

Highway 99 Soundwall Community Safety and Enhancement Project

www.99soundwall.org



Frequently Asked Questions

Updated January 24, 2011

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

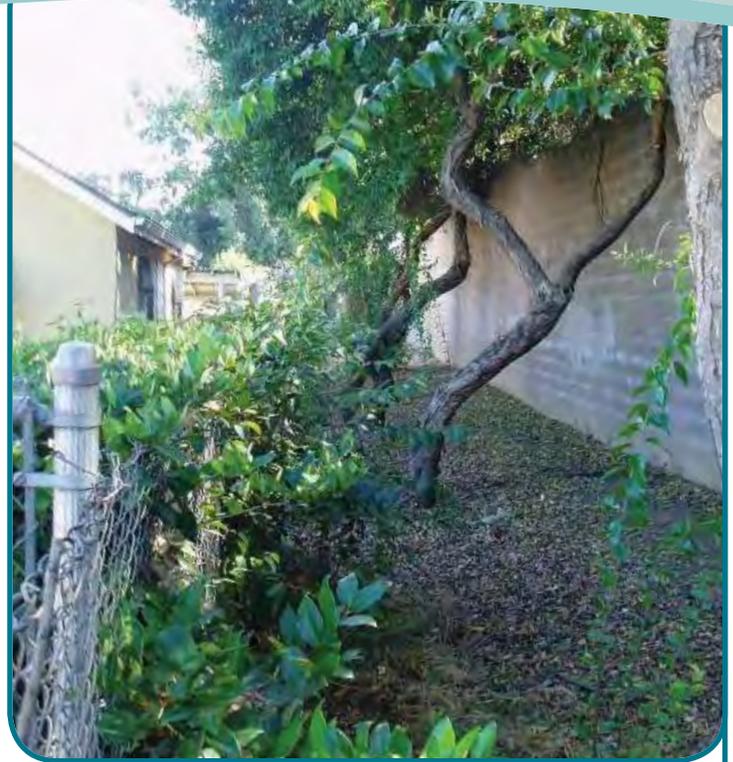
Caltrans is proposing to sell the excess land along the Highway 99 soundwall to adjoining property owners. This project is in the Sacramento area, focused on the east side of Highway 99 between 12th Avenue and 47th Avenue. There are 44 properties in the project area.

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 participating in this project, 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.

Caltrans believes that installing multiple fences will serve as a deterrent to those who may be tempted to cut fencing and trespass on to private property, as they have in the past. This is one reason why your involvement and the involvement of your neighbors is important to the success of this project.



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?

Caltrans will be selling the underlying fee to adjoining property owners for \$1. However, because the administrative costs associated with this purchase will be more than the cost of the property, the fee will be waived.



Caltrans will continue to retain a highway easement over the property, which significantly reduces the ability to develop the property. 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.

Once the property is purchased, Caltrans will install fencing to secure your new property at no cost to property owners. 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?

Sacramento County imposes a property tax of one percent of the assessed value of the property. Based on the selling price of \$1, the County assessor has confirmed that purchasing the excess land should increase the amount of landowners' annual property taxes by only one cent (\$0.01). Homeowners will be provided a letter from the County assessor with this information. Caltrans will pay for recording fees and documentary transfers related to this project.

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 the current right of way 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. Caltrans will remove diseased or dangerous trees and will remove fallen tree limbs and other large de-



bris before the property is transferred. However, 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?

Caltrans has evaluated all trees on the property to identify unhealthy or hazardous trees that need to be removed. Caltrans has offered to remove all other trees on the property, as well. All trees and vegetation that remain after purchase will be the responsibility of the new property owner.

Any replacement trees must be planted away from the soundwall so that the tree canopies do not touch the soundwall in any manner. No new trees should be planted on properties with a slope. 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 held two community workshops to share project information and hear from property owners who live in the project area. These meetings were intended for property owners along the soundwall but were 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 proj-

ect 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.

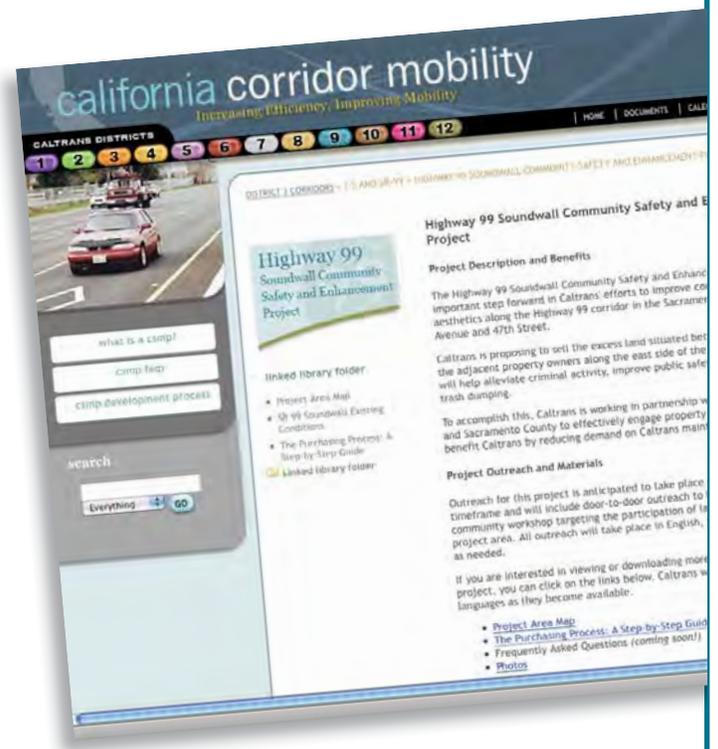
Will Caltrans consider expanding this project to other communities in the future?

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.