

Highway 99 Soundwall Community Safety and Enhancement Project

www.99soundwall.org

CALIFORNIA
99

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the scope of the project and why is Caltrans focusing on this area?

Caltrans is proposing to sell the excess land along the Highway 99 soundwall to adjoining property owners. This project is in the Sacramento area focused on the east side of Highway 99 between 12th Avenue and 47th Avenue. There are 48 properties in the project area.

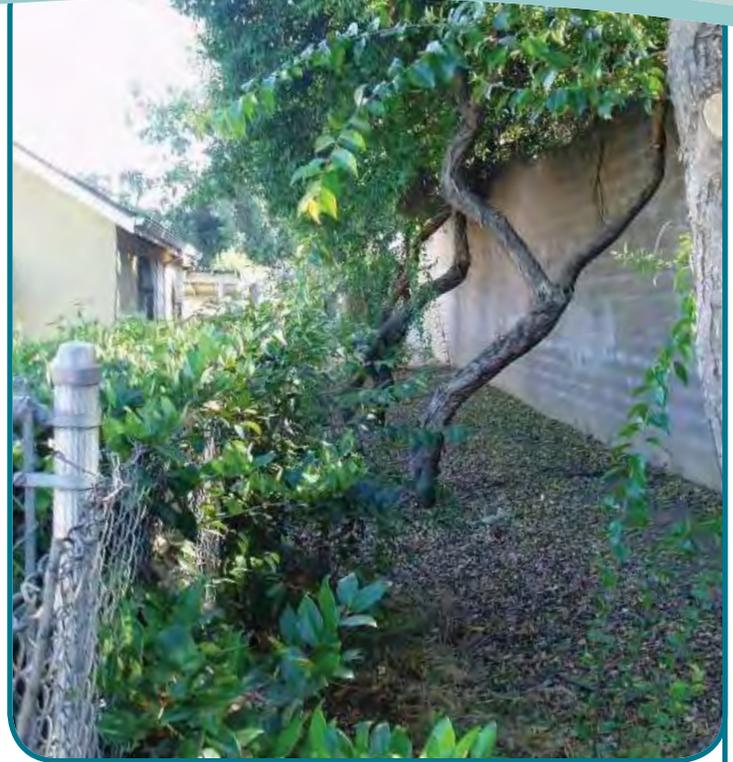
The purpose of the project is to address trespassing and criminal activity that is occurring on Caltrans property along the soundwall. By selling the land to adjoining property owners, homeowners can fence and secure these lands, making it more difficult for trespassers, vandals and criminals to access the area.

How do property owners benefit from participating in this project?

By purchasing the excess land adjacent to the soundwall, property owners can extend and fence their property to the soundwall and maintain this additional property for their personal use. This allows property owners to secure their side and back yards, making it more difficult for trespassing and criminal activity to occur near the soundwall.

How do Caltrans and other agencies like the City of Sacramento and the County of Sacramento benefit from this project?

Caltrans benefits from reduced costs for cleaning and maintaining the area along the soundwall.



The City and County of Sacramento and the surrounding neighborhood will likely benefit from the improved safety and cleanliness of these areas. With these lands secured and in private ownership, there is likely to be less vandalism and illegal dumping along the soundwall.

Will there be any cost to property owners?

Yes, property owners will purchase the property from Caltrans. An appraisal must be completed before Caltrans can provide a cost figure. Caltrans will continue to retain an easement on the property, which reduces the value and cost of the property to the homeowner. An easement is a legal right to use the property for a specific purpose. The highway easement will allow Caltrans to access the property for maintenance and improvements to the soundwall and over the long-



term to accommodate any future highway needs. We anticipate that the cost to the property owner will be nominal.

Once the property is purchased, Caltrans will modify the existing fencing to secure your new property. Property owners will be responsible for maintaining the fencing along their new property line.

Will this project affect property taxes and will there be any other fees or costs that participating landowners might have to pay, depending on whether they live in the City or County?

Purchasing the land will slightly increase the amount that property owners pay in property taxes. The additional property tax on the purchased property will depend on the property's assessed value as determined by the County assessor during the appraisal process. Caltrans appraisals are scheduled to take place during Fall/Winter 2010.

Sacramento County imposes a property tax of one percent of the assessed value. Based on an example selling price of \$300, purchasing the excess land could increase the amount of landowners' annual property taxes by roughly \$3. Again, the specific amount will depend on the appraised value of the property, which as not yet been determined. There may be some nominal fees for recording the new deed.

Have any property owners already agreed to participate?

Yes, as of November 1, 2009, of the property owners contacted, five land owners immediately agreed to participate in the project. Caltrans will

begin surveying these properties and preparing the appraisals to determine the land value. Many additional property owners have expressed interest in the program and would like more information.

If property owners agree to participate, are there any limits or restrictions on what they can do with the property? Can they use the soundwall in any way?

Since Caltrans will retain a highway easement over the conveyed property, this will limit the ability of property owners to develop this property.

Property owners will not be allowed to construct permanent structures in the easement area, including: pools, concrete patios, fixed buildings or any fixture that would be considered realty.

Participating property owners will be able to extend their existing yards to the soundwall. Property owners will be able to landscape this space and will be able to place moveable bricks and pavers, portable storage sheds and irrigation systems.

In order to protect the integrity of the soundwall, landowners will not be allowed to attach any objects or structures to the soundwall itself. Similarly, property owners will not be allowed to drill into, dig under or otherwise compromise the integrity of the soundwall structure. Caltrans will add posts to the soundwall so that property owners can secure their extended fences. Property owners will not be allowed to remove these posts without permission from the Caltrans Maintenance Division.



Will Caltrans provide fencing, clean-up assistance and other support to participating landowners?

To secure the newly purchased property, Caltrans will remove fencing along the back side of your existing property and extend side fencing to the soundwall. Caltrans will use either recycled or new chain link fencing. This will happen after the California Transportation Commission (CTC) returns the approved deed to Caltrans. Once the purchase is completed, all maintenance and landscaping costs will be the responsibility of the property owner.

In June/July 2009, Caltrans conducted a thorough clean-up of the soundwall area, including removal of trash and overgrown and dead vegetation. The property is currently in good condition. If conditions change dramatically before purchase, property owners should contact Caltrans.

What if, after property owners have agreed to participate, their new fence or property is vandalized? Will Caltrans provide any support to fix this or other problems that may happen?

Once they have purchased the property, property owners will be responsible for all maintenance and repairs to fencing and the property itself. Caltrans will continue to maintain the soundwall.

What are the owner's responsibilities for any trees or vegetation that comes with the property?

Property owners will be responsible for maintenance of all trees and vegetation on the property. Once the property is purchased, property owners may remove any trees or vegetation at their expense. Any replacement trees must be planted

away from the soundwall so that the tree canopies do not touch the soundwall in any manner. Caltrans will provide general, suggested guidelines for property owners to use when planning improvements.

What happens after the property purchase is complete? Will Caltrans be doing any maintenance on the soundwall or have any need to come on to the property now or in the future?

Caltrans has continued responsibility for maintaining the soundwall. Caltrans will notify property owners in advance if they need to access the wall for inspection or repair. In cases of emergency, notification will be given as soon as reasonably possible.

What if I am a property owner who wants someone to represent me or speak on my behalf for this transaction?

You may have any one over the age of 18 represent you in the transaction between you and Caltrans. You must provide a written statement that states your wishes and provide the name and contact information to Caltrans, as well as their powers of representation. Please note that only the landowner may sign the contract. A Representative Letter form can be downloaded from the project website at: www.99soundwall.org.

I live in the neighborhood, but do not own property along the soundwall. Is there any opportunity for me to share my issues and concerns with Caltrans and my neighbors?

Caltrans will hold at least one workshop to share project information and hear from property owners who live in the project area. This meeting is

intended for property owners along the soundwall but will be open to the public. Community members may contact Caltrans staff at any time with project questions or concerns. Calls should be directed to: Nieves Castro at (916) 274-0638 or Eva Marie Gordon at (530) 741-4414.

Some property owners and neighbors do not speak or understand English very well. How will they get information about this project?

Caltrans will work with translators to ensure all residents can get the information they need. All communications and outreach related to this project will be conducted in English, Spanish, and other languages, as needed.

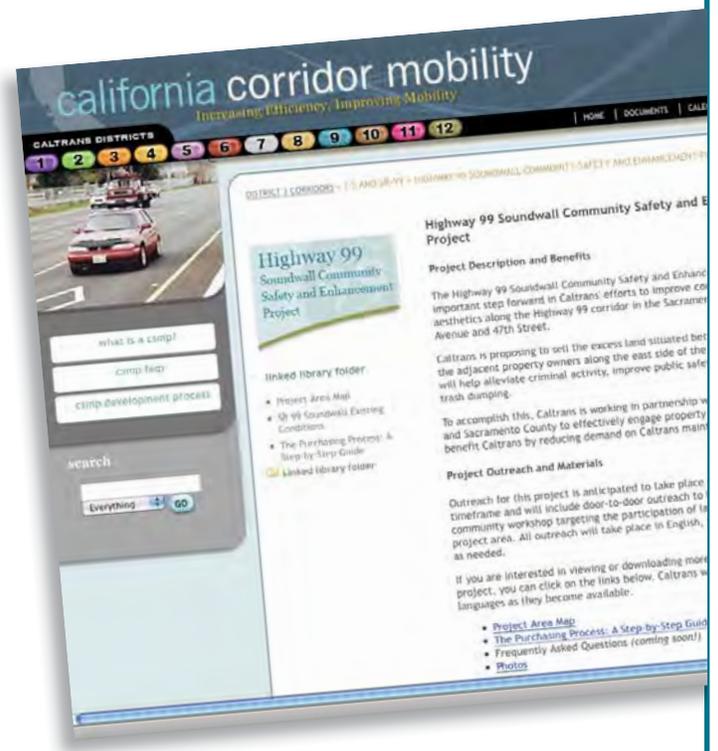
Caltrans maintenance staff helps keep an eye on what's happening in the neighborhood. Will Caltrans still have a maintenance presence in the neighborhood when this project is complete?

Caltrans maintenance staff will continue to be responsible for maintenance of the soundwall itself. However, due to the reduced need for maintenance, Caltrans' presence in the neighborhood will be less frequent.

Will Caltrans consider expanding this project to other communities in the future?

Caltrans is responsible for soundwalls all over the state and there is a similar need in other areas to improve public safety and aesthetics along State-owned transportation corridors.

This is a pilot program and, if it proves successful for Caltrans and property owners, Caltrans may consider expanding this program to other areas.



Where can I find additional information about this project?

The project website is www.99soundwall.org. The site is updated regularly as new information becomes available.

More Questions?

Please contact **Nieves Castro**, Caltrans Project Manager, at (916) 274-0638 or nieves_castro@dot.ca.gov, or **Eva-Marie Gordon**, Caltrans Right of Way Agent, at (530) 741-4414 or eva-marie_gordon@dot.ca.gov.