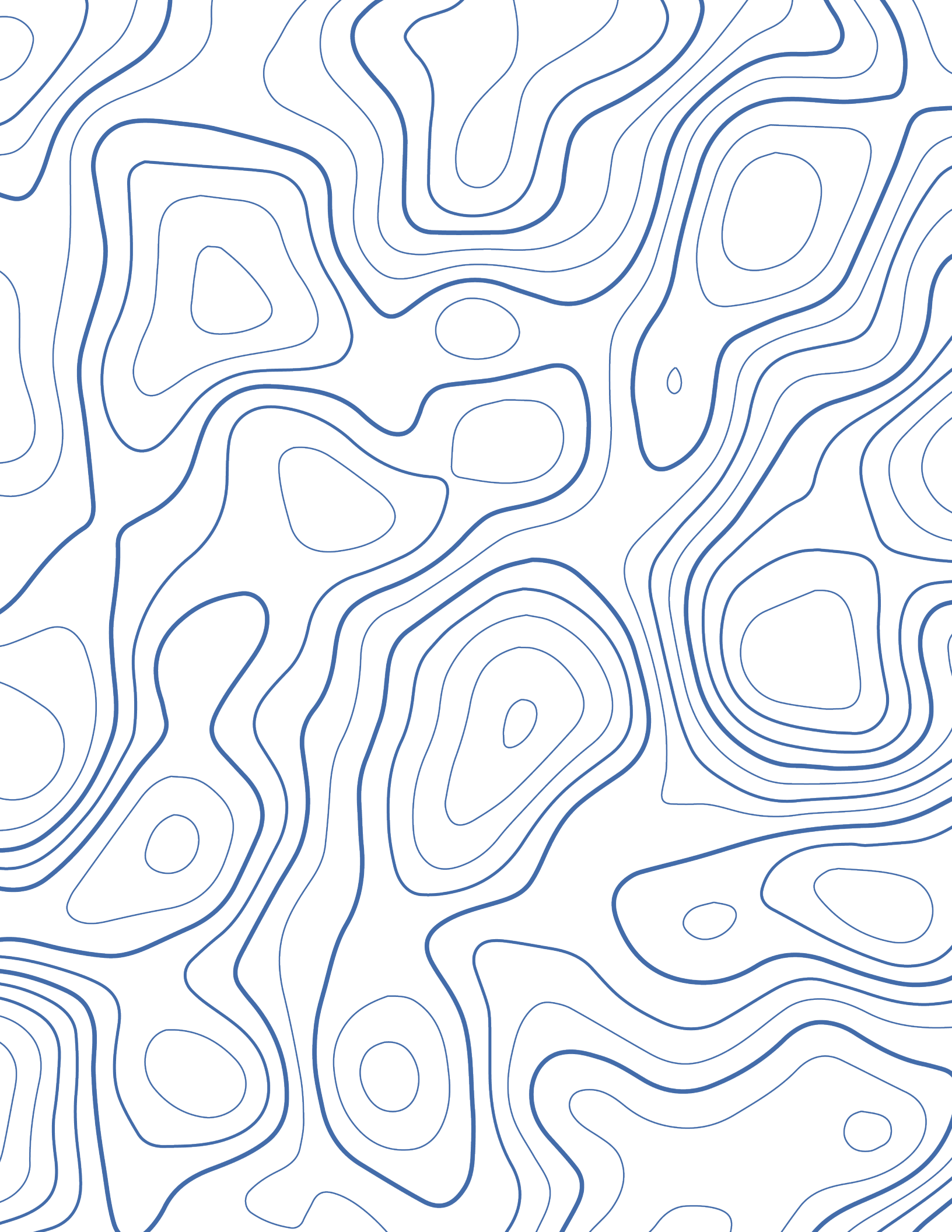




# San Francisco Public Works Annual Report





# 2022 2023

**San Francisco Public Works  
Annual Report**



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# About

# Message From Our Director



Walk down any block in San Francisco and you'll see an imprint of Public Works. We pave roads, care for street trees, clean the streets, repair retaining walls, design parks and fire stations, issue permits for Shared Spaces, paint out graffiti, plant medians and more. Much more.

With nearly 1,800 employees, a diverse portfolio and an annual operating budget of \$449.3 million, the reach of San Francisco Public Works is vast.

This annual report offers readers a snapshot of the breadth of our work in Fiscal Year 2022-23 – from the response of our dedicated and determined front-line crews during the historic winter storms to the opening of the Southeast Community Center, which quickly emerged as both a beautiful and practical neighborhood gem in the Bayview. The report spotlights both our core services and our out-of-the-ordinary work.

The annual report also highlights the behind-the-scenes structure of the de-

partment: Our organizational chart, core values, budget, strategic plan and racial equity initiative, all of which tie into our mission of enhancing the quality of life in San Francisco by providing outstanding public service.

There has been much talk in recent years about how Public Works can best provide that outstanding public service. In 2020, San Francisco voters approved a ballot measure to cleave the department in two, essentially keeping the design, engineering and permitting functions with Public Works and creating a new Sanitation and Streets Department to focus on operations, chiefly street cleaning, urban forestry and building and street repair.

Over the next two years, we put a tremendous amount of effort into mapping a meticulous plan on how to make the separation work and assessing the impacts on cost and the delivery of projects and services. What we discovered is how much the two sides of the house need each other to function efficiently and effectively.

The findings were clear: The mission of delivering exceptional public service would be diminished by the split. The Board of Supervisors agreed and placed a measure on the November 2022 ballot to keep the department whole. The proposition passed with overwhelming voter support.

These ballot measures were not the first transformations of Public Works and they won't be the last; the functions and configurations of City departments morph over time to meet changing needs and priorities.

Just outside my office door is a repository of the department's annual reports dating back to our founding in 1900. Not only do they provide a rich history of Public Works, but they tell the story of San Francisco – a tale of rebirth, perseverance and evolution. With more yet to come.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carla Short".

Carla Short, Director



## Mission

Enhance the quality of life in San Francisco by providing outstanding public service.

We design, build, operate, maintain, green and improve the City's infrastructure, public right of way and facilities with skill, pride and responsiveness in partnership with the San Francisco community.

## Strategic Plan

A living document that drives what we do at Public Works.

It helps us make informed decisions about where to best direct our resources efficiently and effectively.

### Goal 1

Be the best place to work.

### Goal 2

Drive innovation and exceptional service.

### Goal 3

Improve and inspire stewardship of public spaces.

## Core Values

An aspirational set of beliefs and commitments for how we treat each other.

They explain who we are as an organization and reflect our collective, fundamental beliefs.

Our core values are constant, essential and enduring as they embody the traits and qualities that represent Public Works' highest priorities.

### Respect

- We treat each other with respect.
- We communicate openly and fully.
- We listen to one another, to our clients and to the community.
- We value the safety of our workforce and the public.

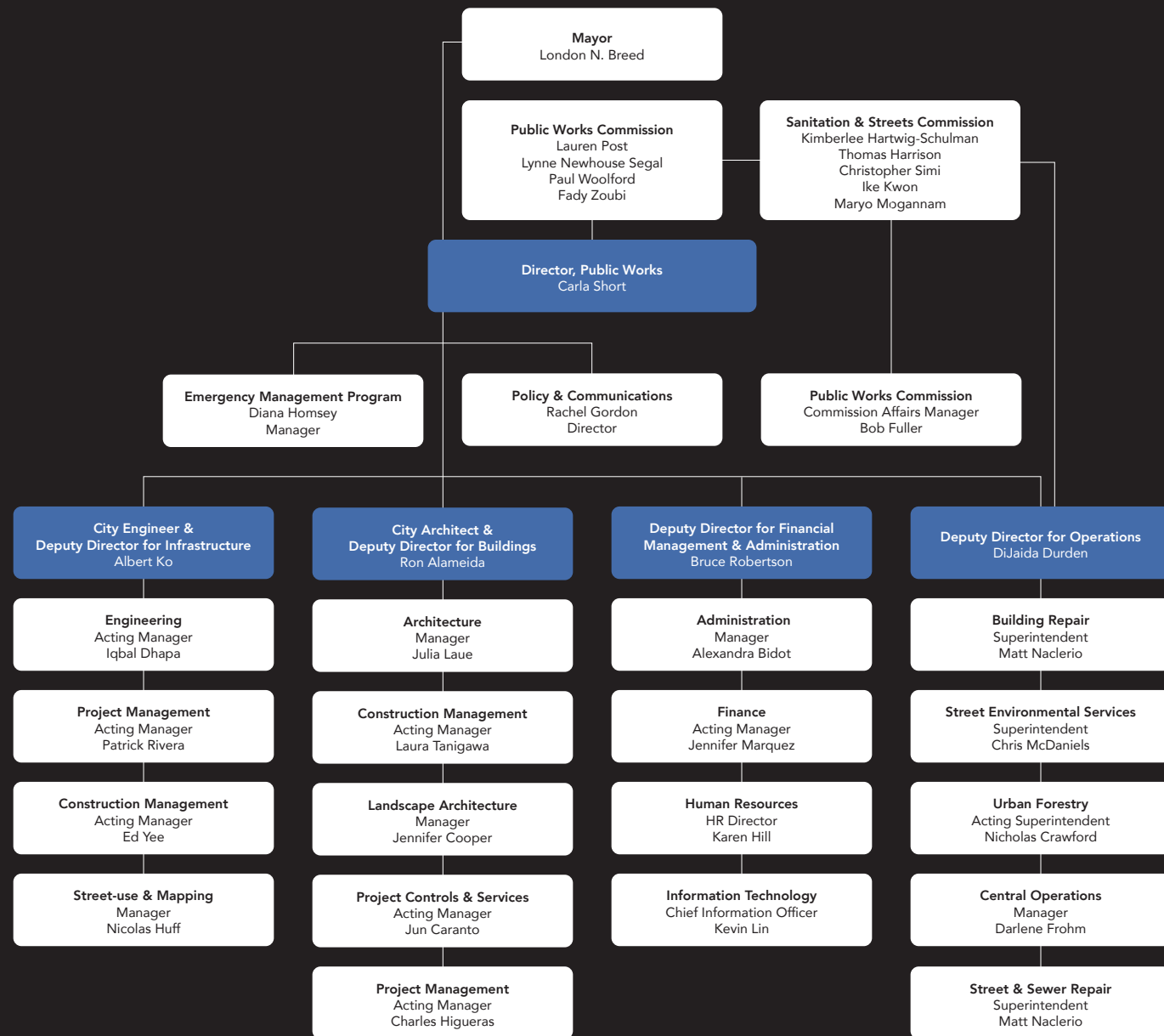
### Integrity

- We behave with integrity.
- We work together as one team.
- We are accountable to ourselves, to each other and to the public.
- We are all responsible for our successes and failures.
- We practice safety every day.

### Responsiveness

- We are responsive to the diverse needs of all communities.
- We pursue new ideas and ways of working.
- We celebrate our accomplishments.
- We incorporate safety as a key to quality customer service.

# Organization



**San Francisco Public Works**  
City and County of  
San Francisco

**Headquarters**  
49 South Van Ness Ave.  
San Francisco, CA 94103

**Operations Yard**  
2323 Cesar Chavez St.  
San Francisco, CA 94124

## Director's Office

### Communications and Public Affairs

The office keeps the public and staff informed of the department's services, projects and programs through mass media, social media, websites, community meetings and other outreach activities. The team produces reports and the monthly community and employee newsletters, briefs elected officials and troubleshoots constituent concerns. The team also oversees media relations and organizes press conferences and special events to celebrate projects.

### Emergency Management Program

The program works to continuously improve our capability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from both natural and human-inflicted disasters.

## Building Design and Construction

### City Architect and Deputy Director for Buildings

The Building Design and Construction Division provides comprehensive planning, project management, architecture, building construction management, contract support and compliance monitoring, hazardous materials investigation and abatement, materials testing, quality assurance, and control services for the development of new buildings and the modernization of existing buildings, facilities and public urban landscapes. Most of this work is often informally referred to as the department's "vertical construction." The Building Design and Construction Division includes the following bureaus/programs:

### Architecture

Provides programming, architectural design, site and master planning, conceptual design and construction support services. The bureau's architects work closely with client City departments and community groups to create architecture within the urban context that reflects the uniqueness of San Francisco neighborhoods.

### Construction Management

Implements project plans overseen by the Project Management, Architecture and Landscape Architecture bureaus. This group of technical staff safeguards the construction and delivery of capital projects and ensures compliance with the project design. Construction Management staff review materials used in construction, oversee environmental services and enforce construction and building codes.

### Landscape Architecture

Provides design services and oversees them into construction, including renovation and new construction, for City departments. Landscape architecture projects include streetscapes, plazas, green infrastructure and stormwater management, parks and recreation facilities, and the design of any outdoor spaces associated with public building projects throughout San Francisco.

### Project Management

Delivers major building capital projects from planning, design and regulatory approval through construction. The bureau delivers a variety of major building projects on behalf of City agencies and handles the stewardship of major capital standalone building projects as well as overarching programs related to emergency services and public safety. Project management supervises many of the City's capital bond programs, including the Earthquake Safety and Emergency Response (ESER) Bond.

### Project Controls and Services

Provides specialized services, such as materials testing, contract preparation, site remediation and contract management, with a focus on buildings, infrastructure and institutional and transportation projects.



## Infrastructure Design and Construction

### City Engineer and Deputy Director for Infrastructure

The Infrastructure Design and Construction Division provides engineering planning, project development, design, construction management and consulting services for a range of capital improvement projects and maintains the City's right-of-way infrastructure, including streets, structures, sidewalks, curb ramps and streetscapes. Most of the work of this division is often informally referred to as the department's "horizontal construction." The Infrastructure Design and Construction Division includes the following programs/bureaus:

#### Engineering

Provides technical services in the following engineering disciplines: hydraulic, civil, electrical, mechanical and structural. Each of these groups plans and designs technical work for infrastructure and building projects for Public Works and other City departments.

#### Construction Management

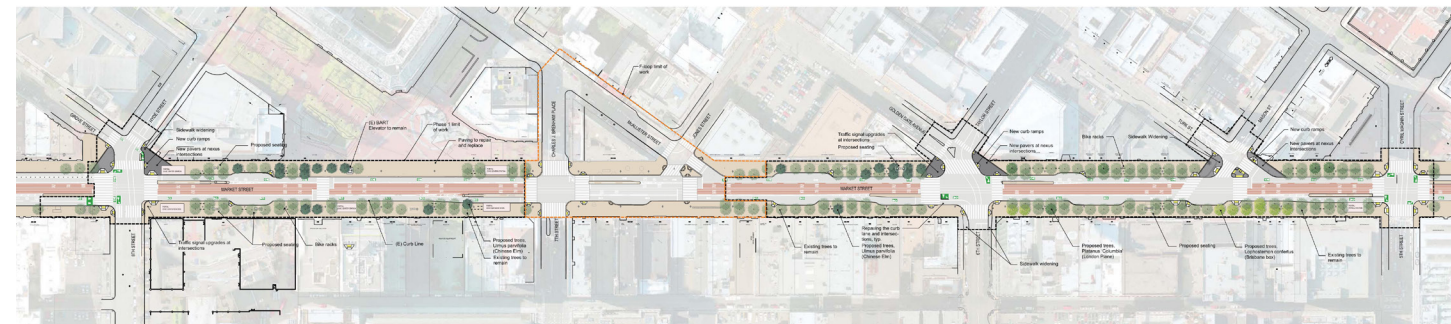
Implements the project plans designed by Project Management, Engineering and other City agencies' staff and safeguards the construction and delivery of capital projects by providing professional construction management and inspection services and enforcing all applicable codes.

#### Project Management

Delivers major infrastructure capital projects from planning, design and regulatory approval through construction. The bureau delivers a variety of major public infrastructure projects on behalf of Public Works and other City agencies.

#### Street-use and Mapping

Ensures that City sidewalks and streets are safe and accessible by permitting and inspecting the use of the public right of way, including the installation of sidewalk.



## Finance and Administration

### Deputy Director for Financial Management & Administration

The Finance and Administration Division includes administrative units that provide budget, capital planning, analytical, performance management, contract administration and information technology support services for the department. The costs of the division are accounted for in the City's budget system under "General Administration," as well as reflected as overhead charges. The programs within the Finance and Administration Division include:

#### Finance

Oversees budget preparation; capital planning, analysis and reporting; grants research and administration; accounting and contract administration. Finance also prepares analyses and produces reports to implement and manage the department's projects and programs. This includes the creation and monitoring of the annual budget; preparation of an annual indirect cost plan; participation in bond authorizations and sales; development of the capital plan and grant proposals. Accounting responsibilities include reviewing and entering financial and purchasing transactions; preparing grant billings and account analyses; recording of construction in progress and entering information on fixed assets; collecting revenues; disbursing funds and guiding funds through required procedures until final liquidation. Contract Administration is responsible for advertising bids; distributing plans and specifications; receiving bids; processing documents; handling bid protests; awarding contracts and ensuring compliance with insurance, bonding and licensing requirements.

#### Planning and Performance

Monitors key activities of the agency to improve the quality of services delivered as well as support the creation, monitoring and measurement of the department's strategic plan.

## Human Resources

The Human Resources bureau oversees a full portfolio of employee services, including recruiting, hiring, onboarding, training and development, compliance with anti-discrimination laws, accommodations, payroll and benefits, leaves, labor relations, contract negotiations and environmental health and safety. The department's human resources functions had been under the Office of the City Administrator but were transferred to Public Works, starting this fiscal year. The change provides Public Works an opportunity to build an operation from the ground up, tailored to the department's own human resources needs.

## Information Technology

Designs, programs, operates and maintains all department-wide automated information systems and equipment. Services include process analysis and planning; software development, configuration and implementation; network and hardware installation; technology operations; help desk and security; and software support and system compliance functions.



## Operations

### Building and Street Repair

Provides professional construction, repair and remodeling services to City-owned facilities; provides emergency-repair services 24 hours a day to ensure that the police, fire department and other public safety operations are fully functional; and oversees paving and street repair work, including patch paving and filling potholes, as well as sewer repair, which includes brickwork.

### Central Operations

Includes the Office of Community Engagement, which runs community programs, including Graffiti Watch, Community Clean Team, Adopt-A-Street, urban harvesting and street parks. The office also oversees the Outreach and Enforcement Team, the department's apprenticeships programs and the Pit Stop public toilet program.

### Street Environmental Services

Cleans streets and curbs using mechanical street sweepers; removes graffiti; adds, removes and replaces litter receptacles; and oversees manual cleaning work crews. Although sidewalk maintenance remains the responsibility of property owners, the bureau sweeps and cleans sidewalks in heavily used commercial corridors and steam cleans human and dog waste and other biohazards.

### Urban Forestry

Responsible for median maintenance, tree planting and maintenance of all street trees. In addition, the bureau's Cement Shop repairs sidewalks and medians and builds curb ramps.





# Budget FY 2022-23 (millions)

**\$449.3**

**\$145.48**

**\$112.60**

**\$52.12**

**\$51.16**

**\$30.98**

**\$29.65**

**\$19.73**

**\$6.71**

**\$0.43**

Total Budget

Infrastructure Design & Construction

Street Environmental Services

Building & Street Repair

Urban Forestry

Street-use & Mapping

Building Design & Construction

General Administration

Sanitation & Streets Director

Public Works Commission

# Bureau Position Summary FY 2022-23

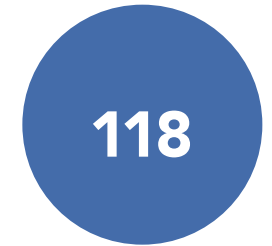
Number of positions



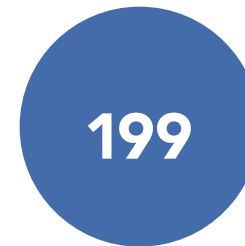
Building Design & Construction



Building and Street Repair



Bureau of Street-use & Mapping



Bureau of Urban Forestry



Deputy Director for Operations Office



General Administration



Infrastructure Design & Construction



Public Works Commission



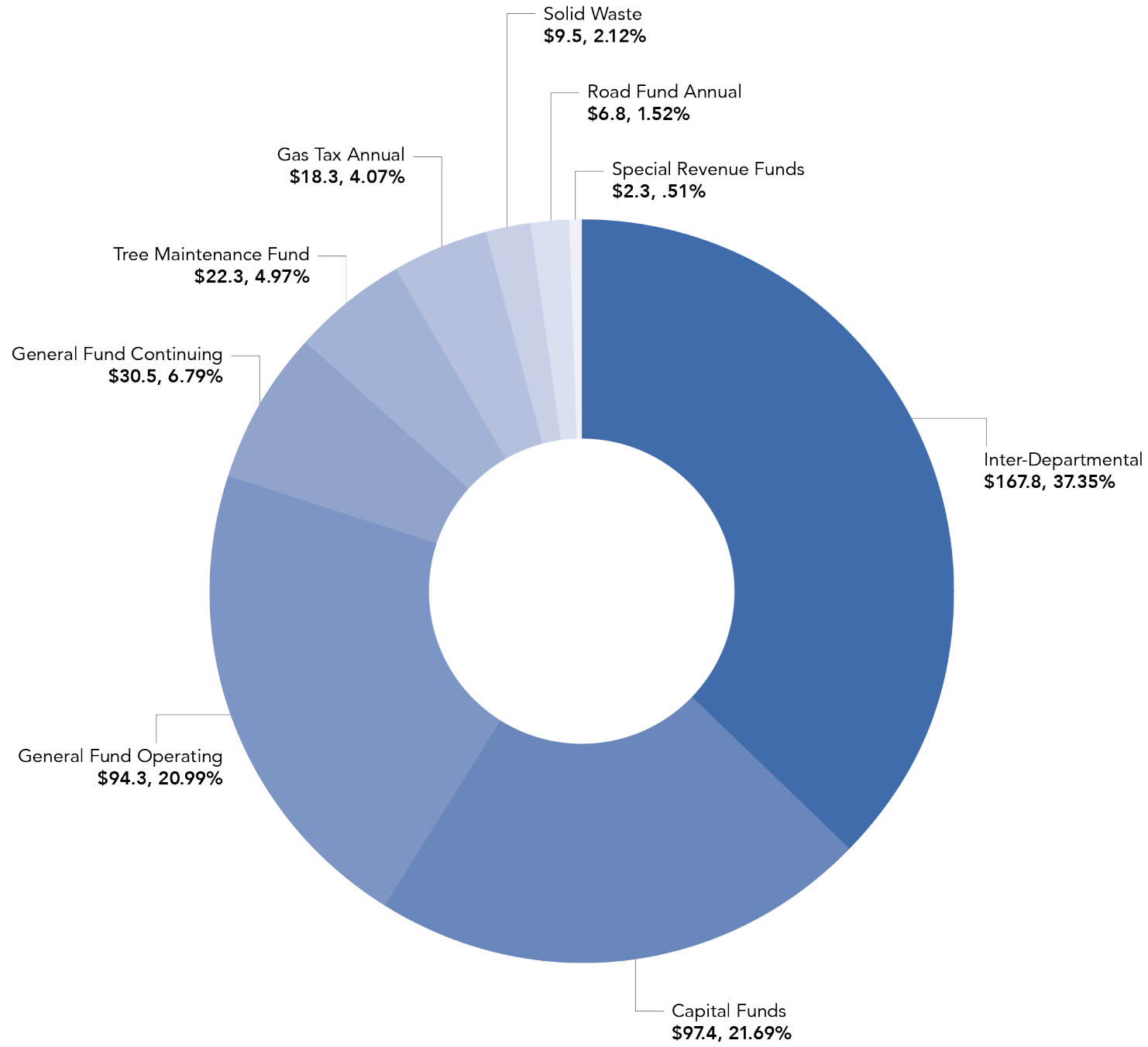
Sanitation & Streets Commission



Street Environmental Services

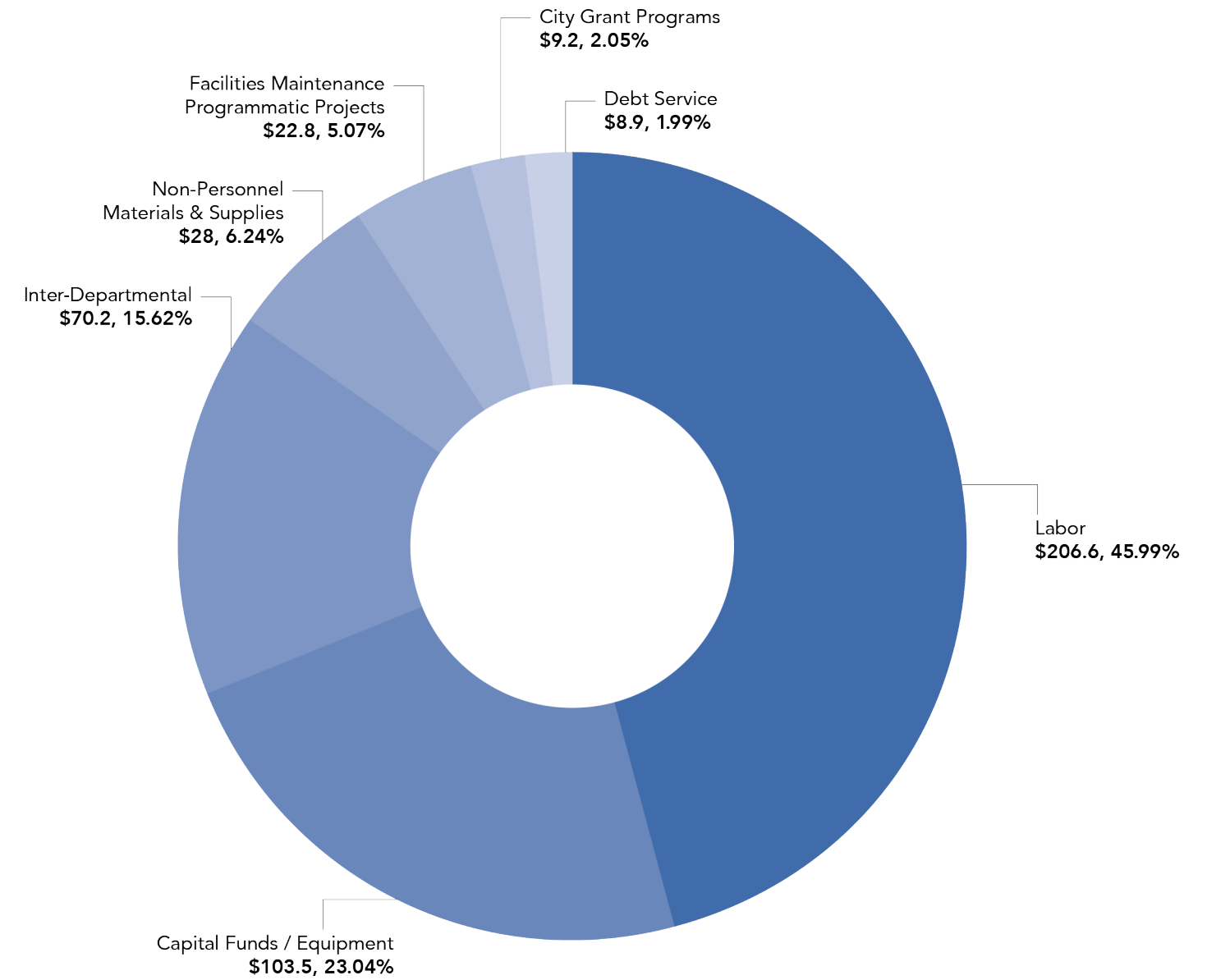
# Funding Sources FY 2022-23 (millions)

Total Budget \$449.3 M



# Budget Uses FY 2022-23 (millions)

Total Budget \$449.3 M



# Stats

75

Pavement Condition Index  
(PCI Score)

507

Blocks Paved

12,876

Potholes Filled

699

Curb Ramps Constructed

1,011

Trees Planted

47,216

Sidewalks Repaired  
(Square Feet)

25,421

Debris Picked Up  
(Tons)

163,902

Swept By Mechanical Sweepers  
(Miles)

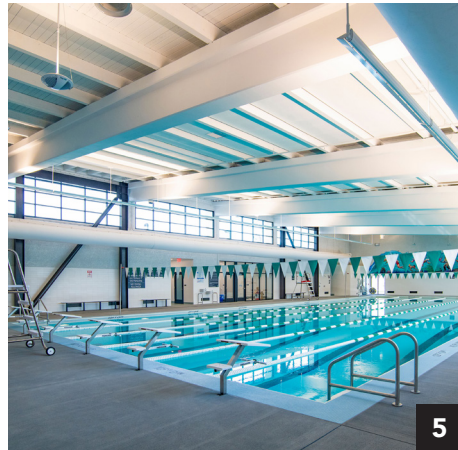
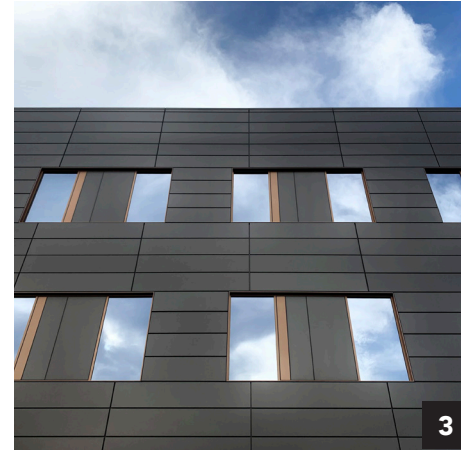
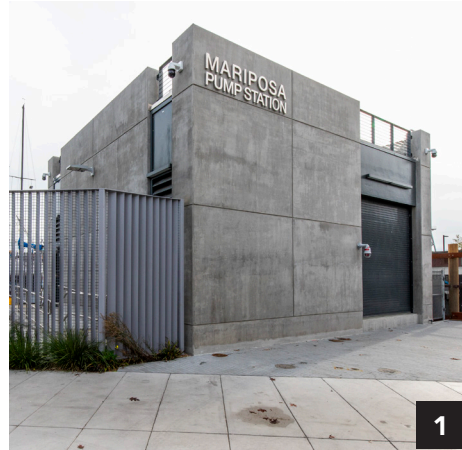
53,228

Graffiti Services Requested

152,504

Street Cleaning Services Requested

# Awards



1. **Mariposa Pump Station Improvements Project**  
2023 San Francisco Collaborative Partnering Award: Building Projects under \$20M - SILVER
2. **Van Ness Improvement Project**  
2023 San Francisco Collaborative Partnering Award: Public Infrastructure Projects over \$20M - BRONZE
3. **Traffic Company & Forensic Services Division Facility**  
2022 San Francisco Collaborative Partnering Award: Building Projects over \$20M - SILVER
4. **Southeast Water Pollution Control Plant 042 Seismic Retrofit and Rehabilitation**  
2022 San Francisco Collaborative Partnering Award: Infrastructure Projects under \$20M - SILVER
5. **Angelo J. Rossi Pool**  
2022 San Francisco Collaborative Partnering Award: Building Projects under \$20M - SILVER
6. **Bayview SAFE Navigation Center**  
Metal Architecture magazine: 2022 Design Award

# Racial Equity Initiative



In the summer of 2019, Public Works launched its Racial Equity Initiative with the intention of identifying racial equity issues within our department and examining how we deliver our programs and work with the community. In January 2021, Public Works released its Racial Equity Action Plan, which laid out an action item matrix to guide the implementation of projects to make our department an anti-racist organization. The plan is based on qualitative and quantitative data and is integrated into department-wide initiatives, including the strategic plan and Public Works Stat.

In January 2023, we launched our homegrown, in-house, monthly series based on Inspecting Our Foundation, a reexamination of Public Works' history through a racial equity lens, which we published in 2022. Topics were chosen to reflect on Public Works' role in San Francisco history and included Indigenous perspectives on public space; race, redevelopment and the Western Addition; Chinatown alleyways; and community design and the Bureau of Landscape Architecture. This series complemented the educational and community-building work of

our heritage month celebrations, including Black History Month, Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Pride and Latinx/Hispanic Heritage Month.

In addition, we launched workplace projects to support better communication among staff and supervisors, develop a mentorship program, broaden recruitment strategies, support staff in their professional development dreams and generally foster an organizational culture of belonging where each employee can reach their potential and thrive.



## Student Intern Programs

After two years of predominantly hosting interns remotely due to the COVID-19 restrictions, Public Works' paid college internship program was back in full swing during the summer. The reboot would not have been possible without the efforts of the department's internship and human resources team. They work year-round to attract hundreds of students from around the country to apply for a Public Works internship.

The internships target college students and recent graduates who are interested in engineering, architecture, landscape architecture, urban forestry, permits and inspections, IT and project and construction management. Many of our interns go on to become full-time Public Works staff after graduation.

To reach as many students as possible, we were creative in our recruitment approaches, sending out email blasts, tapping into an extensive contact list of professional societies and holding informational sessions with student groups and honors societies from dozens of universities.



## Public Works Week

We celebrated Public Works Week 2023 from May 21 through May 26, recognizing the department's outstanding projects, services and employees. We also conducted project tours and hosted an open house at our Operations Yard for students to gain a better understanding of the work we do to clean, green and maintain our city.

Public Works Week, held annually in cities across the United States and Canada, showcases the importance of public works departments caring for and improving our communities – from paving roads, cleaning streets and pruning trees to designing civic buildings, shoring up hillsides and inspecting the public right of way.

San Francisco Public Works is a 24/7 operation and we take great pride in serving the people of San Francisco. Public Works Week provides us a great opportunity to reflect on our work and show appreciation for our teams that get the job done.

**Project of the Year Award:** Southeast Community Center Team

**Team of the Year Award:** Bureau of Street-use and Mapping Illegal Vending Inspection Team

**Employee of the Year Award:** Guillermo Perez Jr.



## Bayview SAFE Navigation Center Wins Awards

The Bayview SAFE Navigation Center opened in 2018 and is a 128-bed shelter with on-site services for people who have been living on the streets. The navigation center model is innovative in that it welcomes partners and pets; provides safe storage for belongings; and offers 24/7 access and counseling and support services.

This year, the center won two awards recognizing the great work that went into the groundbreaking homeless shelter designed by our Bureau of Architecture. Public Works also managed the development of the project.

The project was honored by the International Partnering Institute with a Ruby Level Award. Metal Architecture recognized the project with the Judges Award. The judges commented on the versatility and beauty of the use of materials and how metal was employed to promote a friendly community-building space.



# Partnering Awards

Public Works hosted the 5th-annual Collaborative Partnering Awards ceremony, which recognized 10 City and County of San Francisco building and infrastructure projects that best exemplify the principles and success of structured collaborative partnering.

The partnering process brings together owners, designers and construction teams throughout the life of a project to maximize timeliness, economic efficiency and quality. Projects were judged by a panel of seven City and industry professionals.

Awards were given to projects affiliated with five City agencies: San Francisco Public Works, San Francisco International Airport, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and San Francisco Recreation and Park Department. The projects touched on a variety of publicly funded improvements, among them a new crime lab, a swimming pool renovation and a sewer rehabilitation.

Awards to the Public Works teams included one for the City's new Traffic Company and Forensic Services Division facility and another for the Bayview SAFE Navigation Center.





## AIA Conference

This year's annual American Institute of Architects Conference took place in San Francisco with hundreds of workshops, tours and lectures for more than 14,000 architects – from early-career newcomers to seasoned professionals.

This was a special week for the San Francisco Public Works Bureau of Architecture to be in the spotlight and revel in a much-anticipated opportunity to show off our remarkable civic projects and talk about the unique experiences and challenges of designing and building for the public sector.

Public Works architects and project managers served on panels and hosted tours. Our department, home to the city architect, has strong ties to San Francisco's civic architecture that date back more than a century. We design and manage City projects with our full-service, in-house design firm – with 69 full-time architects who provide design, construction support and site and master planning services.

Our staff hosted tours of recent projects, including the Southeast Community Center and Animal Care and Control facility, and organized "The Climate of Public Architecture – Expanding Equitability for Community Resilience" symposium, which examined how the issues of equity, justice and community influence the design of public facilities.



# Maintaining The City



## Storm Response

Unleashing forceful winds and historic downpours, a seemingly unending procession of storms barreled into San Francisco from late December into March, damaging some 1,000 trees, overwhelming catch basins, supercharging mudslides and tearing up roads. The storms packed a punch and kept our staff extremely busy and working around the clock.

Public Works crews worked tirelessly to help prepare the City and its residents ahead of the storms, mitigate dangers during the severe weather and make San Francisco's sidewalks, streets, bridges and public spaces safe afterward.

Behind the scenes, Public Works staff worked on figuring out staffing schedules, triaged service requests, made sure the on-the-ground crews had the gear and tools they needed to stay safe, kept track of costs for potential reimbursement from the state, coordinated the response with the Mayor's Office and other City departments and kept the community up to date with the latest information.

Our storm-response efforts involved hundreds of Public Works employees, many working extended shifts in the field amid drenching cloudbursts, menacing winds and frigid temperatures.

The urgent response and cleanup operations were immense, with Public Works coordinating closely with other City departments, including the Department of Emergency Management, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, San Francisco Fire Department, San Francisco Police Department, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, SF311, Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing and others.

Those efforts added up to some staggering figures:

#### **35,617 Sandbags Distributed**

If placed in a straight line, they would reach from San Francisco City Hall to Oakland City Hall.

To help minimize flooding of properties, the City distributed sandbags to San Francisco residents and businesses free of charge. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission dropped off pallets of sandbags at areas prone to flooding, such as Folsom and 17th streets, prior to the start of the rainy season. Public Works, meanwhile, made sandbags available to any San Francisco resident or business.

San Francisco, like cities and counties across the rain-soaked region, saw a huge surge in demand for sandbags that outpaced the readily available supply. Our finance team worked throughout the New Year holiday and the weeks that followed to source more sandbags – competing with other jurisdictions. We found vendors as far away as Stockton and Tracy who had some to sell.

#### **2,744 Emergency Tree Orders**

Public Works Bureau of Urban Forestry tree crews were front and center throughout the winter storms, working non-stop on service requests for downed street trees, fallen limbs and precariously hanging branches. Some trees and limbs were threatening property, blocking roads and falling on overhead power lines. Rounding out the service requests were urgent calls to trim and prune trees during the squalls to keep them from failing.

Our arborists worked in heavy rains and howling winds – wielding chainsaws, handsaws and axes, at times 30 feet or more above the ground in bucket trucks. Some jobs took many hours to complete – with the focus on potential hazards to property and people.

#### **4,955 Potholes Fixed**

One result of the heavy rains was an increase in potholes. Typically, our crews patch 600 potholes a month, but because of the winter storms, thousands of them needed patching. Our street repair crews responded and filled the potholes using both cold and hot patches to smooth out the divots and remove immediate hazards for drivers, pedestrians and bikers.

#### **1,304 Catch Basins Cleared**

Coordinating with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, our street cleaning staff went full throttle clearing catch basins of leaves and debris to address flooding at intersections. Public Works crews cleared the catch basins at the surface; the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, which runs the system, was responsible for clearing the drains below ground, using specialized equipment such as vacuum trucks.

#### **818 Repair Requests**

The storms kept our Public Works trades workers busy, too. Our roofers, plumbers, glaziers, electricians, carpenters, sheet metal workers and painters jumped into action, fixing City buildings affected by the unrelenting wind and rain. There were service orders for everything from leaky roofs to overflowing drains.

#### **29 Rockslides and Mudslides**

Public Works engineers kept close watch on potential rockslides and mudslides during the storms. They assessed the damage, recommended short-term safety measures, such as shutting down a street or placing k-rails at the site to catch falling rocks, and started working on longer-term fixes if they were warranted. In the case of rockslides or mudslides, our street repair and street cleaning crews jumped in to clear rocks, place sandbags, set up barricades and flush the mud and muck off the streets.





## Bridge Damage

During the winter storms, three privately owned construction barges broke loose from their tethers at Pier 48 and moved through the choppy Bay waters into China Basin, ramming into the Third Street Bridge and causing significant damage.

Designated as City Landmark No. 194, the Depression-era draw-bridge, also known as the Lefty O'Doul Bridge, was designed by the Strauss Engineering Co., the same firm that designed the Golden Gate Bridge.

Not only is the bridge historic, it also is a busy corridor used by Giants and Warriors fans heading to and from nearby Oracle Park and Chase Center.

As the bridge's official caretaker, Public Works responded immediately to the collision with a damage assessment and then the necessary repairs.



It took a mix of Public Works staff to get the bridge up and running again. In addition to structural and stationary engineers who did the structural assessment, the group included carpenters, sheet metal workers, finance professionals and a project manager to see the first phase of restoration work through to completion, ensuring the bridge was made safe and could remain in use.

The initial evaluation by the engineers showed that a portion of the east-side wooden sidewalk was heavily damaged, including several steel beams below it and the guardrail above. Also damaged were the east-side concrete sidewalk and fender piles on the northern end of the bridge, which were shoved out of place.

In addition, the historic watchman's house was hit hard and sustained significant damage. But, thankfully, the underlying structural integrity of the bridge and deck remained in good shape.

The first step was for our Bureau of Building and Street Repair crews to secure the site so that the area was safe for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers.

Within about a month, Public Works staff had the bridge up and running again, after testing the drawbridge and checking the rack beam, pinions, leaf locks, motors and traffic control devices.

The Coast Guard was then alerted that the drawbridge was operational and safe and that the boating public could once again request lifts to navigate through the Mission Creek Channel.

However, the east-side wooden walkway, which was badly damaged, remained closed. The needed repairs included restoring the sidewalk's timber planks and railing, the support steel below and damaged concrete curbs. Repairs to the severely damaged operator's house, supporting pier structure and northside fender pile system also were needed. The preliminary cost estimate for the fixes was \$6.5 million. Public Works worked to identify potential funding sources for both the short term and future, including federal disaster funds and insurance for the operators of the privately owned construction barges that caused the damage.

Prior to the barge damage, Public Works, as the bridge operator, wrapped up a major rehabilitation project in 2020 to extend the life of the steel-and-concrete structure.





## Street Paving

Public Works resurfaced 500 blocks this year to make the roads safer and smoother for people who drive, bike, walk and take transit.

The ongoing paving initiative is part of the City's successful strategy to steadily improve the condition of our streets. Over the past decade, Public Works in-house and contractor crews resurfaced more than 7,700 blocks – or about 60% – of the City's nearly 13,000 blocks.

San Francisco's Pavement Condition Index score, which is tracked by the independent Metropolitan Transportation Commission, rates roads from 0 to 100, with 0 being the worst and 100 the best. In 2009, the City's cumulative score was 63; today, it's 74, which is considered "good."

San Francisco's rating is the best among large Bay Area cities and exceeds the regional score of 67, considered "fair." Scores in the 80-89 range are considered very good. Above that is "excellent."



The Public Works Street Resurfacing Program budget for this fiscal year totaled \$77.3 million and was funded with local and state money.

Among the streets repaved were Golden Gate Avenue, Junipero Serra Boulevard, Mariposa Street, Bryant Street, Shafter Avenue and Vallejo Street.

When selecting the blocks, the Street Resurfacing Program Team considers a number of factors: roadway condition, use – streets with public transit and bike lanes, for example, are prioritized – and whether the paving project can be combined with other projects, such as sewer upgrades.

We also look at geographic equity to make sure the street improvements benefit all neighborhoods. It's no secret that San Francisco, like communities across the West, was hit hard by potholes with the incessant storms.

The heavy rainfall kept our crews working extra shifts, seven days a week, to catch up. Roads that are in good shape to begin with reduce the chance of potholes forming, amplifying the importance of our proactive paving initiative.







## Ocean Beach Sand Relocation

At the beginning of the summer, Public Works crews carried out the annual Ocean Beach sand relocation operation to reduce the likelihood of sand buildup on the adjacent Great Highway. In recent years, sand buildup has significantly worsened due to climate change, drought and sustained high winds. This year, approximately 43,000 cubic yards of sand were moved away from the road and toward the ocean.

The team used front-end loaders, backhoes and other heavy machinery to reduce the height and width of the sand dunes. Our Bureau of Building and Street Repair crews removed sand at the seawall between Noriega and Santiago streets and addressed the excessive accumulation of sand at Judah Street and other hard-hit areas. These efforts have been shown to delay the natural progression of sand incursion onto the Great Highway.

The work was done in coordination with the federal Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Public Works has a small window to perform the annual sand redistribution work; it must be timed to make sure crews do not disturb the Western Snowy Plover, a small shorebird that is protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. The plovers can be found at Ocean Beach about 10 months out of the year but take off in the spring or early summer to nest in other coastal areas and inland salt flats.



## Steam Loop

Buried beneath the streets and sidewalks around Civic Center Plaza, a steam system more than a century old provides heat for City Hall and other grand civic buildings in the historic district. And it is the job of Public Works' steamfitters to keep it running.

Our crews from the Bureau of Building and Street Repair spent a month-plus focused on an underground stretch along Grove Street. First, they inspected the condition of the sections of the steam system that they could access from manholes: steam valves, steam traps, flanges and pipes – checking for leaks and broken and worn components. Next, they replaced the materials that couldn't be repaired, which was just about everything.

The telltale sign that all systems were working again: no excess steam was leaking through the road, sidewalk or manholes.



The Civic Center steam loop system began operating in 1915 to service the emerging government and cultural district. All required heat to keep the people who work in and visit the buildings warm. Steam heat was in vogue at the time. Feeder pipes run steam into the buildings; its heat is released through building radiators for warm-air comfort. To supply steam to the loop, the City operated a powerhouse at Larkin and McAllister streets that was built the same year as the loop.

The Civic Center steam loop system began falling into disarray in the 1970s. The plan was to rebuild it, but the City didn't move forward because of lack of funding. Portions of the loop were decommissioned after the aging infrastructure gave out. The powerhouse was shuttered in the mid-1990s but remains standing, with its conspicuous rooftop smokestack now held up by braces.

Today, the Civic Center steam loop serves City Hall, the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, the Department of Public Health headquarters and the Civic Center Courthouse, which opened in 1998. San Francisco purchased 30 million pounds of steam to heat the Civic Center facilities this year.

Meanwhile, these portions of the steam loop have been sprouting leaks and sending steam up through manholes, sidewalks and streets.

Maintenance has been sporadic over the years due to budget constraints, but this year the Bureau of Building and

Street Repair repaired the known leak trouble spots and took care of basic maintenance, such as lubricating the expansion joints and replacing worn equipment, along Grove Street. Crews also made a needed fix in front of the historic City Hall on Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place.

The steam, which runs at 350 degrees Fahrenheit, was shut off to keep our crews from getting scalded. The team worked carefully and systematically and kept a close watch on a gas-level monitor to be sure a constant flow of fresh air was pumped into the manhole through a ventilation tube.

Despite this round of repairs, more leaks are expected to emerge, given the condition of the system.

Meanwhile, the City is exploring different options for how to best move forward, including whether to rebuild the existing steam loop or build independent electric steam systems for each building that still would conform with federal rules pertaining to historic buildings.





## Bayview Library

For years, patrons at San Francisco's Bayview/Linda Brooks-Burton Library were greeted by the neighborhood's rich history. Ten large glass art panels have graced the street-facing façade of the branch library, which opened in 2013. They feature historical photographs that depict the people and places of the Bayview. Among the images: are a crane at the shipyard, cows on a hill, the Bayview Opera House, Quesada Gardens, a fisherman with baskets of shrimp, an Ohlone canoe and a large ship in drydock.

Over the years, a steady dose of sunshine had bleached the panels, causing the historical artwork to fade. Some of the special panels were broken several years ago and replaced by regular glass.

This fall, crews from the Public Works Glass Shop installed six new glass panels along the library's Third Street façade. Not only were the new panels upgraded with a fresh coat of gold-colored ceramic ink to make the artwork pop again, but they also were outfitted with a thick slab of protective glass, hopefully shielding the past from any future damage.

Our architects worked closely with the glass team, the manufacturer and the library to ensure that the panels' colors and characteristics matched the initial design.



## Monument Steps

For decades, a 185-foot concrete stairway, cut into a steep hillside at the foot of Mount Olympus and known as the Monument Way Stairs, has provided a vital connection for the neighborhood, linking 17th Street and its public transit options to Upper Terrace. But more than 80 years of wear and tear had left its mark. The stairway needed a full reconstruction as well as a new handrail and recessed lighting – features the community was particularly interested in.

Public Works engineering and construction management teams led the design and oversaw construction. The magnitude of this project was unusual. Usually, the teams work on stairway repairs and smaller projects, but not a full reconstruction like this – and definitely not one with particularly challenging and steep terrain.

The demolition of the old stairs had to be done piece by piece, using small hand-held power tools. The debris had to be dragged to the top to be hauled off by a dump truck. After a portion of the old stairs was removed, crews began grading, removing soil and digging trenches. Then they laid the rebar to help anchor the new stairs and poured concrete.

Even beyond access to public transit for neighbors, the stairs serve as part of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, a hiking trail that spans and connects the Bay Area.



## Lotta's Fountain

Every year on April 18, at 5:12 a.m., Lotta's Fountain – gifted to the City by its namesake, the famous Golden Era theater star Lotta Crabtree – is thrust into the spotlight to commemorate one of San Francisco's darkest hours and serve as a reminder of the City's resilience and grit.

City officials and history buffs gather at the fountain to mark the anniversary of the devastating 1906 earthquake, a violent 7.9-magnitude quake that rattled residents awake and left much of the City decimated to rubble, fires raging for days.

Perched atop a granite base on a pedestrian island at the bustling intersection of Market, Geary and Kearny streets, the landmark was one of the few sources of water following the calamity and served as a meeting point for San Francisco residents after the catastrophe.

But at a century-and-a-half old, even the sturdiest of drinking fountains needs a regular checkup, which is why Public Works' skilled plumbers, electricians and stationary engineers conducted a thorough cleaning and inspection of the cast iron fountain, its 8-foot column, inner workings and embellished light fixture.

This year, like every year, our crews made sure the historic landmark sparkled, shined and was in good working condition for the anniversary event.



## Broadway Tunnel

In November, a flatbed truck towing a too-tall telescopic boom ripped open the tiled ceiling of the Broadway Tunnel's eastbound bore, creating a zipper-like fissure about 100 feet long and leaving behind a big pile of debris.

The good news is that no one was injured in the incident when large chunks of damaged ceiling poured down on the roadway below.

The Public Works team, involving different but well-coordinated divisions of our department, jumped into action quickly. They shut down the eastbound lanes to clean up the mess and to assess the damage caused by the truck operated by a private outfit.

Our civil and structural engineers examined the tunnel for any structural damage that could pose a safety hazard. None was found. As that was going on, our street cleaning crews from Operations cleared the rubble.

The next day, our Bureau of Building and Street Repair crews arrived to continue the make-safe work. A team of electricians, sheet metal workers, stationary engineers and general laborers was brought in to remove the remaining tile that had been damaged.

Our staff responded to this emergency swiftly and with great expertise and know-how.



## SFPD Training Space

Tucked inside the Police Academy in Diamond Heights is a newly constructed apartment where both veteran officers and new recruits can train in responding to incidents inside people's homes.

Built by Public Works carpenters, glaziers and locksmiths, the new "reality-based training structure," as it's known in public safety parlance, is a first for San Francisco. Our trades workers in the Bureau of Building and Street Repair put their skills to good use – building out frames, walls, windows and doors to create a three-room home.

In the past, the academy conducted the training in an empty classroom, where officers and cadets had to make believe they were entering a residence and moving through rooms, or they had to travel to a specialized law enforcement training facility outside of the City for the experience.

Now, with the help of Public Works, police have found a new home for realistic residence-related training.





## Whimsical Wall

More than a half-century ago, at the dawn of the Diamond Heights neighborhood, the then-San Francisco Redevelopment Agency commissioned a “safety wall” to be erected at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street, near Portola Drive, to keep cars from flying off the hillside and hurtling into newly built homes downslope. The structure also was intended to serve as a visually compelling gateway to the fledgling community.

Now part of the City’s civic art collection, the artistic redwood wall underwent a much-needed refresh by a skilled team of Public Works employees. Our graffiti crews carefully cleaned the open-air structure; our painters prepped and painted the nuts, bolts and washers that hold the sculpture together; our cement masons repaired the cracked structural slab at the base and our master carpenters fabricated new sections where the old wood had split or decayed.

Our Bureau of Engineering managed the restoration, working closely with the San Francisco Arts Commission, the official overseer of the City’s public art.





# Cleaning The City



## Love Our City

Love Our City: Neighborhood Beautification Day is Public Works' flagship volunteer program where community members pitch in to create greener and cleaner public spaces.

The monthly events bring together City workers and volunteers to care for our neighborhoods and advance civic pride. We rotate Neighborhood Beautification Days through a different supervisorial district every month.

Volunteer teams, with the help of our Public Works pros, come together to plant trees, weed medians, mulch, pick up litter and wipe out graffiti. The beloved event series draws a diverse crowd, welcoming young, old and in-between.



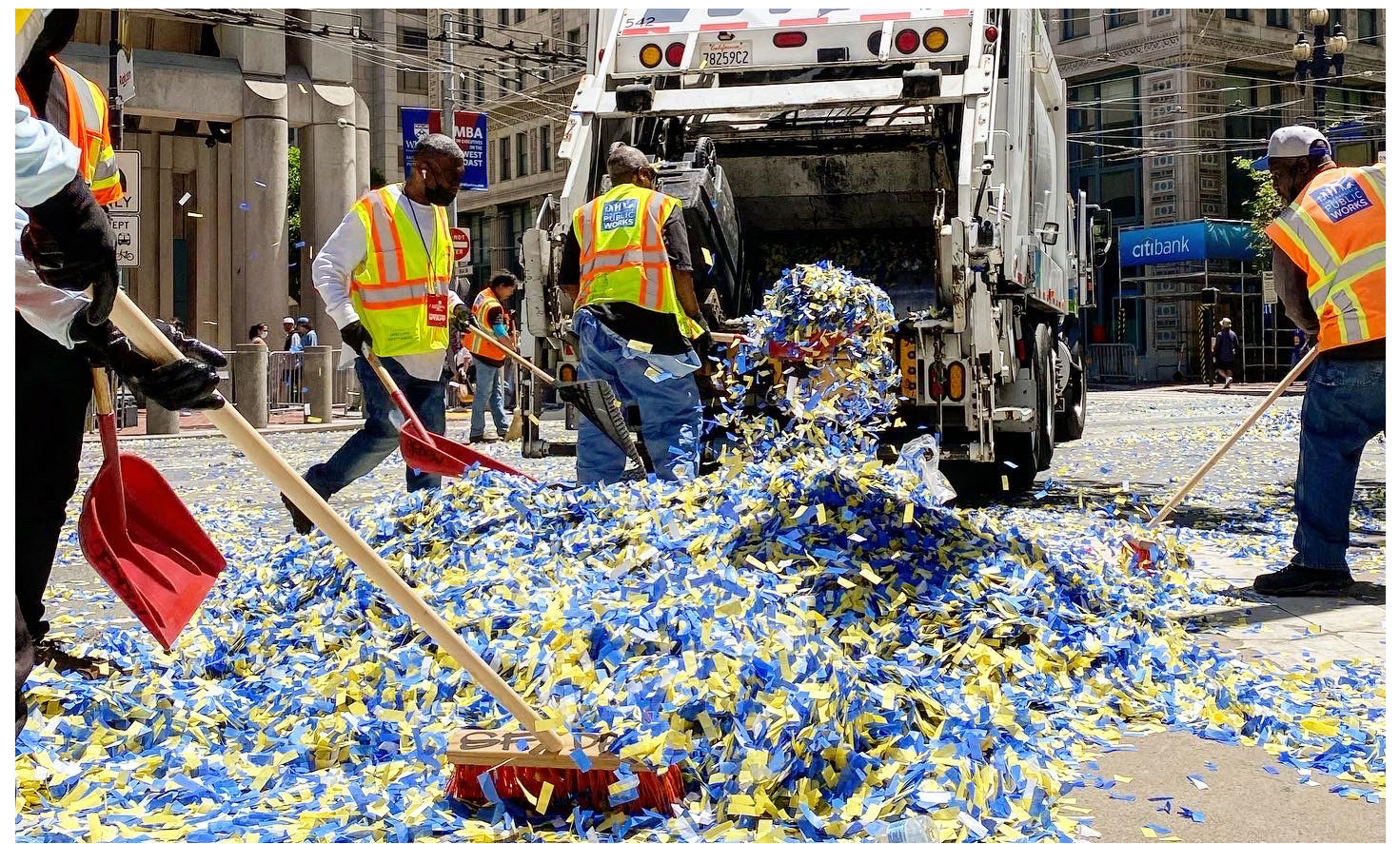
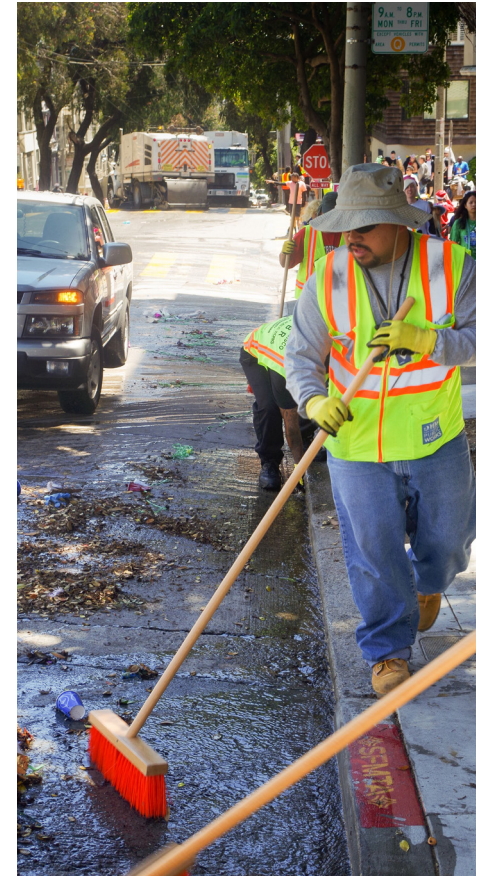


## Event Cleaning

Public Works' well-choreographed street cleaning teams from our Bureau of Street Environmental Services were out in force again at several large civic events this year – with know-how and resolve – to get the streets and sidewalks back in good shape after the crowds cleared out. Even before the parades and events, our inspectors were out assessing the routes to ensure the paths were safe and accessible for the event.

Among the events were the annual Pride and Lunar New Year parades, as well as the yearly Bay to Breakers race.

Our hard-working crews use push brooms, grabbers, rakes, shovels and leaf blowers to clean up anything left behind by participants and spectators. And our mechanical sweeper trucks and flusher trucks help make the area sparkle and shine again.





# Public Toilet Unveiling

In partnership with the JCDecaux street furniture company, Public Works ushered in a new generation of public toilets in San Francisco with the first one installed at Embarcadero Plaza in time for the holiday season and a post-pandemic rebirth of the City.

San Francisco has benefited from a collaboration with JCDecaux since 1994 when the original forest-green Art Nouveau-style toilets and advertising kiosks were placed on City sidewalks. As part of the new 20-year negotiated agreement, JCDecaux is replacing – one-for-one – these aging amenities with updated and more efficient designs. The complete rollout of the 25 replacement toilets will take several years.

Beginning at Embarcadero Plaza, the old toilets are being replaced with a new model that has more efficient and effective cleaning systems, as well as better lighting that includes a skylight to bring in daylight from above and a rain-water collection network that supports routine washing.

Their mechanical systems have been upgraded, too. The toilets self-clean after every use and the hand-washing system is stronger and more energy-efficient. As before, the new public toilets are accessible to people with disabilities and connected directly to City sewer, water and electrical lines.



The public toilets are in diverse locations, including Embarcadero Plaza, Civic Center Plaza, Twin Peaks, the 16th Street and 24th Street BART stations and the Castro.

As part of the partnership, Public Works made sure that the JCDecaux toilets come at no cost to the City. JCDecaux must pay for the full cost of the design, manufacturing, installation and daily maintenance of the public toilets and in return the firm is granted the right to install 114 sidewalk advertising kiosks throughout downtown, the Financial District and popular tourist areas.

In addition, JCDecaux pays \$2.2 million a year for staffing at approximately 11 of the toilets as part of Public Works' Pit Stop program where an attendant is on hand to ensure the toilets are kept safe, clean and operational for their intended use.

After more than 20 years on the sidewalks, the old public toilets are ready to be retired: the mechanical systems are outdated, replacement parts difficult to procure and the materials degrade. Once the original agreement between the City and JCDecaux expired, a Request for Proposals was released to identify the next public toilet vendor.

JCDecaux was chosen in a competitive bidding process to manufacture San Francisco's new public toilets.

SmithGroup, a national design firm with a robust San Francisco office, was chosen as the winner of an invitation-only competition to redesign the public toilets and multi-function advertising kiosks.

The design of the new toilets and kiosks complements the contemporary and elegant designs of the BART portals on Market Street and the café kiosk at Civic Center Plaza at Larkin and Grove Streets. SmithGroup's design for the toilets and kiosks was reviewed and approved by the San Francisco Arts Commission and the City's Historic Preservation Commission.

Because the toilets and kiosks are intended to be used for at least 20 years, they need to be not only timeless in their design but also built and maintained to withstand decades of public use.







## Chinatown Cleaning

Public Works teams hopped into action to ready Chinatown for the Lunar New Year so the historic neighborhood could welcome locals and visitors celebrating the Year of the Rabbit.

The 2023 Lunar New Year celebrations began on Jan. 22 and were observed through Feb. 5 with family gatherings and civic festivities. Chinatown was at the center of the activities in San Francisco.

It is a Chinese tradition for celebrants to clean up their homes, shops and surrounding communities prior to the Lunar New Year to capture the “out-with-the-old, in-with-the-new” holiday spirit.

To that end, Public Works street cleaning crews power washed the Chinatown Dragon Gate at Grant Avenue and Bush Street and deep cleaned the sidewalk along Stockton Street and other major corridors and alleyways that burst with holiday activity. Skilled craftworkers from our Paint Shop touched up the Dragon Gate and the colorful dragon lamp posts along Grant Avenue between Bush Street and Broadway.

In addition, our street repair crews conducted a pothole-repair blitz throughout the neighborhood and along the Chinese New Year Parade route to provide smooth and safe travel.



# Greening



## Arbor Day

We celebrated Arbor Day 2023 in March with lots of hard work, a burst of community pride, a bundle of fun and a strong commitment to greening our urban environment.

Nearly 200 volunteers joined the Public Works Bureau of Urban Forestry team to plant 112 new street trees in the City's South of Market neighborhood. Among the tree species that took root: Raywood ash, London plane and Olea Majestic Beauty.

The new trees, once they grow big and strong, will absorb storm-water runoff, reduce air pollution and provide wildlife habitat and cooling shade in the neighborhood. Plus, they will bring a much-welcomed splash of living beauty to the neighborhood, which has one of the lowest percentages of tree canopy coverage in the City.



Among the locations for the new Arbor Day trees: Fifth street, between Clementina and Bryant streets; Folsom and Harrison streets, between Fifth and 13th streets; Howard street, between 11th and 13th streets; and South Van Ness Avenue near 12th street.

The workday and celebration marked the 151st anniversary of Arbor Day. As caretaker of San Francisco's 125,000-plus street trees under the voter-approved StreetTreeSF program, Public Works is committed to growing the City's urban forest and ensuring it thrives.

In addition to planting trees with volunteers, we also hosted our Arbor Day Fair, a family-fun event organized by our Community Engagement and Bureau of Urban Forestry teams and held on the grounds of the Bessie Carmichael Elementary School.

There, our carpenters set up shop where (mostly) kids, wielding hammers and nails, turned pieces of pre-cut wood into nifty Public Works-branded planter boxes. Once built, folks hit the next station, staffed by our landscape crews, and planted succulents and fragrant mint, rosemary and thyme plants.

Our partner City agency, SF Environment, also was on hand, offering a composting demonstration that included a large plastic bin full of wiggling earthworms. Folks who stopped by to take a look were invited to write a wish for the planet on a piece of biodegradable paper and toss it in the bin for the worms to eat.

The San Francisco Beekeepers Association offered tasty samples of its golden honey, harvested from hives in neighborhoods, including the Richmond, Presidio, Cole Valley, Golden Gate Park, the Sunset, Lake Merced and Bernal Heights. The beekeepers also educated passersby about the importance of the buzzing pollinators who help green the City.

There was face-painting, crafts-making and hip-shaking music. Another highlight of the day was the sky-high bucket truck rides provided by our arborists.





## Rain Garden

In January, the soggy start to the new year had been keeping our front-line crews occupied night and day, tending to fallen trees, clogged drains and hazardous rockslides. It also put our green infrastructure in San Francisco to work.

At the newly-built Southeast Community Center – where we led the design, construction management and greenspace creation – stormwater runoff fed the extensive rain gardens on the sprawling 4 ½ acre campus at 1550 Evans Ave. in the Bayview. We built the new facility, which opened its doors to the community in October 2022, for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

The rain gardens catch 100% of the rainwater that falls on the roof of the three-story building. The purpose is to slow down the water from entering the combined sewer system to keep it from overflowing and flooding the streets. The gardens also provide habitat and public open space.



## Crookedest Street

The meticulously maintained gardens straddling San Francisco's famed Crooked Street on Russian Hill received a long-awaited refresh with a twist this spring: Public Works landscaping crews painstakingly installed a serpentine grid of polyethylene tubing, with drip emitters, right before the eyes of tourists and locals visiting the steep, curvy 1000 block of Lombard Street.

Preparations for the drip irrigation installation project began in January with crews from the Bureau of Urban Forestry excavating broken, old and rusted pipes buried deep underground. Not only does the new irrigation system function better, but it also saves precious water.

The thirsty gardens now slowly sip 8,000 gallons of water a month, down from a gulping 50,000 gallons. That's a savings of more than 500,000 gallons a year — no drop in the bucket considering California is emerging from a devastating decade-long drought.



Set on a timer, the new system enables gardeners to fine-tune watering needs, based on rainfall, heat and sunlight. It replaces an antiquated and malfunctioning irrigation apparatus that wasted water, stressed the plants and vexed neighbors who pool private funds to maintain the spectacular gardens for the enjoyment of all.

Lush greenery, including showy pink and lavender hydrangeas, hardy boxwoods, fragrant roses, vigorous and bushy Matilija poppies and sturdy Sycamore trees, now benefits from the irrigation upgrades – not to mention residents and visitors from around the world who traverse the winding brick road and steep stairways flanking the street’s resplendent flower beds.

The plants are happier because their leaves aren’t splashed with water. The hydrangeas, for instance, which have suffered from drought stress, require deep-root watering — which the new system provides — to truly thrive.

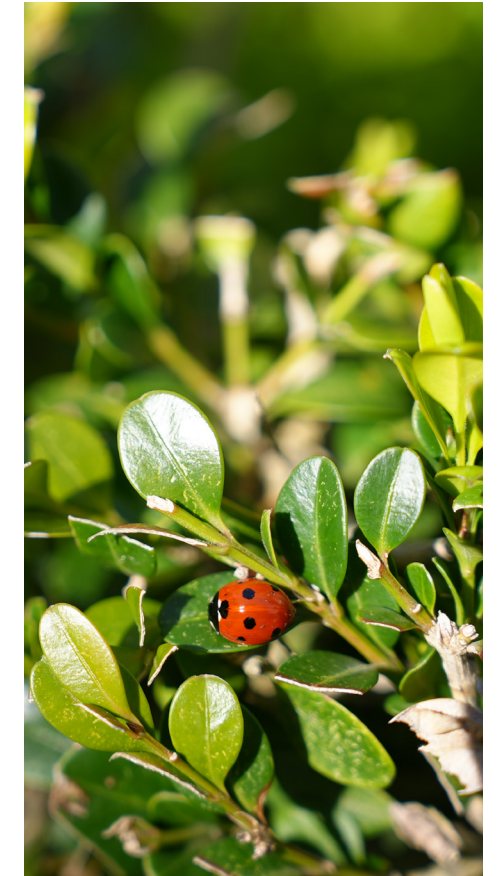
In March, Public Works gardeners began assembling the sections of hose at the department’s Operations Yard in the Bayview. They then transported the materials across town to Russian Hill.

Day by day, over five weeks, they toiled on hands and knees on the hillside, taking breaks to appreciate the sensational views.

Public Works paid for the project, with additional financial support from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, which runs the City’s water system.

The construction of Lombard Street, with its hairpin turns, dates to the 1920s. Up to 17,000 visitors a day come to the landmark location with its panoramic views.

The Public Works team took on the project with pride, skill and moxie. Passersby in late March and early April witnessed the intricate irrigation installation process as gardeners fastened twisting rubber hoses up and down the curving flower beds.





## Carolina Green Space

Running down the middle of Carolina Street, between 22nd and 23rd streets on Potrero Hill, lies one of the largest vegetated roadway islands in San Francisco.

The landscaped median, once maintained by the City, had become overgrown and pocked with litter.

Working with Public Works, a longtime neighbor started getting other neighbors together for volunteer cleanup days. In 2018, the group led the successful effort to forge a more formal stewardship agreement and created the Carolina Green Space street park under the Street Parks Program, a partnership involving Public Works, the nonprofit San Francisco Parks Alliance and community volunteers.

The Street Parks Program's goal is to transform underutilized and unkempt Public Works-owned parcels into welcoming green spaces for everyone to enjoy.

Public Works provides tools for volunteer workdays, picks up green waste, reviews maintenance plans and makes sure the sites are suitable to be turned into street parks.

There now are about 80 actively maintained street parks.





## Oh Rats!

Cities have been the home of rats for millennia! In response, the Public Works integrated pest management crew always is looking to outsmart these rodents and keep our streets cleaner and safer.

Neighbors at the tree-shaded Ada Court in the Tenderloin told City officials that rodents had been burrowing in the bricks of the tree basins. So, Public Works crews showed up with power washers and other heavy equipment to clean – as well as perform a novel rodent abatement method.

To prevent further infestation, the crews demolished existing nests and debris, removed the tree basin bricks and created a better barrier against further nesting. While carefully protecting the trees, crews replaced the bricks with large rocks that the rodents would not be able to penetrate.



# Public Health & Safety



## Street Vending Permit

To address a growing concern over the sale of stolen goods in busy neighborhood commercial corridors, San Francisco Public Works street inspectors began enforcement of the City's new street vending permit in September 2022. Community members reported noticeable improvements.



The goal of the permit program: create a legal path for legitimate vendors to sell their wares and bring order to what at-times has been a chaotic scene in some neighborhoods that had been overwhelmed with blocked sidewalks and the unfettered sale of stolen goods.

The Public Works Bureau of Street-use and Mapping's commercial permits team helped develop the new program, and our street inspectors have been taking the lead on outreach and enforcement.

The legislated program, approved by the Board of Supervisors and signed into law by Mayor London Breed, allows Public Works to issue Notices of Violation, which can result in fines of up to \$1,000.

The enforcement team also can confiscate goods being sold by peddlers without permits. The enforcement operation has not made the sale of stolen goods disappear completely, but the more regular presence of Public Works

inspectors has played a role in reducing the illegal activity and improved neighborhood conditions.

Without items blocking the path of travel, access to BART stations, Muni stops and shops and restaurants in the areas where unregulated sidewalk sales ran rampant became easier.

Public Works street inspectors have been on the ground seven days a week, primarily concentrating on three areas: Mission Street around the 24th Street BART Station and up to 16th Street; UN Plaza in the Mid-Market area and Stockton Street in Chinatown. Police are on hand to provide backup, if needed.





## Southeast Family Health Center

With community partnership and activism as a foundation, along with funding from the voter-approved 2016 Public Health and Safety Bond, Public Works spearheaded the design, project management and construction management of the new Southeast Family Health Center facility on behalf of the San Francisco Department of Public Health. The new health center was built to become a LEED Gold-certified building, equipped with 24 electric vehicle charging stations for staff and solar panels on the roof.

From the drawing board to the work on-site, Public Works' design, engineering, project management and construction management teams made the new Southeast Family Health Center come to life, creating spaces that bring people together and express a community's vision for itself.

The \$39.5 million project broke ground in June 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, with Public Works staff and our construction company partners working through the pandemic to ensure the timely completion of the project. The San Francisco Department of Public Health operates the clinic.



At two stories tall, the building includes 21 patient rooms, a laboratory, space for podiatry and optometry exams and a large multipurpose room. Crucially, the facility provides X-ray services to patients. With a robust offering of resources and expanded capacity, the facility helps keep Bayview-Hunters Point residents healthy, providing quality care for families and individuals and delivering services to where people live.

Dating back to the 1960s, Bayview-Hunters Point activists rallied to participate in new federal programs, intent on improving the health and welfare of their community. Those efforts led to federal funding to develop outpatient services and eventually build the original Southeast Health Center, near the corner of Keith Street and Bancroft Avenue.

The original health center – located next to the new clinic – still functions as a healthcare hub, especially for the most vulnerable community members, but an upgrade was needed to serve the community more holistically and keep up with demand.

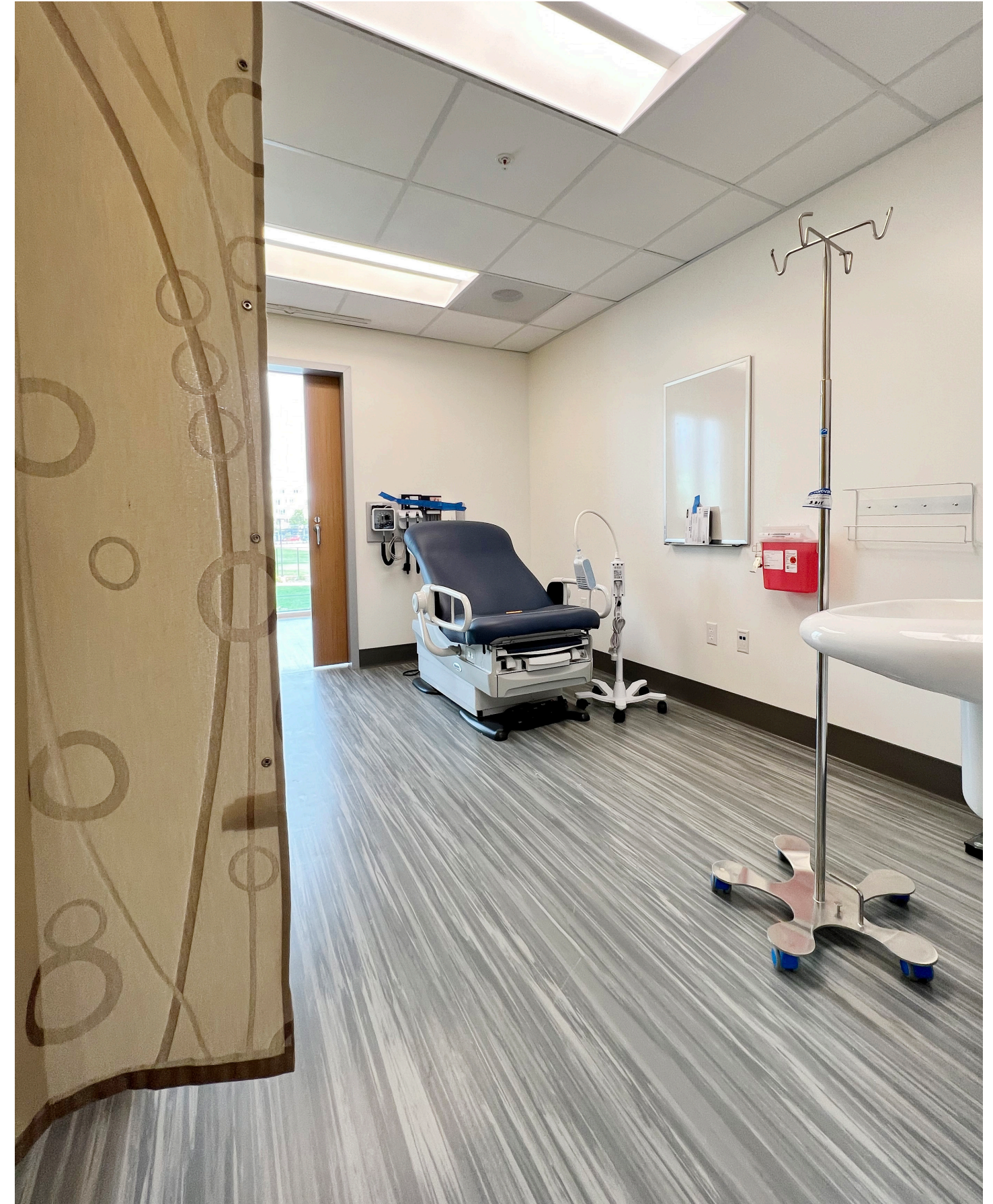
The new 22,000-square-foot neighborhood clinic – the culmination of decades of community activism and the start of a new chapter in community-focused healthcare for the historically under-resourced neighborhood – prioritizes natural light and visual connection to the street and the community. The clinic’s glass façade is meant to be welcom-

ing and evoke a sense that the building is always open and available to the community. Its roof-mounted solar panels, meanwhile, help the facility achieve reduced emissions, at times even producing excess power that can be delivered back to the grid.

The clinic’s steel frame is designed per modern building codes for earthquake safety, ensuring that it is built to last and provides a high level of life safety for occupants during a major earthquake.

More than 40 contractors collaborated on the project and much of the labor was performed by local residents. The main contractor on the project was CLW Builders Inc., a certified Local Business Enterprise.

The building is filled with artwork representative of the community, thanks to the City’s 2%-for-art program and a collaboration with the San Francisco Arts Commission.





# Castro-Mission Health Center

For decades a beacon of compassionate, comprehensive care for the Castro and Mission communities, San Francisco's first neighborhood-based primary care clinic celebrated major upgrades that will improve the patient experience for thousands of people each year.

Public Works was responsible for the project management, construction management and landscape architecture for the Castro-Mission Health Center, located at the corner of 17th and Prosper streets. This \$14 million project included seismic upgrades, improved accessibility for people with disabilities and enhanced patient exam and consultation rooms. At the opening, healthcare workers and community members alike were excited and inspired by this new community-friendly building.



The Castro-Mission Health Center renovation project primarily was funded by the Public Health and Safety Bond, passed by San Francisco voters in 2016. The \$350 million bond supports essential seismic and service delivery improvements to aging facilities that San Francisco relies on to protect the health and safety of residents, neighborhoods and businesses. The bond also funded capital improvements to the Maxine Hall and Southeast Family health centers, as well as clinic facilities at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital.

Improvements to the clinic included a new HVAC system and electrical switchgear, updated staff facilities, a dozen new exam rooms, four new consultation rooms, a new lab and waiting room, as well as upgrades to existing spaces. The exterior renovations included low-maintenance landscaping surrounding the facility.

The clinic, operated by the San Francisco Department of Public Health and formerly known as Health Center 1, traces its roots back to the mid-1960s when it was established as the City's first public health center.

It played an integral role early in the HIV/AIDS epidemic and continues to serve as the third-largest HIV treatment and care provider in the City's primary care network.

The Dimensions Clinic at the Castro-Mission Health Center, meanwhile, serves low-income or homeless LGBTQI+ youth – from 12 to 25 years old – by offering a variety of free or low-cost health services, including hormone replacement therapy, behavioral health and substance-use counseling, in addition to primary and urgent care.

One of the first clinics of its kind in the country, the Castro-Mission Health Center's Dimensions Clinic has been providing respectful gender- and sexuality-affirming health-care services since 1998.

Roughly half the patients at the Castro-Mission Health Center come from LGBTQI+ communities. All told the health center serves more than 3,900 patients a year on average.







# **Streetscapes & Public Spaces**



## Better Market Street

After years of planning, community outreach and multiple design iterations, the Better Market Street project is officially underway. It is a multi-agency, multi-phase project to revitalize 2.2 miles of Market Street, from Steuart Street to Octavia Street.

By the end of February, we completed about three-quarters of the potholing work for Phase 1 and began the process of replanting and removing street trees in the project area.

This phase of the project, which is led by Public Works, includes infrastructure improvements that will make Mid-Market safer and more pleasant for all who live, work and travel along the corridor.

Once construction wraps up in 2024, the project area will include new, fully ADA-compliant curb ramps, repaved crosswalks, new pavers and curb bulb-outs. There also will be new traffic signal poles and catch basins to improve drainage and streetscape improvements.

Future phases of the project, which the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency is expected to oversee, have not been scheduled, with funding sources and work scope yet to be determined.



## Wentworth Place

In San Francisco's Chinatown, where alleyways provide important corridors for the people who live and shop in the densely packed neighborhood, Wentworth Place – once known as “Salty Fish Alley” – was in dire need of a makeover.

Over the years, the wear and tear from heavy use began to destabilize the pavers and Chinatown residents and activists pressed Public Works for upgrades. The department delivered, installing new pavers to give a fresh and vibrant look to this active alleyway in the heart of Chinatown.

The project required close collaboration among various teams within Public Works, including project management, landscape architecture, street resurfacing and the Cement Shop.

Public Works cement masons carefully laid and graded the bedding sand, ensuring a solid foundation, and expertly carved and installed the new pavers. Following the final compaction, placement of joint sand and thorough cleanup, the newly revitalized cobblestone street was built to be resilient while preserving the alley's original charm.



## Public Murals

As the steward of the public right of way, Public Works collaborates closely with community groups that want to beautify and green their neighborhoods. With a long tradition of public murals, many resident groups propose painted and tiled murals on retaining walls, bridges and staircases. The newest mural, envisioned by Glen Park neighbors, is on the retaining wall and along a staircase at the dead end of Burnside Avenue, not far from Chenery Street.

The large retaining wall and its staircase are managed and cared for by Public Works and connect to the Glen Park Greenway, which runs from the BART station to Glen Canyon Park. This greenway is an important walking corridor that connects Glen Park to the rest of the City as part of the Crosstown Trail.

The Burnside Mural+ committee headed up the organizing, fundraising for and shepherding of the mural design. The group commissioned Twin Walls Mural Company to paint it.

The retaining wall portion showcases animals, birds, plants, trees and landscapes native to the area, creating a "learning wall" for students at the neighboring Saint John Catholic School and others. The staircase – painted in a grisaille method, using only various shades of blue – depicts important historic moments with ties to Glen Park, including one of the first U.S. suffragist parades and the Gum Tree Girls, a trio of neighborhood activists who successfully stopped a proposed freeway from ripping through Glen Park in the 1960s.



## Elevating Safer Streets

As part of the Page Street Neighborway Project, Public Works completed the City's first decorative raised intersection on a public street. Public Works partnered with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency on the project.

Located at Page and Buchanan streets, the raised intersection is part of a slew of improvements – from bio-retention planters, also known as rain gardens, to bulb-outs and sewer upgrades – along Page Street, from Buchanan to Gough streets.

Public Works designed the project and was responsible for project and construction management. The undertaking, completed in June, was part of the City's broader push to eliminate traffic deaths in San Francisco, a citywide effort known as Vision Zero SF.

Page Street – a major east-west corridor, especially for bicyclists – was folded into the ongoing Slow Streets Program.

Though raised intersections exist in cities across the country, this project – where a roughly 7-inch elevation and a decorative pavement inlay work together to slow down motorists, keeping pedestrians and bicyclists safe – marks a first for San Francisco.



# Design



## Southeast Community Center

A team of Public Works architects, landscape architects, engineers and construction managers led the design, construction and green-space creation of the new Southeast Community Center, built from the ground up for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and completed in 2022.

The new 45,000-square-foot center, located on a sprawling 4 ½ acre campus at 1550 Evans Ave., aims to be a gathering spot for people of all ages, a homebase for local nonprofits and a support system for families with its low-cost daycare, picnic areas and play spaces for children.

The center incorporates warm building materials, such as wood and brick, to make visitors feel at home. The lobby is intended to feel both intimate and welcoming, able to accommodate groups of various sizes. A terraced outdoor event space flanks the 5,000-square-foot Alex Pitcher pavilion – the spacious community room named in honor of the longtime civil rights activist.

Generous swaths of interior walls were reserved for public art: two three-dimensional photo-collage murals that commemorate the community activists who fought for the original Southeast Community Center and a large, scrapbook-like mural featuring images and cultural symbols of the Bayview–Hunters Point neighborhood.



Greeting patrons at the center’s entrance plaza sits an art installation, called Promissory Notes by renowned artist Mildred Howard. The three bronze sculptures were inspired by West African currency and aim to memorialize the unsung contributions of the African American community in the neighborhood.

The three-story center includes a café on the ground floor with a grand stairway leading to an open space where visitors can hang out and socialize, work on their laptops, read a book or just people-watch. Also on the ground floor: administrative offices for the center itself and a daycare center with access to the outdoors.

The second floor features multipurpose rooms and support spaces. Movable walls allow for the rooms to be subdivided or turned into one big space. The third floor includes offices for nonprofit and community organizations.

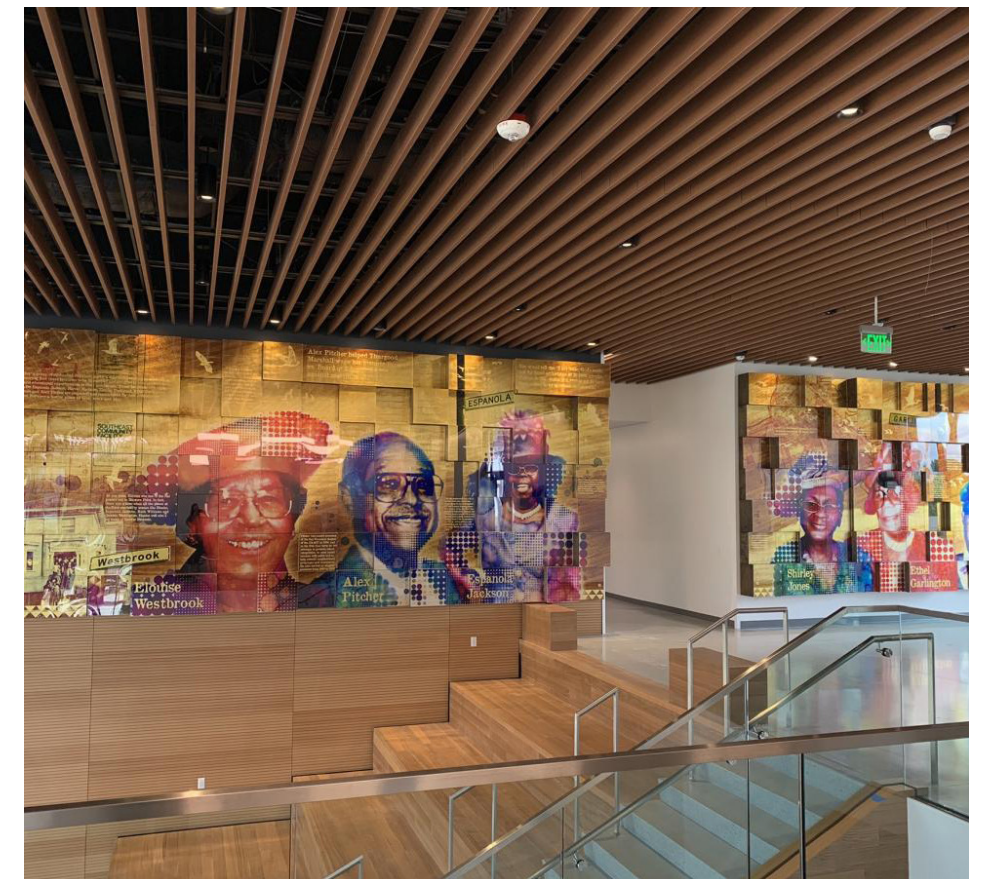
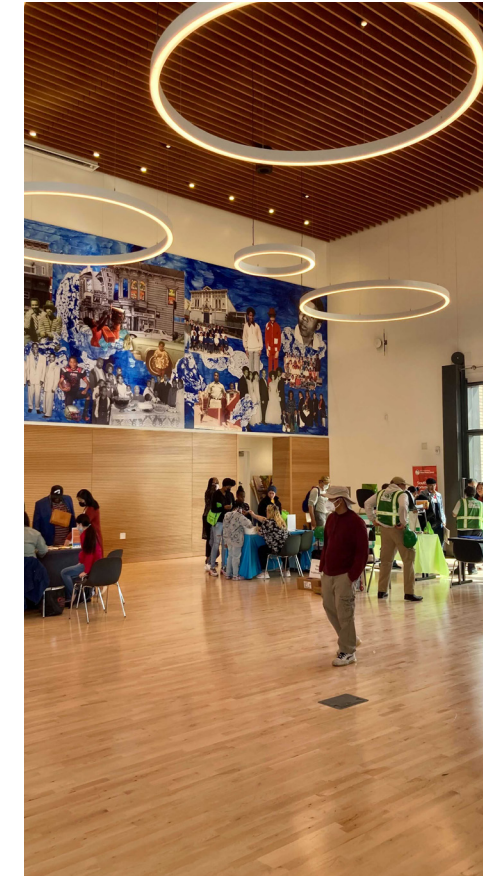
A LEED Gold-certified, all-electric facility, the center has solar panels on the roof, uses high-performance glass to stabilize the internal temperature and features motion-sensor activated lighting inside and outside the building to save energy.

Sunshades in the form of slats around the building help keep it cool and the parking lot includes nine electric vehicle charging stations.

Among the project’s more unique features: Stormwater runoff from the roof is brought down through the building and runs in trench drains across the site and finally ends up as a rainy season wetland at the south end of the property.

The ground-floor daycare has classrooms with doors directly to the outdoors so the teachers can oversee indoor and outdoor activities at the same time.

Both the new community center and the original Southeast Community Facility – which is located less than a mile away and would have required major repairs to stay open – are rooted in community activism and civic participation.







# Merced Heights Playground

The Merced Heights community came out in May to celebrate the latest transformation of a neighborhood park into a more enjoyable spot with a new picnic area, terraced lawn, plaza for public gatherings, outdoor exercise equipment, a lively dog play area and freshly planted habitat for birds and butterflies.

Public Works led the design for the reimagined Merced Heights Playground's lower lawn terrace and provided construction management and engineering services to deliver the project on behalf of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department. The park is bordered by Byxbee, Shields and Monticello streets.

The \$1.67 million renovation transformed a once underutilized grassy field on the lower portion at Merced Heights Playground into a feel-good, functional recreation space that encompasses some 17,000 square feet.

The latest improvements feature a natural lawn area, fenced-in synthetic turf dog run and exercise equipment for adults to augment the children's play structures nearby. Accessibility upgrades now make the space easier to navigate for all visitors.



## All-Gender Bathrooms

This spring, San Francisco began construction on a 21-stall all-gender restroom – the largest one yet for a City building.

All-gender restrooms are intended to be used by anyone.

The new restroom was built on the second floor of 1 South Van Ness Ave., the City building that houses several departments, including the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, the Department of Technology, the Department of Human Resources and the 311 customer service center.

The second-floor bathroom, available for City employees, is the only one available for public use, as well.

The new all-gender restroom, which replaced two existing single-sex bathrooms last renovated in the 1980s, was constructed by knocking out the wall that separated them. It uses most of the existing plumbing and mechanical connections and floor drains to save on costs, but all the toilets, sinks, toilet partitions, flooring and the like are new.

The Public Works Bureau of Architecture designed the project on behalf of the City's Real Estate Division.



## Poem

Emerging from Lone Mountain springs  
Hayes Creek lies hidden beneath your feet  
Winter rains revealed the wellspring below  
Once wide and braided more like a river  
Now covered and quieted  
Beneath Civic Center it still flows

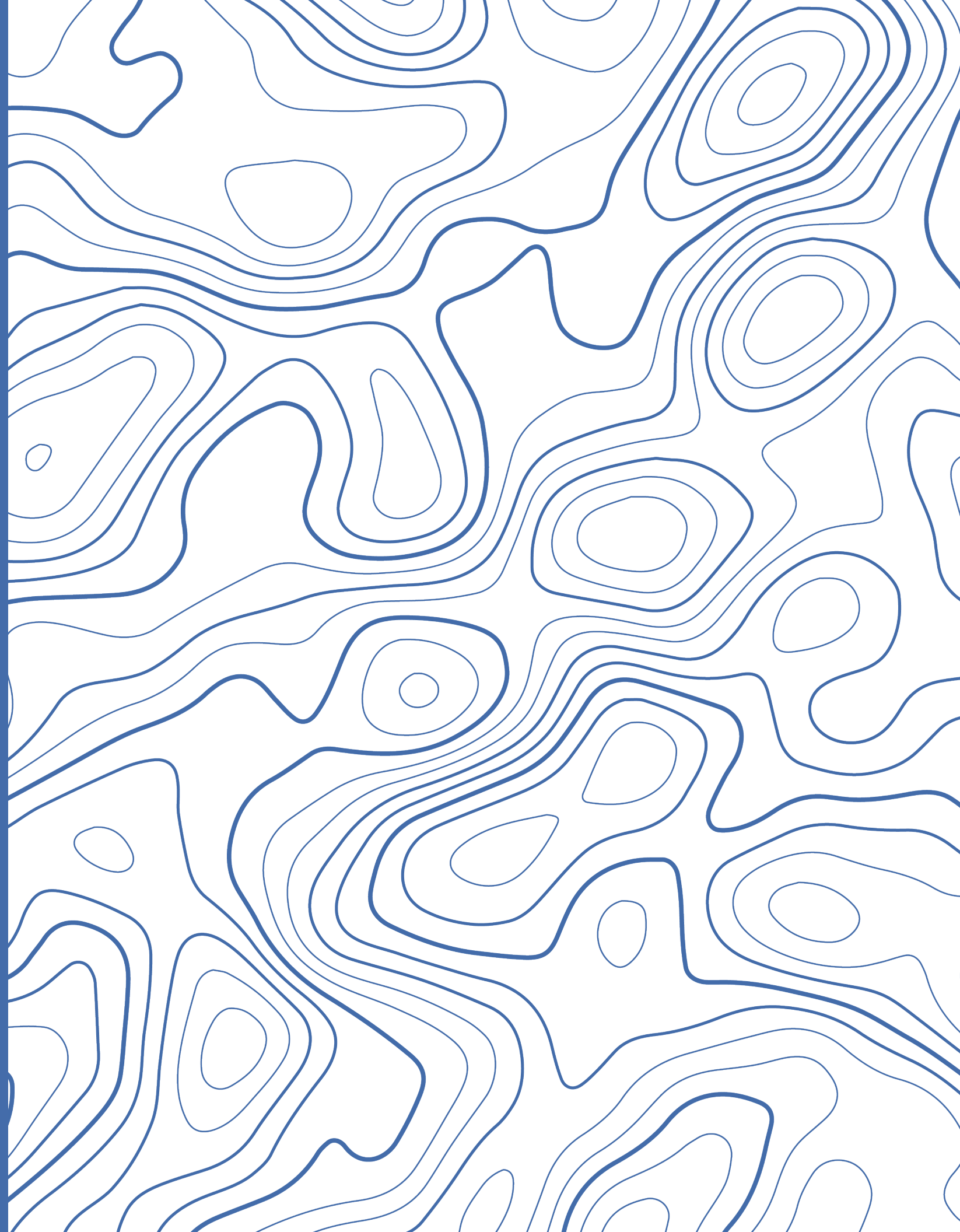
Those 36 words, woven together as a poem in six stanzas, can be found engraved into the curbs of bio-retention planters that the City installed as a green infrastructure component of the Van Ness Transit Improvement Project. Designed to capture and manage stormwater to reduce flooding on the street, the planters also serve to beautify the busy Civic Center neighborhood corridor near City Hall.

Koa Pickering, a Public Works landscape architect who worked on this stormwater project, wrote the poem as an interpretive element that reflects the natural environment of what once was and what still lies beneath the paved urban fabric.

It may be subtle and people may walk by and not take notice, but it may also spark curiosity and get people to start to think a little more deeply about urban development and the amazing natural landscapes and waterways in our ecosystem.

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