

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What is the purpose of the Partnership 81 project?

A1: *The purpose of the project is to improve Interstate 81 (I-81) from milepost 161.2 to Exit 168 (Highland Park Boulevard) to meet regional traffic and local needs, as well as support the Primary Highway Freight System (PHFS) and interstate travel within the northeastern United States, by providing a transportation facility that reduces congestion, improves highway geometry, and addresses mobility issues.*

Q2: The proposed project includes the addition of a third travel lane in each direction. Why is this extra lane needed?

A2: *A traffic study was conducted for the roadways within the project area and the results indicate that traffic growth will exceed the current capacity of the interstate and surrounding roadway network causing the interstate facilities to operate at unacceptable levels of service.*

Q3: How much traffic currently travels on this roadway? How much is the traffic anticipated to increase in the future?

A3: *The current Average Daily Traffic (ADT) along I-81 in the general project area is approximately 53,000. The ADT is expected to grow by nearly 40% by the year 2047 with a general project area ADT of 73,405.*

Q4: What is a P3 project?

A4: *A “P3 Project” is a public-private partnership (P3) between PennDOT and a private entity that enables PennDOT to progress under-funded projects by transferring to the private entity some responsibilities that would typically belong to PennDOT on conventional design-build-bid projects. The responsibilities include portions of or any combination of engineering, construction, operation, financing, or maintenance. The distribution of the responsibilities is set forth in a contractual agreement over a defined period of time. For Partnership 81, the private sector would be responsible for portions of the final design, all of the construction, and some financing of the project.*

Q5: If there is no tolling, how does the private entity pay for the construction?

A5: *The private entity typically includes a team member who has access to finances that are available now to pay for the construction. The public entity (PennDOT) can then pay back the private entity over time, similar to a mortgage for a private home.*

Q6: What is the expected construction cost for this project?

A6: *The anticipated construction cost may range between \$250 and \$350 Million, and will be refined during the completion of the preliminary engineering phase.*



Q8: How will traffic be impacted during construction?

A8: *Two lanes of traffic in each direction will be maintained along I-81 during construction. Short term detours and lane closures may be required along the non-interstate roads and entrance/exit ramps during construction.*

Q9: When will the construction begin and end?

A9: *Construction is not anticipated to begin prior to 2025. More details will be provided on the anticipated construction duration during the final design phase.*

Q10: Why are improvements to the Route 29 interchange (Exit 164) needed?

A10: *Improvements are needed to accommodate the additional travel lane along I-81, to improve the safety of the interchange, replace the aging bridges, and to update the entrance/exit ramps to meet current standards.*

Q11: Why are improvements to the Route 309 interchange (Exit 165) needed?

A11: *The current entrance/exit ramps between I-81 and Route 309 are located at various points along the interstate including a left exit ramp from I-81 NB to Route 309 NB, do not meet current standards, and will not be able to accommodate future traffic growth. Additionally, the aging bridges are in need of replacement.*

Q12: When will I be notified that my property will be impacted?

A12: *The identification of right-of-way needs for this project will be completed as part of the preliminary engineering and environmental studies. PennDOT representatives will contact any affected property owners after these studies have been completed. The preliminary engineering and environmental studies are anticipated to be completed by fall of 2024.*

Q13: Will a noise barrier be installed?

A13: *A preliminary noise study has been completed and will be included with the environmental analysis for the project. Properties that were identified as noise receptors within the project corridor have been notified and invited to attend the neighborhood meetings held on March 28th and 30th, 2023 to review the results of the preliminary noise study which includes recommendations for noise mitigation.*

