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Green Valley Road opens new lanes to alleviate traffic

By: Cheri March

It took five years, but traffic is finally buzzing--albeit a bit more quietly--up and down all four lanes of Green Valley Road.

Green Valley's makeover from two lanes to four divided lanes is just one of a series of key projects meant to relieve growing traffic woes in El Dorado Hills. But this particular project also served as a test.

County officials chose to use Rubberized Asphalt Concrete (RAC), the same material used on the American River Parkway bike trail. Tests show that RAC is up to 30 percent quieter than traditional asphalt concrete overlay.

"It sounds much quieter. If it lasts and it works well, we could foreseeably use it throughout the county," said El Dorado County Supervisor Rusty Dupray.

RAC boasts safety benefits as well.

"You'll really notice it in the rain," said Dupray. "It won't puddle or splash up a lot. When you leave the asphalt, you'll feel a big difference."

During rainy weather, water penetrates through the first layer of open-graded asphalt, but is whisked away from a second, densely graded layer. The process reduces spray and hydroplaning.

Paving of Green Valley Road was delayed this year as workers waited for temperatures to rise above 60 degrees, the magic number needed for the asphalt to set, explained John Kahling, supervising engineer for the Department of Transportation.

Overall, the project, which included a stoplight near Brown's Ravine, finished six weeks ahead of schedule and \$1 million under budget. The total cost was \$7 million.

Though a little more expensive, RAC so far "appears to last longer than traditional asphalt," Kahling said.

"Many of us remember being in non-stop traffic from Natoma to Francisco Drive. To say the least the current four lanes of GV is a welcome change -- a real pleasure," said Harriett Segel, who lives off Green Valley adding she'd been waiting over 10 years for the project.

Another bonus: RAC recycles waste tires from California landfills, said Dupray.

So what other improvements can El Dorado Hills drivers expect in the future?

There's the plan to realign El Dorado Hills Boulevard by adding a four-lane divided road north of Crown Drive to Francisco Drive.

Then there's the work to modify the El Dorado Hills Boulevard off-ramp and widen White Rock Road, projects that El Dorado Hills resident Alexis Moore is grateful to see underway.

"I believe all of the road work is long overdue," she said. "White Rock is one of the most dangerous roadways we have in El Dorado Hills."



Javier Pahuia, from left, Asunzio Guitierrez and Sergio Guitierrez smooth out asphalt placed on Serrano Parkway, one of the EDH roads getting much needed attention. Robert Scott/The Telegraph

As construction heats up on Blackstone, Lennar's 3,000-home planned community, Thomas Dodson, a manager at BSB Designs in the EDH Business Park, is eager to see Latrobe Road widened.

"We're on the south side of Latrobe, and on the north side they're building Blackstone," said Dodson. "At peak drive times, it gets pretty congested."

Dodson said he initially believed that road improvements would be made to accommodate new traffic, but now that Blackstone models are opening up and he hasn't seen any such changes, he's starting to worry.

"If they're not ahead of the game, they better get behind it real quick," he said, adding that he is only taking into account White Rock Road. The interchange at Highway 50 could also be a problem, he said.

"A lot of people work out here and, if they don't do something, I'm guessing hundreds, maybe thousands, will be impacted."

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