

Grand Boulevard Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions



What is the Grand Boulevard Initiative (GBI)?

SamTrans is leading the Grand Boulevard Initiative (GBI) which is a collaboration in San Mateo County between 14 local jurisdictions, three countywide agencies, and Caltrans. The project aims to make El Camino Real (State Route 82) a safer and more connected place to walk, bike, drive, and take transit by installing roadway improvements along the corridor.

What are the goals of GBI?

GBI aims to transform El Camino Real into a safe, inviting, connected, and transit-oriented boulevard. The project seeks to increase connectivity and improve safety for people walking, biking, driving, and taking transit on the corridor. GBI is seeking to align these local studies with ongoing state and countywide planning efforts to develop and implement a comprehensive vision for El Camino Real in San Mateo County.

What is the history of GBI?

GBI originally began in 2006 to support corridor-wide transportation and land use projects along El Camino Real. GBI has achieved success in promoting economic revitalization and infill development along El Camino Real. In the 2024 relaunch, GBI pivoted to focus exclusively on transportation improvements on El Camino Real aimed at improving safety and connectivity for people walking, biking, driving, and taking transit.

What's the timeline for GBI?

SamTrans is leading the first step in the Caltrans project development process which is expected to be complete within 18 to 24 months from Summer 2025. After that initial step, future project phases would include design and construction and can take additional time to complete. SamTrans expects that construction of any proposed improvements would start in 2030 or 2031.

Who is involved in GBI?

The GBI is a collaborative effort between 14 San Mateo County cities, SamTrans, the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA), the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG), the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Caltrans, the City of Palo Alto, and the County of San Mateo. City participants include:

- Atherton
- Belmont
- Burlingame
- Colma
- Daly City
- Hillsborough

- Menlo Park
- Millbrae
- Palo Alto
- Redwood City
- San Bruno
- San Carlos
- San Mateo
- South San Francisco

What is the role of each agency that is participating in GBI?

SamTrans is leading GBI and sponsoring the first phase of the coordinated Caltrans project development process with grant funding from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA) is a project partner that is helping provide a local funding match for the MTC grant. The SMCTA administers funding in San Mateo County and supports long-range planning and project delivery for many projects along El Camino Real. Caltrans, the City/County Association of Governments, and MTC are also project partners and staff from these agencies participate in GBI.

What are examples of streetscape improvements on El Camino Real that GBI is seeking to realize?

GBI aims to transform El Camino into a safe, inviting, and connected boulevard. Streetscape improvements would include safety and mobility focused roadway improvements, such as physically separated bicycle lanes, upgraded pedestrian crossings, bus-only lanes, and bus stop amenity improvements.

What are the benefits of cities' involvement in GBI?

Joining GBI streamlines the Caltrans approval process for cities. GBI aims to complete the first step of the Caltrans project development process, called a Project Initiation Document (PID) for all El Camino Real in San Mateo County. The PID process establishes the scale and purpose of planned improvements to Caltrans roadways, and the document can include several project alternatives alternative. Completing a shared PID document would make it easier to implement future local improvements to El Camino Real.

How can I get involved as a member of a public agency, city, nonprofit, or business group, or as a member of the general public?

Please contact grandboulevard@samtrans.com if you are interested in learning more about this effort and how to get involved.