Opening the new East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge was not supposed to happen all at once. Due to a conflict between the original westbound (to San Francisco) lanes and the new eastbound (to Oakland) lanes, westbound traffic would have started driving on the new bridge while eastbound would have stayed on the original. Workers would have then demolished the conflicting westbound lanes to finish the new eastbound lanes during four to six months of construction.

A plan to realign traffic lanes and build detours just west of the toll plaza will allow engineers and construction crews to complete those new eastbound lanes while work continues on the rest of the East Span. By implementing these detours for the next two years, the entire bridge will open to all traffic in 2013, earlier than previously scheduled. Eastbound traffic will begin using the detour in May 2011 while westbound will start in early 2012. More information will be provided prior to the traffic shifts.