

Wood St. Information Sharing Q&A

If Caltrans is given an understanding of the top priorities of all stakeholders, this will make it easier to prioritize – emphasizing that while not all requests can be granted or possible due to current laws and policies, they will be taken under thoughtful consideration.

Long term plans have not been finalized. Caltrans continues to listen to all stakeholders throughout the process.

[Gov. Newsom announced \\$12 billion to resolve encampments, how much of that money does Caltrans receive?](#)

Money to Caltrans, \$1.1 billion, is projected for Clean California for litter pickup and beautification projects, job creation for the Service Assistant Maintenance positions, approximately 700 jobs over three years in Caltrans Bay Area.

Most of the funding is directed to local governments to address encampments. Much of the funding will go to create more living space and provide mental health resources for people who are currently living unhoused.

Caltrans understands that the primary solutions to improve conditions for people experiencing homelessness is permanent housing, mental/behavioral health care, and addiction services. Caltrans, by virtue of funding and legal authority, cannot not provide any of the solutions and must address the impact of displacing people once immediate safety issues exist, after assessment by Maintenance staff, who follow statewide guidance. Some safety issues require moving people from certain areas.

[I've been living at Wood Street for years why is Caltrans closing encampments during the pandemic?](#)

Increased safety issues is the simple answer.

Since March 2020, Caltrans decreased encampment closures due to guidance from Centers for Disease and Prevention. In Spring 2020, Oakland Fire Department personnel identified access to Wood Street was blocked by people experiencing homelessness. Oakland Fire's lack of access presented a risk of incurring a "Ghost ship" type of disaster if a fire were to occur, with threat to life and infrastructure being of great concern.

In June 2020, Caltrans worked with City of Oakland Continuum of Care, to close encampments in Phase 1 to reduce fire risk, fuel load of abandoned vehicles and debris.

In Spring 2021, encampments began to re-establish in Phase 1 after *Cannabis Collective* moved into Phase 1 during November 2020. To prevent a wall being constructed and to address cars being set on fire, Caltrans worked with the City of Oakland Continuum of Care by requesting services and emergency housing were offered, ahead of Caltrans Bay Area closing all encampments therein. In April 2021, Caltrans Bay Area began a construction project to set up barrier to prevent any vehicle entry.

[I want to stay on the land at Wood Street, how can I do that legally?](#)

The current conditions at Wood Street are untenable and contrary to Caltrans property being to Caltrans property being used for transportation purposes. This site is not suitable for leasing.

For a suitable site made available for leasing, the City of Oakland or Alameda County must be willing to lease and would need to lead the process based on the rules. Shelters on Caltrans property through [Executive Order N 23-20](#) must be an organized and staffed facility, not a “sanctioned encampment”. First, a city must meet the State of California’s requirements of shelter leasing. [California Streets and Highways Code Section 104.30](#) sets forth the requirements.

- \$20 million in insurance
- 24-hour security
- Onsite services – Porta-potties, water, power
- If Federal or State Highway, environmental review requirements must be met
- Engineering drawing of proposed shelter plan for review and approval

[Why isn’t Wood Street being considered for a shelter site?](#)

Two primary reasons exist to make Wood St. not a suitable site for shelter site. First, a significant portion of Wood St. is under the freeway dripline and not suitable as a shelter site pursuant to SHC Section 104.30 (3)(2). Second, there is limited access into the Wood Street parcel. Wood St is bordered by private property.

[I’ve lived at Wood Street for over 5 years, why don’t I have adverse possession rights?](#)

Lands owned by the State of California are not subject to adverse possession.

[It makes sense to place my encampment under a structure to provide some protection from the elements why is this a problem?](#)

The law does not permit it. A shelter cannot be installed under a bridge, only open space away from a bridge SHC Section 104.30 (3)(2) “Any improvements of a temporary nature in which people live, eat, recreate, receive services, or otherwise occupy shall not be underneath a

transportation structure, and shall not be within 20 horizontal feet from the farthest edge of a transportation structure.”

I need shelter, why can't I build a structure on Caltrans property?

Structures must be permitted and meet building codes. None of the existing structures at Wood St. meet this requirement including the cob houses and the tiny homes. Important to add that structures that meet applicable building codes must be used for shelter. Prior to any construction, designs must be submitted, reviewed, and approved with an encroachment permit issued together with airspace lease execution and CEQA/NEPA compliance.

Why can't a non-profit or other entity like an individual access land under EON 23-20?

Legislation that controls [Caltrans Street and Highways Code 104.30](#) only allows Caltrans to offer land to state and local agencies. “The department may offer the airspace or real property for lease to a local or state agency for the purpose of conducting a temporary emergency shelter or feeding program. For purposes of this section, “local agency” means a city, county, or political subdivision of a city or county. To propose changes to existing laws or create new legislation, people are encouraged to reach out to their elected officials- Caltrans does not author legislation.

What is Caltrans doing to hire unhoused?

Caltrans is eager to hire qualified unhoused and housed community members, veterans, students, at-risk youth, people with justice system histories (incarceration, probation, parole).

Caltrans hosted a hiring event in August 2020, in Oakland at Laney College and is participating with 30 employers and Alameda County for a job fair at the Oakland Coliseum on December 2, 2021.

Caltrans has provided job application assistance through Operation Dignity to assist people experiencing homelessness.

I'd like to plant trees, what do I need to do?

- Join Adopt-A-Highway – in addition to maintaining sections of roadside with CA Highway System, participation can include planting and establishing trees.
- Visit Adopt-A-Highway website and identify site location for availability.
- To learn more about the Adopt-A-Highway program, visit [Adopt a Highway](#). To contact the District 4 program, email [Michael Jevicky](#).
- New planting requires recycled water for irrigation. EBMUD would have to be involved.

- Those wanting to plant trees should note that due to drought existing trees are struggling. If AAH is abandoned, then Caltrans would need to maintain any plantings.

What is Caltrans doing to address air quality in West Oakland?

Caltrans is currently participating as a member in the implementation of the West Oakland Community Action Plan to reduce emissions in this neighborhood.

Why doesn't Caltrans hire housing advocates or unhoused to perform outreach to talk directly to people?

Caltrans does not perform outreach and does not have any resources to offer for people experiencing homelessness but engages with Continuum of Care with City of Oakland and Alameda County. If individuals want to improve outreach and communication with unhoused, they should reach out for volunteer or employment opportunities with City of Oakland and Alameda County or one of the non-profits that support shelter sites, i.e. Operation Dignity, Roots, Homeless Action Center.

Caltrans is aware that there is a need for increased outreach due to number of encampments even if housing is yet available. Due to staff limitations, some continuums of care are reluctant to perform outreach without offers of housing. More staff may allow for continued outreach to bring resources to where people are.

Why can't unhoused or housing advocates sit on committee to be part of process for encampment closures?

Caltrans' maintenance staff identifies safety issues based on their training and experience with Caltrans facilities and maintenance standards. To mitigate the impact of displacement, Caltrans partners with Continuum of Care for perform outreach to offer services and housing options. To improve the process, Caltrans recommends people reach out to Continuum of Care to become part of their process to address outreach more closely to people experiencing homelessness and improve their outcomes.

Can Caltrans go to encampments to hire?

Caltrans wants to engage with people experiencing homelessness and continue to provide job application assistance with Operation Dignity. Caltrans is concerned about equity going to encampments, Caltrans would like to focus on assisting people experiencing homeless through effective outreach to communicate about upcoming hiring events and job postings for Service Assistance Maintenance positions.

How can I find out where the property lines are along Wood St.

Please use this link to identify property lines: [Caltrans D4 Maps on Demand](#)

Do I speak to Caltrans about street calming along Frontage Road?

No, Frontage Road is part of City of Oakland right of way and not Caltrans. For any traffic improvements, Caltrans recommends individuals engage with their District city councilmember and Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) through 311 regarding any "street-calming" proposal involving a request for K-rail from Caltrans.

Why doesn't Caltrans publish a schedule for encampment closures?

Here are some of the factors contributing to the difficulty of publishing an encampment closure schedule for 48-hour notice due to *Sanchez* decision in Oakland, Berkeley, and Emeryville, – 72-hour notice in other areas:

- Encampment closures are largely driven by safety concerns, and these tend to arise quickly and demand a quick response.
- Exact timing may not be known until shortly before maintenance personnel are assembled. Caltrans must go through a series of steps, complete a series of actions, and receive a series of approvals to perform an encampment closure.

What is the process for identifying encampment closures during pandemic?

Assessments are made as to the level of priority, based upon safety concerns. In critical circumstances where encampments pose imminent threats to safety or infrastructure and must be immediately resolved upon discovery similar to a Red Tag notice to evacuate due to inhabitability (Priority Level 1), Caltrans always attempts to first pursue engagement by local outreach unless emergency response functions are impeded.

Who are Agency contacts?

- **Caltrans** has 3 ways to report litter, potholes, and other concerns. To file a Customer Service Request, visit <https://csr.dot.ca.gov>. The Customer Service Request system is the most efficient and generates a ticket number which is emailed to you.
- Members of the community can also contact Caltrans at via [e-mail](#) or call (510)286-4444
- **City of Oakland:** For urgent issues involving illegal waste, dumping and related issues, from within the City of Oakland, call 311 or (510)615-5566.
- **Union Pacific:** UP Emergencies: 1-888-877-7267

- **Burlington Northern:** 1-800-832-5452
- **Capitol Corridor:** 1-877-974-3322