

# Frequently Asked Questions: Bayfront Parkway Central Corridor Project

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## Project Details

- **What area is included in the Bayfront Parkway Central Corridor?**
  - The Central Corridor project includes the intersections with Sassafras Street Extension, State Street, and Holland Street. This is just one of several projects developed out of the [Bayfront Parkway Study](#). Other projects proposed by the study include the East Bayfront Project that is planned for 2023, and future improvements on West Bayfront that are still in the early stages of design.
- **Will the project increase future traffic volumes along the parkway?**
  - No, the project is not designed to increase traffic volumes. It is designed to handle the predicted changes in traffic volume due to private developments along the Bayfront Parkway, such as the construction of retail shops and destination businesses. The anticipated traffic volume for the roadway in 2043 is 28,937 ADT (average daily traffic), which considers the development plans and historic growth rate data. The proposed roadway improvements can adequately handle this traffic volume.
- **Will the project require the displacement of businesses or homes?**
  - No, the selected alternative is designed to minimize impacts to adjacent properties and no relocations are necessary. The Bayfront Parkway will remain one lane each direction within the project limits with additional turn lanes at each intersection.
- **Is there a timeline for the work?**
  - The proposed timeline starts with work on some supplement projects - Soldiers' and Sailors' Home Access Improvements (completed) and the 12th Street Traffic Signal Enhancements (underway), ~~East Bayfront Safety Improvements and~~. The contract for work on the Bayfront Parkway Central Corridor is expected to be awarded in fall 2022. Due to the size and complexity of the project, it will be completed in multiple phases over several years. Additional information on the timeline and the supplementary projects is available at [www.BayfrontParkwayProject.com](http://www.BayfrontParkwayProject.com) and [www.PennDOT.gov/District1](http://www.PennDOT.gov/District1).

## Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements

- **Will the proposed plans increase connectivity from the city to the waterfront for pedestrians and bicyclists?**
  - Yes, there are several aspects of the selected alternative that address the concerns for increased safety and accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists. The plan includes three pedestrian bridges, enhanced street level cross walks at all intersections, completion of missing trail connections on the waterfront side of the parkway, bike lanes on State Street, and traffic calming measures throughout the corridor.
  
- **Are pedestrian bridges part of the selected alternative for the Bayfront Parkway Project?**
  - Yes, the Bayfront Parkway Project plan includes three pedestrian bridges – one each at Holland, Sassafras Extension and State streets. A project this large must be built in phases over several years. The pedestrian bridge at Holland Street is included in the first phase of the project and will feature a cable-stay design with a gradual switch-back design on the waterfront side for accessibility. The other pedestrian bridges will be scheduled for construction in coordination with later phases of the multi-year project.
  
- **How will roundabouts increase pedestrian and bicycle safety along the Bayfront Parkway?**
  - Among the safety enhancements of roundabouts is slower traffic speeds and pedestrian crossings with refuge areas. The Bayfront Parkway Project proposes two roundabouts, one at Holland Street and the other at Sassafras Street Extension. At each of these locations, pedestrians directed to cross in areas where traffic will be headed in a single direction. Pedestrians will cross the one direction of traffic and stop at a refuge area and then cross the other direction of traffic. This will eliminate the need for pedestrians to cross traffic heading in opposing directions. Cyclists will have the option to maneuver through the roundabout as a pedestrian or in the travel lanes. Click [here](#) for more information on roundabouts and safety enhancements.
  
- **Are there pedestrian improvements at State Street included in the first proposed phase of the project?**
  - Yes, the selected alternative of a grade separated intersection at State Street will enhance pedestrian safety in two major ways:
    - First, the current plans create a smaller intersection at current street level that will decrease the length of the pedestrian crosswalk from 86 feet to 46 feet.
    - Second, a traffic analysis of the intersection determined that once the grade separation is in place, average daily traffic at the street level intersection will decrease significantly. In 2043, of the estimated 28,937 vehicles on the Bayfront Parkway daily only 7,760 are expected to use the intersection at street level with the rest passing beneath the intersection.
    - These improvements mean the pedestrians wanting to walk across the Bayfront Parkway at State Street will only have to cover nearly half the

distance with less than a third of the traffic, which will be a substantial improvement to safety there.

## Environmental Analysis

- **Has the project had a full environmental review?**
  - Yes, the project impacts have been reviewed against the sensitive resources and the findings included but are not limited to:
    - Wetlands and Waterways – Minimal wetland impacts, 0.015 acre, and no stream impacts.
    - Noise – Projected noise levels (year 2040) and increases are below [Federal Highway Noise Abatement Criteria](#) and [PennDOT Publication #24](#) guidelines.
    - Air Quality – Evaluated when placed on the Transportation Improvement Program and conforms with the guidelines provided by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
    - Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Species – Coordinated and reviewed with the natural resources agencies that oversee T&E species and no impacts were identified.
    - Coastal Zone Management (CZM) – Coordinated and reviewed with the Coastal Resource Management Team at the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the project was found to be consistent with the CZM Policy.
    - Environmental Justice (EJ) – Upon analysis, it was determined that the selected alternative will result in no disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on EJ communities:
      - The project will result in no displacements or significant environmental impacts;
      - The project will improve mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists; and
      - The project public involvement included representatives of EJ communities and all information and meeting materials were/are made available in alternate languages.
    - Water Quality – Project will follow national and state permitting processes which do not permit degradation of water quality including discharge rates and volume; stormwater controls, including green infrastructure, will reduce the rate and volume and as well as the pollutant load.
  - Read the full environmental document online at <https://bayfrontparkwayproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-06-15-Approved-Level-2-CE.pdf>
- **Does the term Categorical Exclusion (CE) mean no environmental studies are required for the Bayfront Project?**
  - No, the project had a full environmental review as listed above. Categorical Exclusion, or CE, is a federal environmental category for projects that, upon analysis, were determined not to result in significant impacts. The process still requires a complete environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Read the full environmental document online at

<https://bayfrontparkwayproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-06-15-Approved-Level-2-CE.pdf>

- **What does it mean that the project environmental document was “downscoped” from an Environmental Assessment (EA) to a Categorical Exclusion (CE)?**
  - The project began as an EA due to the possibility of multiple alternatives with unknown impacts to the environment. As the project moved through design, a preferred alternative was selected, and environmental studies were completed on the sensitive resources within the project area. The studies found no individually or cumulatively significant impacts on the environment. For this reason, the project was downscoped from an EA to a Level 2 CE. The Level 2 CE process is still a complete environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Read the full environmental document online at <https://bayfrontparkwayproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-06-15-Approved-Level-2-CE.pdf>

## Peer Review

- **What is a peer review?**
  - A peer review is an internal process where one consultant (peer) reviews the design work of the primary consultant to look for possible adjustments or improvements to the design. It includes a combination of meetings between the two consultant teams and PennDOT, such as an onsite field view, a design workshop and discussions with a peer review committee. In some instances, the independent reviews and calculations completed by the peer have led to recommendations for changes to the design.
- **Is a peer review being done for the Bayfront Parkway Central Corridor Improvement Project?**
  - Yes, there were two peer reviews conducted for different portions of the project.
    - The first focused on the roundabouts planned at Holland Street and Sassafras Street Extension. This peer review evaluated the design plans for the roundabouts as well as the pedestrian safety aspects of the intersections to ensure the project is the right size to balance the needs of all the users. The peer review committee included a member of the City of Erie Council and a representative of the mayor’s office. Through the review, it was determined that the southbound approach to each of the roundabouts could be reduced to a single lane, shortening the pedestrian crossings in those areas.
    - The second peer review focused on the pedestrian bridge proposed at Holland Street. The review resulted in potential enhancements to the initial design concept, as well as several possible alternative aesthetic concepts for consideration. The designs were presented to the public during meetings in September 2021 and a preferred design was selected based on the feedback received and in coordination with the City of Erie.
- **What information is reviewed?**
  - The consultant charged with each peer review will look at a variety factors to ensure the design is compliant with federal, state, and industry guidelines. Through a series of meetings, the consultant will see site conditions, evaluate traffic and safety needs,

discuss conceptual traffic control strategies, and review other data collected related to the roadway. They will also review any concerns brought forth through the public involvement process to determine if there is a need for updates to the design to address those concerns.

- **Is the public informed about the findings of the peer review?**
  - Yes, the results of the peer review will be shared with PennDOT, the Bayfront Parkway Project Action Committee as well as with City of Erie Council. Any potential changes recommended by the peer will be shared with the public for feedback at a meeting, as well as online at [www.BayfrontParkwayProject.com](http://www.BayfrontParkwayProject.com), [www.PennDOT.gov/District1](http://www.PennDOT.gov/District1) and the Facebook group [Bayfront Parkway Project](#).

## Public Outreach/Comment

- **What type of public outreach has been done for this project?**
  - PennDOT, in coordination with its planning partners, has done many forms of public outreach since the Bayfront Parkway study began. Information, including feedback received, is continuously available online at [www.BayfrontParkwayProject.com](http://www.BayfrontParkwayProject.com), [www.PennDOT.gov/District1](http://www.PennDOT.gov/District1), and the [Bayfront Parkway Project](#) Facebook group. There have been numerous face-to-face public meetings and community outreach opportunities, including:
    - 5 Public Meetings (520+ attendees)
    - 4 Community Outreach Events (650+ attendees)
    - 60 plus Stakeholder Meetings
    - 10 Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Meetings (93 members)
    - 11 Coordinating Committee (CC) Meetings (44 members)
    - 3 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings (15 members)
- **Can the public still give feedback on the project?**
  - Absolutely. The project continues to be open for public comment. Everyone is invited to let us know what they like about the project, any concerns they may have, or other information they think we should consider by filling out the [Comment Form](#) or contacting the PennDOT project manager Tom McClelland, PE., at 814-678- 7081 or [thmcclella@pa.gov](mailto:thmcclella@pa.gov). As the design process proceeds, additional public meetings will be scheduled.
  - Two public open houses are scheduled for August 24, 2022.
    - A face-to-face open house will be held from 3:00 to 7:00 PM at the Erie-Western PA Port Authority building, 1 Holland Street, Erie, PA 16507. Attendees will have the opportunity to see information boards, receive an update on the plans, including the pedestrian bridge at Holland Street, and talk with representatives from the design team.
    - A virtual open house tour will be held from 5:00 to 6:00 PM on Microsoft Teams Live. Representatives will be on the meeting to talk about each of the informational boards on display at the in-person option.
    - Copies of all the informational boards and a link to the short comment form are available on the project websites as well.

- A summary of feedback received during earlier meetings is available online at [www.BayfrontParkwayProject.com](http://www.BayfrontParkwayProject.com) and [www.PennDOT.gov/District1](http://www.PennDOT.gov/District1).