



Perris Press Release

Contact: Joe Vargo, Perris Public Information Officer
Phone: 951-956-2120
jvargo@cityofperris.org

Ramona Expressway Transformation Nearly Complete

Work crews using a large crane recently lowered palm trees into the Ramona Expressway median in north Perris, continuing a two-year transformation of the City's major east-west traffic arterial.

Since 2009, upgrades along Ramona Expressway have included widening the roadway in each direction between Perris Boulevard and Evans Road, repaving portions of the roadway, adding drought resistant landscaping and rockscape, synchronizing traffic lights to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and completing turn pockets to facilitate traffic flow.

Other improvements include installing a pedestrian and bicycle lane along a portion of the thoroughfare.

The planting of 28 palm trees is the latest improvement on Ramona, but not the last. City officials say 21 Palo Verde trees soon will be planted along the roadway.

The new landscaping is beautiful but drought resistant and City officials says that maintaining the new plants, trees and grasses will cost about half of previously planted ground cover.

Work on the most recent round of improvements is about \$1 million, which was paid for by designated funds specifically for such purposes.

Future work also includes a new intersection at I-215 and Ramona Expressway which should greatly reduce backups on exit ramps from the freeway to Ramona. Construction is slated to begin in October or November.

Ramona Expressway is the most heavily traveled east-west roadway in Perris, carrying about 150,000 vehicles a day. After Perris Boulevard, it is the most heavily used roadway in the City.

Perris elected officials say their commitment to making Ramona Expressway safe and eye-pleasing dates back more than a decade. Motorists who travel through Perris say the road often provides visitors with their first impression of the City. So it must look good.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch said he can't wait for work on the new Ramona/I-215 interchange to begin. The freeway entrances often are backed up onto the freeway, creating potential traffic accidents.

"We've been working on this for a long time and are glad to see that it is finally arriving," Mayor Busch said of the new interchange. "The new landscaping really looks good. It is a big improvement that is making our City look good."

Perris City Councilman Al Landers said improving Ramona Expressway is personal for him and has been for much of the 16 years he has served on the City Council. His son-in-law was fatally injured when he was struck while walking along the side of the roadway. Landers said as a result of the tragedy, he became determined to improve the lighting, safety and aesthetics on the roadway. He said Perris officials worked with the Southern California Fair to install landscaping along Ramona Expressway and entrance to the Lake Perris State Recreation Area, creating a win-win situation for both agencies.

"One of the things that I am most proud of is that Perris is an aggressive and progressive City," Landers said. "We are committed to making Perris a place that people can take pride in. It's a beautiful place and it's making us proud. We are making Fred T. Perris and all the forefathers who built this City proud."

City Councilwoman Rita Rogers said the improvements along Ramona Expressway—ongoing despite a sluggish economy—shows the City of Perris is resilient and determined to improve.

"It is a well-traveled road, therefore it is a destination within the City of Perris," Rogers said. "The improvements along Ramona Expressway are fantastic. In spite of the economy, we continue to move forward. We are a city on the move."

City Councilman Mark Yarbrough said improvements along Ramona Expressway are earning kudos from Perris residents who left town and returned years later. He said a friend of his, who grew up in Perris and came back 20 years later, commented on how good the City looks.

Yarbrough credited City staff with keeping Perris moving forward during difficult economic times.

"We have come a long way," he said. "We know what we have to do to maintain that forward momentum. We are still moving forward."



Work crews using a backhoe prepare to install palm trees along Ramona Expressway in Perris. The thoroughfare has undergone substantial improvements in the last two years.



A crane lowers a palm tree into position for planting along Ramona Expressway in Perris.