

TO: Residents and Owners near California Avenue

FROM: City of Palo Alto Public Works Department



PROJECT NOTIFICATION/UPDATE

CALIFORNIA AVENUE STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

CIP PE-07005 , RF-09003, & PE-86070

Project Start Date: September 14, 2009

Project End Date: November 25, 2009

California Avenue Streetscape Improvements:

California Avenue between El Camino Real and the Caltrain Station will be undergoing streetscape changes to increase the visibility of the businesses, encourage visitors to linger in the area and enhance the overall ambiance of the California Avenue Business District. The work is a joint effort of the Public Works Engineering and Operations Divisions and the California Avenue Area Development Association. The project scope of improvements addresses the deteriorating condition of the streetscape and includes replacing the street trees; installing new tree grates; replacing the mix of bench styles with uniform benches styles; replacement of the mix of trash cans with dual use trash and recycling containers to match the benches; replacement of bike racks; and street resurfacing. A more pedestrian and bicycle friendly avenue will be accomplished by incorporating traffic calming elements such as modified lane striping and colored crosswalks. Also, new curb ramps and accessible parking with ramps will be constructed.

The street tree replacement aims to address the business association's desire for a better suited street tree which provides a cohesive aesthetic statement for the avenue. The Holly Oaks will be replaced with Red Maples, deciduous trees which produce strong fall colors ranging from orange to deep red. Many of the replacement trees will be planted in improved planting sites that are expected to reduce conflicts with store fronts, street lights and underground utilities to provide better rooting areas. Most of the trees that were removed were Holly Oaks and many were diseased and in poor condition. The branches covered street lights and grew over building storefronts and roofs. The Holly Oak produces honey-dew, sooty mold and drops large quantities of acorns that create tripping hazards for pedestrians. Tree selections were proposed by the City and were well received by the California Avenue Area Development Association (CAADA). Red Maple is a fast growing tree that is tolerant of different soil conditions and produces smaller seed fruits. With the replacement of street trees, the City standard tree wells with metal grates will be installed in concrete sidewalks which will bring a uniform look to the business district and provide greater pedestrian safety.

California Avenue from El Camino Real to the Caltrain Station will receive a new asphalt overlay with colored crosswalks. The resurfacing work will be broken into two parts, the concrete preparation work, and the road resurfacing. The concrete preparation work includes new and upgraded curb ramps, repaired concrete curbs, gutters, and sidewalk, and base failure repairs to the street's concrete base. The road resurfacing work includes milling out the existing asphalt, repairing the cracks in the concrete base, repaving the road with new asphalt, and finally restriping the road. In addition to the resurfacing, new colored crosswalks will be installed by injecting a red brick color into the asphalt which is then stamped with a brick pattern, with a white edging.

Construction update:

The Public Works Department has begun the California Avenue Streetscape Improvements in the California Avenue Business District. The City of Palo Alto Public Works Department removed most of the street trees on California Avenue from El Camino Real to the Caltrain Station. Over the next few weeks, concrete sidewalk removal will occur around the tree stumps and the stumps and roots will be removed to full depth. After this removal, concrete sidewalk shall be poured back and new tree grates frames will be set in place. The new street trees shall be planted in the coming weeks. The concrete preparation work is expected to begin in late September and last approximately three weeks. Milling the roadway and final paving of California Avenue from El Camino to the Train Station is expected to begin in mid-October.

Construction traffic control and hours of operation:

Partial closure of the sidewalk and parking spaces are required for this work. The City and the Contractor will ensure that businesses are accessible during the construction project. A maximum of two blocks shall be worked on at the same time, and only one side of those blocks shall have construction activities resulting in limited sidewalk access and parking spaces closure. There will be times when one lane of the street will need to be closed for the concrete work. Traffic control measure shall be in place to facilitate smooth traffic flow during construction.

The Contractor shall start work at 8AM and end no later than 6PM between Mondays through Fridays. The Contractor has been instructed to minimize dusty and noisy work such as jack hammering and paving between the hours of 11:30AM to 1:30PM. There may be some Saturday work as well depending on the progress of the project. Please expect significant noise disruptions during the construction work especially during the concrete removal and paving phases. Most of the work is expected to be complete by Thanksgiving.

Project Coordination

The Streetscape Improvement Project was vetted with the community and business district and the consensus was to have all the trees replaced at one time to create a more uniform appearance over time as the trees mature. The public has been notified of the construction via informational flyers and outreach performed by CAADA ahead of the work.

In order to minimize impacts to California Avenue business district, the Public Works Department will be coordinating the street resurfacing of California Avenue with the Streetscape Improvements. The projects shall be coordinated in order to minimize closure of sidewalks, parking spaces, and street lanes. The resurfacing phase of the project follows the concrete work and is expected to begin in mid to late October. The resurfacing will be phased over three weeks in order to minimize disruption to businesses and residents. Also, the Streetscape Improvements have been coordinated with the utility infrastructure work recently completed in California Avenue

Public Notification The Public Works Department will provide more information as it becomes available and can also be found on the City's Website. Project updates shall be sent out by notification flyers and by emails. If you have any questions or wish to be included in the email distribution list, please email Kate Rooney at kate.rooney@cityofpaloalto.org with your name and your address. Thank you.

PROJECT CONTACT:

Kate Rooney, Public Works Project Manager

Phone: 650.617.3127

Email: Kate.Rooney@cityofpaloalto.org