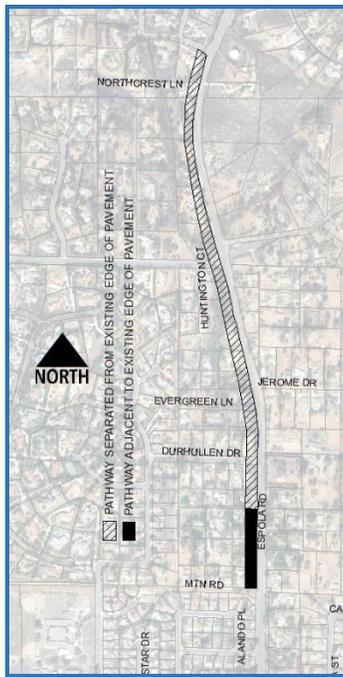




Espola Road Safety Improvement Project

Frequently Asked Questions



What is this project?

The Espola Road Safety Improvement Project is a two-part project that will improve safety for those who walk, jog, cycle or ride horses along the stretch of Espola Road that falls between Poway High School and Twin Peaks Road.

Specifically, it targets the west side of Espola Road, from Mountain Road (just north of Twin Peaks Road) to Willow Ranch Road (about a block south of Titan Way, at the south end of Poway High School).

The first step is “undergrounding” utilities in the area. This means that the overhead powerlines and other equipment will be moved underground, aesthetically improving the road way and removing obstacles from the proposed pathway.

The second part of the project is creating a safe access by installing a decomposed granite (DG) pathway. The pathway will be generally set back from the main road and include a lodge-pole fence as a protective barrier.

Why are we doing this?

This stretch of Espola Road has been the subject of discussion for more than 25 years as it's one of the few sections that has not been upgraded along this widely-travelled corridor.

At one point, the City Council looked at – and rejected – the idea of widening it to a four-lane roadway. Staff later proposed a compromise: a three-lane roadway (a travel lane in each direction plus a continuous center left-turn lane) along with a list of other improvements that would relieve traffic, increase capacity of the existing roadway and improve safety for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists. City Council ultimately decided that while there wasn't a significant enough need to widen the road, the other safety improvements were needed.

Most of this section has no pathway, outside of a narrow dirt trail directly alongside the busy road. Pedestrians have to navigate uneven walkways, utility poles, street signs and more – all while keeping an eye on cars travelling at speeds of 45 miles per hour (and higher).

How much is this going to cost and how will it be paid for?

The current cost estimate including design, construction and right-of-way acquisition is approximately \$1.5 million. A general fund appropriation of \$2.4 million has been set aside for the project's design and construction.

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An underground utility district was created to use the approximately \$1.89 million in Rule 20A funds available. These funds come from the rates paid by utility customers and distributed annually by SDG&E to jurisdictions to pay for undergrounding projects. Because this doesn't cover undergrounding the entire section between Twin Peaks and Titan Way, City Council directed staff to use a portion of the City's surplus revenues to form an additional underground utility district. The estimated additional cost that it would need to complete the project is \$2.6 million.

Will this project improve traffic?

The Espola Road Safety Improvement Project will not impact the current road – it will stay as is. The Poway City Council's commitment to this is so strong that in October 2013 the council went on record with a resolution confirming that it does not intend to widen Espola Road.

But even though this project doesn't target widening the road to accommodate more cars, it's still expected to have a positive impact on traffic – especially when congestion is at its worst. More than 2,400 students attend Poway High and this road is the only route to and from school for a significant portion of neighborhoods within its boundaries.

Constructing a pedestrian-friendly pathway will likely result in more students walking or biking to school, which in turn will reduce the number of cars on the road during peak times.

What impact will this have on the residents living along this stretch of road?

Espola Road is an essential corridor between the southeastern portion of Poway and areas to the north. Creating safe access along a stretch of road that was built long before Poway incorporated is not without its challenges.

The existing right-of-way doesn't always provide the needed area for the project. The City will need to acquire strips of land adjacent to the road from some property owners in order for the pathway to be built.

Construction will impact the current landscape. A few trees that exist in the area of the new pathway have been identified for removal. There are walls, utility poles, signs and other impairments that will need to be moved as well.

As with any plan that impacts a neighborhood while enhancing the community at large, there were significant variations and points of view to consider. After thoughtful consideration, the council determined this alternative to provide the balance needed between progress and preservation. Its open, natural design mirrors the "City in the Country" tone of the community while ensuring for the safety of those who travel this road.

For more information, see the [Capital Improvements](#) section of the City of Poway website (poway.org).