

Frequently Asked Questions

December 4, 2018

PennDOT has received many questions about the I-80 Reconstruction Project. Below, the project team has prepared answers for the most common questions. Currently the project is still in the preliminary design phase, and as such not all details are known at this time. Communication about construction, especially construction impacts and road closures, will begin in the final design phase and continue throughout project construction.

1. What is the Interstate 80 Reconstruction Project all about?

Interstate 80 was built in the 1960s and is approaching the end of its useful life. It needs to be reconstructed; PennDOT and FHWA are working to reconstruct I-80 to improve safety and traffic flow for the vibrant Pocono region. I-80 will be reconstructed from just west of Exit 303 in Stroud Township to just east of Exit 307 in Stroudsburg. The current plan proposes:

- Converting the existing partial interchanges at Exits 303 and 304 into full interchanges
- Reconstructing the entrance and exit ramps for Exits 305 and 307
- Removing Exit 306 (Dreher Avenue)

PennDOT is in the process of determining the full package of improvements that can provide the greatest benefit for the least cost and community impact.

This project is part of a broader effort to improve I-80 from I-380 (Exit 293) to the Delaware Water Gap (Exit 310) as identified in the 2009 I-80 Corridor Study. This section was prioritized as the first stage of improvements in the corridor due to its high traffic volumes, its high crash rates, and the deteriorated condition of its roadway and bridges.

2. What is the purpose of this project and what changes are proposed?

The project's purpose is to improve safety and reduce congestion. PennDOT is weighing a number of potential changes to accomplish this. Proposed changes include:

- Widening the highway to three lanes in each direction
- Expanding highway shoulders to improve emergency access
- New interchanges to improve local access and reduce merge and exit conflicts
- Elimination of Exit 306 (Dreher Avenue) to reduce traffic conflicts
- Improved sight distances at curves and elevation changes
- Improved stormwater drainage to protect water resources

3. How much will the project cost?

Total project costs are currently estimated at somewhere between \$400 and \$600 million, and will be paid using a mix of state and federal funds. At this early design stage, it is not possible to state definitively what the project will cost.

4. When is construction going to start?

Currently, construction is anticipated to begin in late 2022, but the project is early in the design process, so it is possible construction could begin earlier or later. These dates are simply not known at this time.

5. How will PennDOT work with, and communicate with the affected communities during the remaining design process?

PennDOT has formed a project advisory committee made up of local residents, businesses, local governments, and elected officials. The committee will meet throughout the design process to help shape highway design recommendations.

The latest public information about the project can always be found at www.i80project.com.

6. Why are lanes being added?

PennDOT's traffic models anticipate that congestion will get worse on this segment of I-80 and in the surrounding community in the coming 30 years. Without additional highway capacity, traffic flow is projected to deteriorate below acceptable state standards on the highway. Traffic congestion will also increase on local roads, as drivers, especially local drivers, seek to avoid delays on I-80. Additionally, the highway is being widened to accommodate wider shoulders and longer entry and exit ramps, improving safety.

7. Will there be detours during construction?

PennDOT has committed to keeping two lanes of traffic open in each direction on the highway during construction, except for short periods overnight and only when absolutely necessary. There may be temporary detours during these times, but this has yet to be determined. Streets adjacent to I-80 may need to be detoured at times during construction, which will not be known until later in the design process.

PennDOT will provide ample notification of any temporary closures and detour information to emergency service providers, municipalities, and the general public.

8. How will we know once an alternative is selected?

Refer to www.i80project.com for project updates; those on the project e-mail list (sign up for e-bulletins) will receive notification of website news updates. PennDOT will summarize the alternatives within the Environmental Assessment (EA), which will be made available for public comment.

9. What happens next?

A formal Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared to document the entire alternatives analysis process and to recommend the preferred alternative(s) for construction. The draft EA will be released to the public for review and comment after it has been reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration.

10. What's going on at Exit 308?

The work around Exit 308, known as the "I-80-05S, Exit 308," is separate from the I-80 Reconstruction Project. You can learn more about this project at <http://www.i80project.com/i-80-exit-308-interchange-in-east-stroudsburg/>.