

Traffic Heading in Your Direction

By: Peter Jacklin

Santiago Canyon Road - A Gaint Step Closer to a Safer Santiago Canyon Road

During a very brief City Council meeting on September 14 2010, the City Council voted unanimously to approve \$587,000 for the Santiago Canyon Road median. The funding is more than \$250,000 less than the \$850,000 originally forecasted by the city's Public Works Department. There are a few benefits to a slow economy.

The project is now slated to begin in mid-October 2010. A complete project schedule will be posted on www.opacommunityaction.org as soon as the schedule is available.

Speaking in favor of the funding were OPA Board President Tom Davidson and OPA Board member Laura Thomas.

Councilman Denis Bilodeau advised that a ground-breaking ceremony will be held prior to the start of work. The late councilman Steve Ambriz's widow is expected to attend. Watch for an e-Tree announcement. The [OPA Community Action Website](http://www.opacommunityaction.org) will be posted with the date and time as soon as it becomes available.

The SantiagoCanyon and Kennymead Intersection - One More Step Closer to a Safer Santiago Canyon Road

During the spring, on April 14, the City of Orange Traffic Commission voted unanimously to close Kennymead Street. In doing so, the Commission validated the safety hazards that have existed for some time at the intersection of the street with Santiago Canyon Road.

Kennymead intersects with Santiago Canyon Road in the area known as "Deadman's Curve.". The intersection was modified in 1999 to allow only ingress to Kennymead. By voting in favor of the closure, the Commission recognized the long history of accidents on "Deadman's Curve" and the growing rate of commercial and local residents' vehicles exiting Kennymead illegally to Santiago Canyon Road.

Speaking on favor of the closure was OPA President Tom Davidson, OPA Traffic Committee members Laura Thomas and Peter Jacklin. Residents Carolyn Aliotta and Ron Williamson spoke in favor as well. Ron lives on Kennymead Street and has experienced the situation firsthand. The City of Orange Fire Department and the Police Department stood in support of the closure

The next step toward closure is a design. The Commission asked the Public Works staff to consider the unique needs of the Martin Calderwood property located on the southeastern corner of the intersection. Also, the Commission recognized the limitations that a closure would have on mail delivery and trash pickup. Trash pickup has the unique requirement that a large commercial vehicle must be able to turn around at the closure. The design will be offered for review to interested residents as soon as it is available.

The closure eliminates the westbound left turn lane on Santiago Canyon Road as well as the eastbound right turn lane. Many residents will not use the left turn lane because of the dangers of slowing to enter the lane from a rapidly moving fast lane on Santiago Canyon Road. The Commission agreed that this is a safety concern as well.

It's expected that the closure will happen in the same time frame as the construction of the median on Santiago Canyon Road, sometime in the fall of 2010.

In May, the City of Orange Traffic Commission reviewed and approved the closure. The vote by the Commission was 5-0 in favor. The City Council reviews the approval at their 7/27/10 7:00 pm meeting.

RSCC adds a parking lot. Santiago Canyon Road gets one more traffic light

RanchoSantiagoCommunity College is adding a new parking lot providing spaces for approximately 1000 cars. The lot is currently under construction and is located on the Santiago Canyon Road side of the campus.

An additional 4 way traffic light will be installed between Newport Boulevard and Jamboree Road on Santiago Canyon Road at the entrance to the Hillsdale Community. That will bring a total of three (3) traffic lights in the area.

The work will be done in the October 2010 time frame. Of course, this is the same period of time that the Santiago Canyon Road median will be under construction. The traffic light installation is a much smaller construction project and is not expected to take the same amount of time that the median construction will. All that considered, it may be wise to find alternate routes in and out of OPA during September and October.

Your OPA Traffic Committee

Tom Davidson, Peter Jacklin, Theresa Sears and Laura Thomas are the members of the Traffic Committee. Please feel free to contact any one of the committee members about ways to improve traffic in the area.