

Background on Unsafe Sidewalk/Road Conditions in El Granada.

9/12/22 Gregg Dieguez

Background

Several EG residents state that: a) there are few sidewalks in El Granada (about ¼ of all homes), b) Consequently the ones they have are more heavily traveled by pedestrians and c) these same roads also tend to be the major arteries for vehicles. Unfortunately both vehicle and pedestrian traffic continues to grow and there are now pedestrian 'choke points' when cars are parked on both sides of the street where there are also blocked sidewalks. This situation forces pedestrians to walk on the road and compete with autos, where there is already insufficient space for two cars to pass simultaneously. This matter was brought to the Councils' attention a few weeks ago, and residents attended 3 MCC meetings to voice their concerns. Council members Dieguez and Olson met with several local residents on site, including some who had mobility issues.

Ave Portola

One example of pedestrians feeling their lives are at risk on EG roads is on Ave Portola between Palma and Francisco streets. This street has a spring that creates a moss-filled irregular drainage ditch/gutter on the west side of the road year around. It is filled with slippery algae. There is almost a clear sidewalk from Francisco St. to the Post Office, except for blocked sidewalks fronting 3 houses on this portion of Avenue Portola. *[Previously there were two other blockages to the sidewalk, but those homeowners responded to neighborhood requests by clearing vegetation and/or moving planter boxes off of the walkway].*

Ave. Portola, in contrast with surrounding EG streets, is wider and has a partially straight gradual downhill stretch of road on the way to the Post Office *[Much of EG does not have mail delivery, so the PO is a mandatory visit].* Nearby streets are either: a) curvy and narrower, b) not the most direct route to the P.O., and/or c) humped like the Big Dipper Roller Coaster, where the driver cannot see the road below the hump. As a result, drivers are more frequent, and faster, on this preferred stretch of road.

Pictures of two examples of sidewalk blockages are attached:

A. 305 Ave Portola (Attachment 1)

This homeowner started their encroachment of the sidewalk with a 6ft high fence that overlaps on the first foot of the public sidewalk right of way. There is also supposed to be a survey to make sure that the fence does not encroach on the right of way. Did the County approve this encroachment, or has it not yet inspected here? Then the owner planted trees, put succulents underfoot, and built rock piles. Slowly these plants made the sidewalk difficult to pass. And the rocks are an obvious tripping hazard.

B. 339 Ave Portola (Attachment 2)

This homeowner built a stone retaining wall over an uncracked, concrete sidewalk.

When delivery trucks (which are increasingly frequent since the Pandemic) or cars park on Portola, pedestrians are forced to walk even further into the road to get around the sidewalk obstructions. Several elderly have slipped and slid to their knees in the moss filled gutter trying to scamper from the street to avoid passing vehicles. A disabled vet also reported having trouble being quick enough to avoid vehicles when forced to walk on the street – especially the new silent electric varieties. Another resident stated she had slipped on the

mossy drainage ditch when forced to leave the sidewalk and had badly sprained her ankle.

County Role

Is there a county process for enforcing code that forbids blocking sidewalks, especially non-developed sidewalks; that is, areas between lots and streets that were never built of concrete? What guidance dictates the situations where the County must act, either to physically remedy safety hazards and/or to compel property owners to do so?

One resident complains that 18 months has elapsed without action on a sidewalk obstruction complaint filed by 5 residents. *[First email to Scott Burklin of DPW with pictures was March 01, 2019]*

Khoa Vo has provided the following information regarding construction and maintenance of sidewalks and curbs, to begin a dialog explaining the complexities of this situation:

Construction of Sidewalks and Curbs and Maintenance of Sidewalks are identified in these sections from the CA Streets and Highway Code:

Division 7, Part 3, Chapter 22 – Maintenance of Sidewalks (Chapter 22 added by Stats. 1941, Ch. 79.)

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayexpandedbranch.xhtml?tocCode=SHC&division=7.&title=&part=3.&chapter=22.&article=

Division 7, Part 3, Chapter 27 – Construction of Sidewalks and Curbs (Chapter 27 added by Stats. 1945, Ch. 1339)

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayexpandedbranch.xhtml?tocCode=SHC&division=7.&title=&part=3.&chapter=27.&article=

Assessment for the construction cost of sidewalks and curbs are shown in Section 5879.1.

Attachments:

1. **305 Ave Portola**
2. **339 Ave Portola**





