

Firesafe17.com NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE August 10, 2019

Work to Begin on Highway 17's Protective Fuel Break

Los Gatos, CA: The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council and CAL FIRE are working together to complete a shaded fuel break in the Santa Cruz Mountains. A shaded fuel break is one tool that is used to increase the resilience of a community and reduce the risk of catastrophic loss of life and property. Shaded fuel breaks are created by removing brush, dead and dying vegetation and low limbs of trees, reducing the ability of fire to climb vertically into the tree canopy. Keeping any potential fire close to the ground increases the ability for responders to extinguish the fire quickly.

The fuel break is being planned and executed cooperatively by the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council and CAL FIRE. The project will encompass the 6.5 mile corridor along Highway 17 between Los Gatos' Main Street Bridge and the Summit Road overpass. Adjoining communities, including both public and private land, will be included.

This multi-agency project has been funded through the California Climate Initiative, and the size and scope of this project is unlike anything that has been done in the past. Governor Newsom, who proclaimed a State of Emergency regarding the risk of wildfire to vulnerable communities in California, directed CAL FIRE to make this project -- along with 34 other similar projects in the state -- a top priority. CAL FIRE has shifted local resources to focus attention to this very important and valuable endeavor.

Agencies collaborating with the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council and CAL FIRE include CalTrans, the California Highway Patrol, Chemeketa Park, Dudek, Mid-Peninsula Open Space District, Redwood Estates, Santa Clara County Fire, Santa Clara County Roads and Airports, Santa Clara County Parks, Santa Clara Valley Water District, San Jose Water Company and the Town of Los Gatos.

There will be several phases of the project over the coming months. Most of the phases will have minor to no impact on the roadway, however some parts of the project will affect travel on Hwy 17. The project team is working to reduce the impact on travel and will provide early notification to residents and drivers. Information will be shared through multiple sources including radio, notification lists, digital and print media. The project's website, www.firesafe17.com, provides answers to frequently asked questions, project updates and news reports for commuters and information for residents whose properties are near the designated work areas.

