

UC San Diego

# UC San Diego News Center

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*When the 11-mile Mid-Coast Trolley extension is completed in 2021, the region's residents will be able to ride all the way from the border of Mexico at San Ysidro to La Jolla. Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications*

## Regional Transportation Projects Impacting Campus Gear Up

The construction is nearly impossible to miss. Whether you exit the I-5 freeway at Genesee Avenue, travel on Regents Road or pass through campus on Gilman Drive, there are plenty of regional transportation projects underway on and around campus. And with construction in progress on the 11-mile Mid-Coast Trolley extension, things in the area are about to get a whole lot busier.

“We’re going to see significant construction on campus once the trolley really gets going later this year,” said Gary C. Matthews, vice chancellor for Resource Management and Planning. “While we’re making every effort to minimize the impacts to our community, we’re also asking everyone to be

patient and flexible.”

## **The Trolley Takes Shape**

When the trolley begins service in 2021, it will transform the way people access and experience UC San Diego. Downtown will be just a 30-minute ride away, the border a little over an hour. Students, faculty and staff who live on or near campus can take advantage of all the region has to offer and many San Diego communities will be better able to access the educational, cultural, job and health care opportunities offered by UC San Diego and the La Jolla/Golden Triangle area.

### **Staying Up-To-Date on Construction**

Updates on regional transportation projects will be provided to the campus community through various outlets including UC San Diego’s [On The Go](#) website. You can also visit the [I-5/Genesee Avenue](#) webpage and the [Mid-Coast Trolley](#) webpage to learn how to get up-to-the-minute information on detours and construction.

To plan your commute and find alternate routes, visit [Shift San Diego](#), an online resource created by SANDAG and Caltrans to help travelers navigate through and learn more about construction in the University City/Golden Triangle community. You may also want to consider using other traffic and navigation tools such as [Google Maps](#) and [Waze](#).

The trolley also will provide an effective campus commuting alternative, helping to reduce roadway congestion and ease parking demands.

“This will be key to UC San Diego’s sustainability efforts, helping us reduce our carbon footprint and reach carbon neutrality by 2025,” said Matthews.

So what to expect with trolley construction at UC San Diego?

Currently, there is a lot of what is referred to as “make ready” work—fences are going up, sewer lines and utilities are being moved, road detours are underway, trees are being removed and contractors are occupying portions of parking lots and other areas of campus. In the next couple of months, the lighting will be taken down at Warren Field to accommodate construction, a small portion of parking lot [P701](#) will close, and work will begin in part of parking lot [P406](#), off Gilman Drive near Pepper Canyon.

Then, the trolley will start to take shape, literally.

“The first sign of aerial guideway construction will occur this spring quarter,” said Greg Coghill, principal architect with UC San Diego Facilities Design and Construction. “Mobile drilling rigs and cranes will be staged in the fenced parking lot areas, foundations will be drilled and poured, and the steel and wooden formwork will be erected.”

With two stops planned on campus—one at Pepper Canyon serving west campus and one at Voigt Drive serving east campus—and another stop planned at the nearby VA Medical Center, the trolley will be built from two headings.

“One heading will be from the VA going towards Pepper Canyon and the other will be from Genesee Avenue through east campus with a new trolley bridge over Interstate 5,” said Coghill.

As with any construction project, there will be impacts. Streets, bike lanes and sidewalks will be intermittently impacted and detours may be used. Total street closures are expected mostly at night in order to minimize the amount of disruption to campus. Flaggers and traffic control measures will be used as needed to maintain safe conditions.

“We’re asking everyone to be extra careful while all this construction is going on,” said Coghill. “Please slow down and be aware of your surroundings when traveling through construction zones and obey all flaggers and signage. We want everyone to be as safe as possible.”

## **Building the Gilman Bridge**

With the Gilman Drive Realignment successfully completed, work has already begun on the new Gilman Bridge. Expected to open in 2019, the bridge will arc gracefully over the I-5 freeway uniting two existing campus roads: Gilman Drive on the west and Medical Center Drive on the east.

“It’ll be another way to go from one side of the campus to the other without using busy city streets,” said Christina Mannion, principal architect with Facilities Design and Construction. “Getting across the campus will be quicker and more efficient.”

To facilitate smooth traffic flow, the bridge and intersections on both sides will have three-lane configurations: One lane of traffic each way with a protected left-hand turn lane. Sidewalks and bicycle lanes will also be included on the bridge. A new pedestrian bridge is also being built that will connect graduate housing in the Mesa Neighborhood to the Gilman Bridge at Medical Center Drive.

Currently, anyone driving by the Gilman Bridge area will see temporary barricades and a lot of dirt excavation going on along the sides of the freeway. Wooden formwork is going up on the east side with concrete pours expected to start this spring. By the end of the year, expect to see wooden formwork going up on both sides of the freeway with more concrete pours to come.

## **The I-5/Genesee Avenue Interchange Gets a New Look**

This past February marked two years of construction on the I-5/Genesee Avenue Interchange. The project is replacing the existing six-lane Genesee Avenue overpass with a ten-lane structure that includes additional vehicle lanes, new bike lanes and sidewalks, and will better accommodate current and future traffic demands.

The entire project is nearly two-thirds complete and is expected to open to traffic in spring 2018. Currently, the structural pieces of the second half of the new I-5/Genesee Avenue Bridge have been formed and poured. Crews are relocating utilities in the new bridge and are preparing to pour concrete on the bridge deck and barriers in the next several months. Additionally, crews are grading and paving the eastbound side of Genesee Avenue.

Work is almost complete on the last retaining wall, which is the large wall along the northbound off-ramp to Genesee Avenue. After the wall is complete, the final grading and paving can occur on the off-ramp.

“We should see the off-ramps convert to two lanes from their current single lane configuration within the next couple months,” said Mannion. “That should help traffic flow a little more smoothly.”

Once the I-5/Genesee Avenue Bridge is constructed, the last major item of work will be construction of the bicycle/pedestrian bridge over Genesee Avenue.

## **Widening Regents Road**

Construction kicked off last summer on this City of San Diego project that widens Regents Road between Genesee Avenue and Executive Drive from the existing two lanes to four lanes and adds new bike lanes.

Athena Way, a connector road between Athena Circle and Regents Road, is being built in conjunction with the widening.

“Access to the East Campus area will be available on Athena Way this spring,” said Ross Kunishige, senior civil engineer with Facilities Design and Construction. “That will alleviate congestion at the other entrances to the UC San Diego Medical Center as construction activities around the area continue to ramp up.”

The widening of Regents Road is expected to be completed in late 2017.

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