



MEMORANDUM REPORT

DATE: 08.19.2025

TO: Board of Commissioners of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District

FROM: Moody–El Monte Project Team,
Harmon, Field Manager
Eugenia Woods, Programs, Planning and Grants Manager

SUBJECT: Moody–El Monte Evacuation Route Maintenance Project Final Report

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the Moody–El Monte Evacuation Route Project Final Report.

BACKGROUND

The Los Altos Hills County Fire District (District or LAHCFD) 2023–2027 Strategic Plan Goals & Strategies, Strategic Goal 1: Prevention, Protection, Resiliency, aims to fund, develop, and maintain programs to protect life, property, and enhance safety to build a resilient community. Evacuation Route Hardening is a key initiative under this goal. Integrated Hazardous Fuel Reduction (IHFR) programs identified in the LAHCFD Chart of Services include Community-Focused Evacuation Route Hardening projects, which are based on fire science, the LAHCFD Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Annex 4, and the expenditures allocated in the annual District budget. IHFR projects are designed to enhance community resiliency, educate residents, and reduce community fire hazards.

The Moody- El Monte project area lies entirely within District boundaries and remains a priority route as originally outlined in the 2023 initial treatment determination. Currently it is necessary to perform hazardous fuel reduction maintenance following earlier full-treatment cycles to maintain safer roadside conditions. The objective was to maintain roadway clearance standards, reduce fine fuels and ladder fuels, improve driver sightlines, and ensure unobstructed emergency vehicle passage. Work was performed in compliance with District environmental policies, avoiding riparian zones and limiting treatment in sensitive habitats to measures directed by the District and in compliance with CEQA and biological surveys.

This project aligns with LAHCFD's strategic commitment to public safety by providing safer evacuation corridors, mitigating roadside ignition potential, and preserving emergency access under high-risk wildfire conditions.

DISCUSSION

The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCCFSC) served as the project manager for the Moody–El Monte Evacuation Route Project. The District provides this report and summary of costs for the project. The Moody–El Monte project was successful in meeting its primary goal of reducing hazardous roadside vegetation to improve public safety through enhanced evacuation readiness.

Scope of Work

The project involved trimming woody vegetation, weed whipping grasses and weeds adjacent to the road, removing dead or dying woody debris under 8 inches DBH, reducing ladder fuels around larger trees, and improving visibility at intersections and blind corners in accordance with Los Altos Hills Municipal Code Title 10-Zoning. Specific clearance measures included:

- Shrubs pruned to less than three feet in height at road level within intersection sight triangles.
- Tree limbs within these zones pruned to at least six feet above road surface.
- Vegetation cleared three feet around, and ten feet above, fire hydrants.

Project Site

The project treated approximately 15.5 miles total (both sides combined) along seven interconnected road segments:

- Moody Road
- Tepa Way
- Summit Wood Road
- La Loma Drive
- Prospect Avenue
- Stonebrook Drive
- El Monte Road, including the I-280 Cloverleaf interchange

The western limit began at Moody Road & Page Mill Road (37.360812, -122.170053), progressing southeast to Foothill College, and ending at Summerhill Avenue & El Monte Road (37.365639, -122.115522).

Permissions & Public Outreach

ROE (Right of Entry) acquisition required significant outreach, including mailers, social media posts, and door-to-door engagement. Out of 184 parcels, ROEs were secured for 16 priority

parcels, strategically selected for their hazard reduction value and visibility along the route. LAHCFD and SCCFSC staff conducted in-person outreach two weeks prior to project start to maximize participation.

Environmental Precautions

A biological survey was completed on May 26, 2025, by Dudek, before work commenced. Sensitive habitats, active bird nests, and woodrat nests were flagged for avoidance. Heritage trees were excluded from treatment. A 25-foot buffer was maintained along seasonal waterways.

Operations & Traffic Control

The project ran from Monday, June 9, 2025, through Thursday, June 26, 2025, with 13 total operational days and no red flag weather events. Denali Tree Service performed vegetation removal with a crew of 13 led by a foreman, supported by SCCFSC and LAHCFD field staff. City Rise Safety implemented the Traffic Control Plan, initially providing five personnel, then increasing to six per day for safe management of commuter traffic, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Each operational day began with a joint safety briefing led by SCCFSC and LAHCFD, covering PPE, traffic safety, environmental hazards, weather, and emergency procedures. Lane closures on I-280 and adjacent roads were coordinated with Caltrans and reopened daily after work completion.

Challenges

The most significant challenge encountered was navigating the dynamic learning curve associated with working on an active interstate under Caltrans jurisdiction. Requirements for daily lane closure call-ins, coupled with restricted work hours, imposed by interstate traffic patterns, significantly slowed production rates and necessitated adjustments to daily work sequencing. Coordinating traffic control operations within these parameters required ongoing communication between LAHCFD, SCCFSC, Caltrans, and the traffic control vendor to maintain both productivity and safety.

Additionally, limited ROE participation required adaptive treatment strategies and prioritization of accessible parcels to maintain continuity of the evacuation route. Pre-existing wood chip piles within the project area were identified during field operations and left in place pending District direction.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS and EXPENSES

The Moody–El Monte Evacuation Route Project produced measurable improvements to public safety by reducing hazardous vegetation along a combined **25.2 miles** of roadway shoulders (both sides of the road).

Treatment Summary

- **Total treated distance:** 25.20 linear miles (combining phases 1 & 2)
- **Average treatment depth:** 15–30 feet from roadway edge; extended to 50 feet on ROE parcels where conditions warranted
- **Total acres treated:** 45.81 acres
- **Operational days:** 13
- **Daily production average:** 1.94 miles or 3.52 acres per day
- **Primary fuel type removed:** Fine fuels, ladder fuels, and hazardous roadside overgrowth
- **Notable vegetation removed:** Dead/diseased woody debris <8" DBH, invasive plants, encroaching branches, and obstructive shrubs in visibility triangles

Mileage Calculation Note

The reported 25.20 miles treated includes the I-280/El Monte Road interchange, where vegetation management required full-area treatment rather than traditional linear roadside clearing. Treatment in this area was measured in acreage and converted to an equivalent mileage figure to maintain consistency in reporting across District projects.

Volume Treatment Chart

PROJECT WORK TRACKER									
Moody - El Monte									
Total Weeks	Total Days	Treatment Dates	Totals for the Treated Area Per Day			Acreage Information Totals	Cubic Yards	Notes	
1	1	Monday, June 9, 2025	1.44	7578.57	15.00	113678.55	2.61	35.37	Phase 1 started
	2	Tuesday, June 10, 2025	1.43	7562.45	15.00	113436.75	2.60	35.29	
	3	Wednesday, June 11, 2025	2.20	11624.76	15.00	174371.40	4.00	54.25	
	4	Thursday, June 12, 2025	1.56	8249.25	15.00	123738.75	2.84	38.50	
	5	Friday, June 13, 2025	2.13	11249.58	15.00	168743.70	3.87	52.50	
			8.76	46264.61	<-- Weekly Totals -->	639369.15	15.93	215.91	
2	6	Monday, June 16, 2025	1.36	7170.48	15.00	107597.20	2.47	33.46	Phase 1 Completed Phase 2 Started
	7	Tuesday, June 17, 2025	1.81	9563.64	15.00	143544.60	3.30	44.66	
	8	Wednesday, June 18, 2025	2.97	15660.08	15.00	234901.27	5.39	73.08	
	9	Thursday, June 19, 2025	2.85	15039.60	15.00	225593.97	5.18	70.19	
	10	Friday, June 20, 2025	3.31	17457.41	15.00	261861.19	6.01	81.47	
			12.29	64897.22	<-- Weekly Totals -->	973458.23	22.35	302.85	
3	Off	Monday, June 23, 2025							
	11	Tuesday, June 24, 2025	0.88	4624.35	15.00	69365.25	1.59	21.58	
	12	Wednesday, June 25, 2025	2.35	12414.14	15.00	186212.11	4.27	57.93	
	13	Thursday, June 26, 2025	0.92	4834.72	15.00	72520.78	1.66	22.56	
	Off	Friday, June 27, 2025							
			4.14	21873.21	<-- Weekly Totals -->	328038.14	7.53	102.07	
			25.20	133035.03		1995525.52	45.81	620.83	
Average Linear Miles Treated Per Day			Average Linear Footage Treated Per Day		Average Square Footage Treated Per Day		Average Square Acreage Treated Per Day	Average Cubic Yards Per Day	
2.11			1116.18		133035.03		3.05	51.88	

Expenses

Moody - El Monte Evacuation Route				
Project Cost Breakdown				
Service Description	Contractor	Completed	Amount	Notes
IHFR Project Management	SCCFSC	Feb - June 2025	18,348.84	
Personnel Mileage	SCCFSC	Jun-25	1,009.75	\$807.80 + 25% uplift
Project Supplies	SCCFSC	Jun-25	57.81	Printing = \$46.23 + 25% uplift
Project Supplies Reimbursement (LAHCFD)	Credit Card Purchase	Feb-25	52.50	NOE
Traffic Control Plan	City Rise	Mar-25	8,680.00	\$7,750 + 12% uplift
Traffic Control Contractor	City Rise	Jun-25	75,357.23	\$64,599.50 Traffic Contr + \$2683.74 Signage + 12% uplift
Fuel Reduction	Denali	Jun-25	187,420.80	\$167,340 + 12% uplift
Biological Survey	Dudek	Jun-25	5,628.28	\$5025.25 + 12% uplift
Postcard, Cover Letters, & ROE Mailers	Folgers Graphics	May - June 2025	1,636.23	
Pre-Project UAS Flyover/Data	Jackson Ricketts	Feb-25	5,675.00	Two advance flyovers (2/15/25 & 2/28/25)
Post-Project UAS Flyover/Data	Jackson Ricketts	Jul-25	6,900.00	
Total Project Cost			310,766.44	

SUCSESSES

The Moody–El Monte Evacuation Route Project achieved its objectives safely, efficiently, and in full compliance with District environmental and operational standards.

- **Zero incidents:** The project was completed without injuries, traffic accidents, or safety violations, despite the complexity of working within Caltrans right-of-way and high-volume commuter corridors.
- **Effective traffic control integration:** The Traffic Control Plan, coordinated between City Rise Safety/BATS, Caltrans, SCCFSC, and LAHCFD, ensured worker, cyclist, and public safety. Adaptive adjustments, including increased personnel on high-traffic days, maintained safe and productive operations.
- **Operational coordination:** Daily safety briefings brought together contractors, traffic control staff, SCCFSC, and LAHCFD to review work zones, environmental precautions, and traffic management needs.
- **Advanced aerial imaging:** Jackson’s Drones captured before-and-after imagery, provided quantitative vegetation metrics, and verified treatment completion, improving accountability and long-term maintenance planning.
- **Strategic environmental protection:** Sensitive habitats identified during the pre-project biological survey were clearly flagged and avoided. Riparian buffers were respected, and heritage trees remained untouched.
- **Community relations:** Field staff maintained positive interactions with residents, answering questions and explaining project objectives during door-to-door outreach and spontaneous encounters along the route.

- **Complex site execution:** The I-280/El Monte interchange was fully treated despite its irregular geometry and traffic constraints, requiring innovative sequencing and measurement methods to capture production accurately.

The safe and timely completion of this project strengthens LAHCFD's Integrated Hazardous Fuel Reduction program and enhances the operational readiness of one of the District's most critical evacuation routes.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

LAHCFD staff promoted the Moody–El Monte Evacuation Route Project through coordinated outreach efforts designed to inform residents, road users, and stakeholders well in advance of work commencement.

- **May 19, 2025: Mailers distributed:** Letters were sent to all property owners along the project route, explaining the project's objectives, anticipated start dates, and the process for granting Right-of-Entry (ROE) permissions.
- **May 21–23, 2025: Sandwich board signage posted:** Project notification signs were placed at key entry points along Moody Road and El Monte Road, alerting motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians to the upcoming work.
- **May 27–29, 2025: Door-to-door engagement:** LAHCFD and SCCFSC staff conducted in-person outreach to residents, discussing the project, addressing concerns, and securing ROEs for priority parcels.
- **June 3, 2025: Media release:** A press release was issued to local media outlets and partner agencies, providing details on project scope, anticipated schedule, and the public safety benefits of the work.
- **On May 27, 2025: Changeable Message Sign (CMS):** was placed at the intersection of El Monte Road and Foothill Expressway to notify motorists of the upcoming Moody–El Monte Evacuation Route Project. The CMS provided advance warning of potential traffic delays, raised public awareness of the vegetation management work, and complemented other outreach measures such as mailers, signage, and door-to-door engagement.
- **Week of June 9, 2025: Digital promotion:** The project was featured on the LAHCFD website and SCCFSC social media platforms, reaching residents and regional users of the evacuation route.
- **June 9–26, 2025: On-site communication:** During active field operations, LAHCFD and SCCFSC personnel engaged with residents, cyclists, and other passersby, answering questions and sharing information about the project and other District programs.
- **Stakeholder coordination throughout project:** The District worked closely with Caltrans, County Roads & Airports, the Town of Los Altos Hills, and Foothill College to ensure safe traffic flow, minimize impacts, and align the Traffic Control Plan with operational needs.

Community feedback was positive, with multiple residents noting improved visibility and roadway clearance, and expressing appreciation for the proactive maintenance of this critical evacuation corridor.

INSIGHTS / LESSONS LEARNED

The Moody–El Monte Evacuation Route Project provided several operational insights that will help refine future evacuation route treatments, particularly those involving state highway interchanges and multiple jurisdictional partners.

- **Caltrans coordination is critical.** The I-280/El Monte Road interchange required daily lane closure call-ins and adherence to limited work-hour windows. This constraint significantly slowed productivity and required adaptive scheduling. Future projects involving Caltrans right-of-way should begin traffic control coordination earlier in the planning phase to allow more flexibility.
- **ROE acquisition remains a limiting factor.** Despite targeted outreach from May 19–29, 2025, only 16 of 184 parcels provided ROE access. Early identification of strategic parcels, combined with community meetings prior to ROE mail-outs, could improve participation.
- **Pre-project biological surveys help prevent delays.** The May 26, 2025, survey allowed contractors to work without unplanned stoppages for environmental compliance, and pre-flagged sensitive areas reduced the risk of inadvertent habitat disturbance.
- **Traffic Control Plan distribution must be verified.** On the first operational day (June 9, 2025), it became clear that the field crew supervisor had not been fully briefed on the moving work area and multiple driveway crossings. The District has implemented a policy requiring a direct pre-project briefing between the project manager and traffic control field supervisor for every project.
- **Complex geometry requires flexible measurement methods.** Treatment at the interchange could not be captured accurately using linear measurements alone. Area-based calculations, converted to mileage equivalents, provided a more accurate representation of production.
- **Adaptive staffing and equipment resources improve resilience.** While no significant delays occurred, having additional crew members and a second chipper available provided a safeguard against equipment breakdowns or unforeseen labor shortages.
- **On-site engagement builds community trust.** Spontaneous conversations with residents, cyclists, and pedestrians during the June 9–26 operational period fostered understanding of the project’s public safety value and promoted participation in other District programs.

NOTE OF APPRECIATION

The Los Altos Hills County Fire District extends its sincere appreciation to all agencies, contractors, and community members whose collaboration contributed to the successful completion of the Moody–El Monte Evacuation Route Maintenance Project.

Special recognition is given to:

- **Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCCFSC):** Project management and coordination, ensuring that operational, environmental, and community engagement goals were met.
- **Denali Tree Service:** Professional execution of vegetation management under challenging traffic and site conditions.
- **City Rise Safety / Bay Area Traffic Solutions (BATS):** Implementation of a comprehensive Traffic Control Plan that safeguarded workers, motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians.
- **Jackson's Drones:** Aerial photography, treatment mapping, and quantitative vegetation metrics that improved project accountability and planning for future maintenance cycles.
- **Caltrans:** Cooperation in granting access to the I-280/El Monte Road interchange and coordinating daily lane closures.
- **County of Santa Clara – Roads & Airports Department** and **Town of Los Altos Hills:** Support in logistics, permitting, and operational coordination.
- **Foothill College:** Coordination to minimize traffic disruptions in the vicinity of the campus.
- **Residents and property owners:** Participation through granting Right-of-Entry permissions and providing feedback that enhanced the effectiveness of roadside treatment.

The District also acknowledges the dedication of its staff and field partners in adhering to safety standards, environmental protections, and the operational timeline. Their collective efforts have strengthened one of the community's most critical evacuation routes, improving life safety and wildfire resilience for years to come.

This concludes the District's final report:

Attachments include the SCCFSC final project report which includes before and after photos..



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FINAL REPORT **Moody - El Monte Evacuation Route**

July 11th, 2025

Introduction:

The Moody - El Monte Road in Los Altos Hills, California, represents a significant thoroughfare for the Los Altos Hills Community. This road is a primary means of egress and ingress in case of a fire. To secure this egress/ingress' integrity, Los Altos Hills County Fire District and Santa Clara County FireSafe Council proposed a roadside treatment of fuels.

Cooperators:

There were multiple agencies, contractors, property owners, and organizations that contributed to the project; Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council, Los Altos Hills County Fire District, Dudek, Denali Tree Service, BATS/City Rise Safety, the County of Santa Clara, and the Town of Los Altos Hills to name a few.

Goals For This Project:

1. Trim woody vegetation and weed whip grasses and weeds adjacent to the road.
2. Remove dead or dying woody debris of less than 8 inches DBH.
3. Reduce ladder fuels around larger trees.
4. Remove dead, diseased, or damaged trees smaller than 8 inches DBH posing a hazard.
5. At street corners where vegetation is thick and blocks visibility, trim and remove to meet standards of shrubs less than 3 feet high and trees limbed up to at least 6 feet above ground. Per Los Altos Hills Municipal Code Title 10-Zoning, "shrubs and plants shall be pruned to a height not to exceed three (3') feet above the road level at its nearest point in an area bounded by the center line of intersecting roads or easements for vehicular access, public or private and a straight line joining points on such center lines eighty (80') feet distant from their intersection. All side limbs of trees in such an area shall be pruned to a height of not less than six (6') feet above the road surface."
6. Clear all vegetation for three (3) feet around the circumference and ten (10) feet above fire hydrants. Advise property owners and the fire department of any other obstruction that cannot be mitigated.



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Project Site:

The Moody - El Monte Road evacuation route maintenance project treated multiple roads along the evacuation route.

The Moody - El Monte evacuation route project will treat seven (7) roads along the evacuation Route and will include Moody Road, Tepa Way, Summit Wood Road, La Loma Drive, Prospect Avenue, Stonebrook Drive, El Monte Road, and the I280 – El Monte Road Cloverleaf/Interchange.

The Western end of the project was at the intersection of Moody Road and Page Mill Road (37.360812, -122.170053). The project progressed south by southwest towards Foothills College. The Eastern end of the project was located at the intersection of Summerhill Avenue and El Monte Road. (37.365639, -122.115522).

Treatment of the Tepa Way (37.357273, -122.134789 to 37.355382, -122.132834) commenced before the intersection of Moody Road and El Monte Road. This route runs towards Summit Woods Road (37.355382, -122.132834 to 37.353662, - 122.131296) to La Loma Drive (37.353662, -122.131296 to 37.354473, - 122.127912), onto Prospect Avenue (37.354473, -122.127912 to 37.354133, - 122.121722) and ultimately to Stonebrook Drive (37.354137, -122.121745 to 37.3596813, - 122.1220280).

The length of road in the Phase 1 portion of the project area was approximately 5 miles heading south by southeast on Moody Road and 5.3 miles heading north by northeast on El Monte Road and Summerhill and 2.6 miles onto the I280 Cloverfields from Phase 2 of the project. The total treatment available was approximately 15.5 miles for both sides of the road.

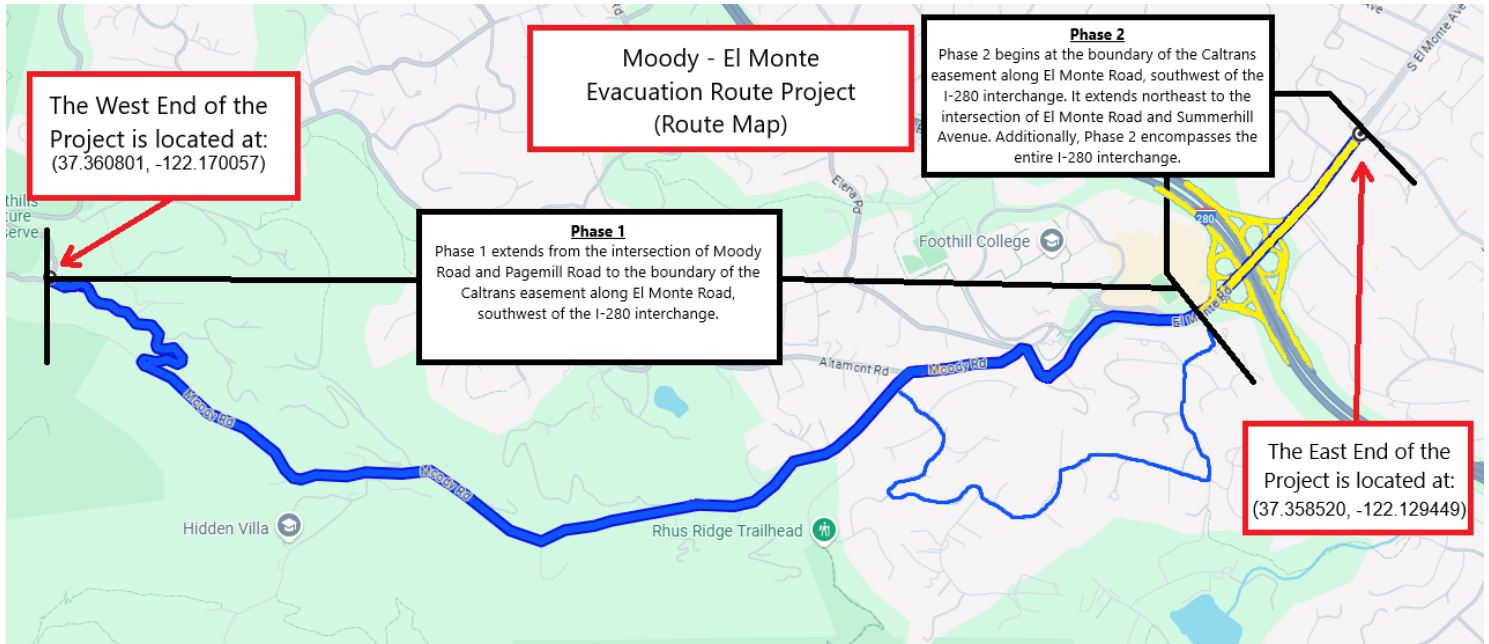


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Moody - El Monte Evacuation Route Project Map



Permissions:



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One of the biggest challenges in these types of projects is getting permission to treat the properties. During planning of the project we conducted an extensive public outreach effort to get the permissions needed. It included mailers, newspaper articles, door-to-door visits, and a social media campaign. We were able to include 16 of the 184 parcels involved. Prior to the project, LAHCFD staff conducted a survey of the area to identify key parcels within the project scope. SCCFSC's timeframe for ROE forms to be returned was 14 days with a due date of May 23, 2025. LAHCFD and SCCFSC Staff went out to conduct door knocking 2 weeks prior to project start date.

Biological Precautions:

As with all of our projects, protecting the biodiversity of the area is a high priority. A Biological Survey was conducted on May 26, 2025, by Dudek, 7 days before the project started. The biologist identified and flagged wood rats nests, active birds nests, and any habitat within the treatable area. The biological review was completed within the nesting season. Heritage trees were identified during the field verification stage and were not included in the work plan. Finally, a buffer of 25 feet was implemented along stream beds and seasonal waterways.

Project Duration:

The project started on Monday June 9, 2025 and was completed on Thursday June 26, 2025. A total of 13 Days. We encountered 0 red flag days.

Jurisdictions And Funders Involved:

Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council, Los Altos Hills County Fire District, Santa Clara County, County Roads and Airports, and Town of Los Altos Hills.



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Contractors Selected:

Dudek was selected for this project due to availability and competitiveness of the bid.

Denali Tree Service was selected due to their availability, familiarity with evacuation route projects within SCCFSC, commitment to self and public safety, and ability to complete the project within the requested time frame.

BATS/City Rise Safety provided a traffic control plan and provided six flaggers and traffic control for project duration.



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Project Photos





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By The Numbers:

- Area treated – 5.11 miles total area treated for both sides were treated during this project. Most of which was treated 15 to 30 feet from the edge of the road unless marked for riparian area. On ROE properties treatment extended 30-50 feet from the edge of the road if needed. The daily average was 1.2 miles per day.
- Acres treated = 12.39 acres with an average of 2.48 acres treated per day.
- No poison oak was treated during this project.
- 5 days of treatment on the project itself was carried out by Denali Tree Service.

We overcame many challenges to complete this critical part of growing the evacuation route and vegetation treatment system in Santa Clara County. This project also supports goals in the LAHCFD CWPP annex as well as the overall Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution made by Denali Tree Service, Dudek, and BATS/City Rise Safety. All entities were committed to assisting Santa Clara County FireSafe Council with the project from start to finish.

Bats/City Rise Safety provided five traffic control personnel on the first day and then provided six personnel the remaining four days to make sure that the work could be done in a safe manner. All roads worked on are commuter roads with multiple driveways, high bike and foot traffic routes; the additional traffic control personnel was necessary for the safety of the tree crews, SCCFSC staff, LAHCFD staff, general traffic, and bicyclists in the Los Altos Hills area. I'm happy to report, with BATS/City Rise Safety, traffic control coverage and the safe working practices of Denali Tree Service, we were able to finish the project with no reported injuries or incident reports. In addition to that, Los Altos Hills County Fire District granted permission for the project crew to use their parcel for a staging area.

Safety briefings were held by the safety officers, Ryan Cronin and Barbara Gonzalez each morning before start of work to discuss traffic control, personal protective equipment (PPE), local emergency services, environmental hazards, and weather conditions.

We would like to thank all the cooperators and property owners for all their support. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to direct them to:



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