



# EL CAMINO REAL ROADWAY RENEWAL

**T**he El Camino Real Roadway Renewal Project will **improve the function, access, and safety of El Camino Real while retaining the character** of this critical corridor. The project area stretches 3 miles, between East Santa Inez Avenue and Millbrae Avenue, and encompasses uniquely challenging pavement, vegetation, sidewalk, utility, drainage, and safety issues. This stretch of El Camino Real is also lined with heritage tree rows that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and contribute to the unique character of the corridor.

To ensure a thoughtful and productive path, Caltrans has had ongoing collaboration with stakeholder groups including:

- BURLINGAME PUBLIC WORKS
- BURLINGAME PARKS DEPARTMENT
- EL CAMINO REAL TASK FORCE
- BURLINGAME HISTORICAL SOCIETY
- BURLINGAME TRAFFIC, SAFETY & PARKING COMMISSION
- BURLINGAME BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION
- TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH
- CITY OF SAN MATEO
- CITY OF MILLBRAE

## Stakeholder Spotlight

### THE EL CAMINO REAL TASK FORCE



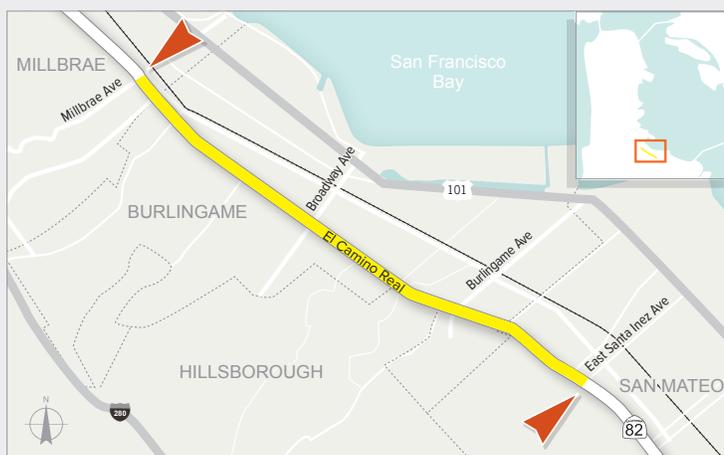
Since 2017, Caltrans has been collaborating with the El Camino Real (ECR) Task Force through a series of meetings, field visits, and listening sessions. The result of this work was a suite of Task Force recommendations that focused on four main areas of concern and two main objectives.

#### CONCERNS

- Trees
- Roadways
- Sidewalks
- Drainage

#### OBJECTIVES

- Retain the character and health of “the Grove”
- Improve the safety of the roadway and sidewalks.



Also known as State Route 82 (SR-82), El Camino Real is owned and maintained by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). ECR handles nearly **30,000 vehicles daily**. As a high-volume state route, it must comply with ADA accessibility regulations, visibility requirements, and safety guidelines.





# BACKGROUND

## History

**1770s:** Spanish expeditions establish El Camino Real (ECR) along routes used by Native Americans, linking missions, presidios, and pueblos from San Diego to San Francisco

**1874:** Local landowners hire landscape horticulturist John MacLaren to plant trees to line ECR: elms for shade and fast growing eucalyptus to shelter the slower-growing elms

**1912:** Paving of ECR begins

**1930:** Burlingame enacts the nation's first zoning ordinances to protect tree rows on ECR from development

**1985:** Caltrans begins replacing historic trees lost to damage/disease

**2008:** Caltrans does extensive documentation of the Howard-Ralston Eucalyptus Tree Rows, including documenting size, type, and location of each tree

**2012:** The Howard-Ralston Eucalyptus Tree Rows are listed on the National Register of Historic Places

**2017:** ECR Task Force is formed and recommends options to deal with challenges along the roadway while preserving the tree rows

**2019:** Caltrans undertakes preliminary assessments for corridor deficiencies, including ADA upgrades, drainage improvements, and roadway restoration



El Camino Real, circa 1915. Elm trees form a tunnel over the newly paved road, with fast-growing eucalyptus beyond

## Caltrans Project Development Process



Project Initiation Document (PID)



Project Approval and Environmental Document (PAED)



Plans, Specifications & Estimates (PS&E)



Ready to List (RTL)



Construction



## Project Spotlight

The rows of mature trees are what make this stretch of El Camino Real special. For this project, each tree will be examined carefully. Landscape architects, engineers, planners, and arborists will be considering important questions such as:

- Is the tree healthy overall?
- Is the tree structurally sound?
- Does the tree obscure drivers' visibility?
- Can the sidewalk go around the tree?
- Can the roots be protected from necessary drainage and pavement repairs?
- What measures can be taken to protect each tree during construction?



# CURRENT CONDITIONS

## An Aging Roadway

Several challenges have developed as the roadway, sidewalks, infrastructure, and tree rows on El Camino Real continue to age.

### ROADWAY

Pavement has exceeded its design life, evidenced by cracking and settlement. Subgrade settlement and pavement heaving from water damage and tree roots make superficial pothole repairs ineffective.

### ADA ACCESS

Curb ramps and pedestrian signal call buttons are missing at many intersections and existing ramps are not up to code. Uneven sidewalks are difficult to maintain and often unpassable for wheelchair users, strollers, and others with limited mobility or sight. Tree roots contribute to ongoing uplifting and cracking of concrete sidewalks.

### DRAINAGE

Settlement and uneven pavement prevents water from draining properly, resulting in pooling and, in some cases, flooding. Older drain inlets are not all connected to the underground storm sewers. Some locations also have small pipes or clay pipes, which are easily clogged and difficult to clean.

### VISIBILITY

Dense vegetation and large tree trunks prevent drivers turning onto ECR from seeing oncoming traffic and pedestrians. Vegetation can also block views for those who are maneuvering in and out of driveways.

### POWER LINES

Winter storms have led to damaged trees and downed power lines. PG&E does not recommend any trees be within 10 feet of power poles for safety.

### TREE HEALTH

As trees age, the stability of their branches and roots becomes compromised. Many of the trees that make up the historic tree rows are nearly 150 years old and are approaching the end of their natural lifespan. Additionally, many have suffered damage from installation of utilities and curbs over the years. In some cases, tree roots have grown together over time, such that when one tree falls it destabilizes nearby trees.





# GOALS

## Improvements

With El Camino Real's Roadway Renewal project, Caltrans is seeking to collaborate with the community to improve safety while preserving the corridor's unique identity. We are working to develop a set of solutions that will:

- Repair or replace cracked and damaged pavement
- Build accessible, ADA-compliant sidewalks and crosswalks
- Provide new drainage to address flooding
- Improve visibility for drivers and pedestrians
- Provide new lighting
- Create a landscaped buffer between sidewalks and roadway to improve pedestrian safety
- Implement a maintenance plan for the entire roadway
- Establish a replanting and maintenance program for trees



## Vision

We envision a street that is safe and beautiful for all who travel on it. Caltrans is ready to make the roadway improvements necessary to deliver an El Camino Real that the community will enjoy for decades. We look forward to continued involvement with all stakeholders, community groups, and residents as we create a streetscape that enhances the safety and livability of El Camino Real while maintaining its unique identity.

Please stay tuned for more opportunities to provide feedback on our plans for this exciting roadway renewal project!



TO LEARN MORE OR SUBMIT QUESTIONS,  
PLEASE VISIT:

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