Ashland Avenue Project

Building Safer Routes to Schools and More

Life just got better on Ashland Avenue for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially the many students who walk to and from school every day.

Thanks to the Public Works Agency’s foresight, Ashland Avenue, in the unincorporated area of San Lorenzo, is more accessible to both pedestrians and bicyclists. The $755,000 upgrade, which broke ground this past May and was completed in September, includes improvements along the underpass, continuous sidewalks, ADA-compliant ramps and bike lanes, too! The vast majority of Ashland Avenue, between E. 14th Avenue and Ano Avenue, has now been upgraded. The remaining portion of Ashland Avenue, between Ano Avenue and Lewelling Boulevard, will be scheduled for upgrades at a later date through a separate PWA improvement project.

“With the Ashland Avenue Improvement Project, our goal was to provide and improve facilities for all modes of transportation while also providing a safer route for students attending Hesperian Elementary School, Edendale Middle School, and San Lorenzo High School. Thanks to the Active Transportation Program, we were able to apply for and receive federal funding to make this project possible,” says PWA’s Maritoni Maravilla, Project Engineer for the Ashland Avenue Project.
WINTER STORM PREPARATION

Keep it Simple! Get Help! Plan Ahead! Start Now!

Storm season typically runs from October through March, with most of the severe storms occurring between December and February. While that may seem a long way in the future, it’s never too early to start getting ready.

Steps to Prepare for The Winter Storm Season:

- Create an EMERGENCY PLAN for your property and your family. Visit ready.acgov.org or www.ready.gov for tips.
- Assess storm/flood risk for your property and review, update or purchase flood insurance.
- Schedule home repairs now (roofs, doors, windows, etc.)
- Prepare emergency kits (including items such as a first aid kit, essential medicines, cash, food, non-electric can opener, portable radio, flashlights and spare batteries) and store in air-tight bags in an easily accessible location.
- Clear storm drains and rain gutters of debris.
- Trim trees and landscaping to protect your structure and powerlines.

During a storm, you can do a couple of extra things to help prevent flooding and minimize damage:

- Keep a rake on hand to clear debris that may clog storm drains during rain storms.
- Secure or remove items that can blow around in your yard.
- Keep your garbage cans and cars at least one foot from the curb to avoid blocking storm water flows.
- Keep filled sandbags handy and install as needed.

FOR MORE TIPS and to sign up for road closure and storm impact emails, visit the Public Works Agency’s website.

THE BEST OF THE BEST...IN THE WEST!

Having PWA employees recognized for excellence by the American Public Works Association (APWA), Northern California Chapter is beginning to be a wonderful habit. Last year, two PWA employees were recognized for outstanding service. This year, two more employees took home top honors and six employees were nominated for their contributions to various public works fields.

The “APWA Water Resources Manager of the Year” award was presented to Hank Ackerman for his vision and effective leadership as the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District manager. Hank oversees 37 staff members and manages a $79 million-dollar annual flood control budget. Hank successfully leads his team as they employ new and innovative tools and technologies which have streamlined and improved day-to-day operations. He is well-known for his positive attitude and unwavering commitment to improving quality of life through Public Works.

Nanci Erven-Collins accepted the “APWA Administrative Manager of the Year” award for her contributions as the Agency’s Public Information Officer, the legislative coordinator, and for her direct support to the Agency Director and its 250+ employees. Some of her recent accomplishments that earned recognition include the newly revamped Public Works Agency website, the creation of a series of storm preparation videos (available on YouTube), and implementing and editing this newsletter. Nanci is a valued long-time member of the PWA team who has earned respect from her peers and from Alameda County constituents for her responsiveness and her solutions-based approach to challenges.
On Saturday, September 9th, the Public Works Agency joined other county departments and local, state and national agencies to participate in the Alameda County Sheriff’s Urban Shield 2017 Emergency Preparedness Fair.

Attended by over 750 people, the fair featured simple tips and demonstrations that can save lives in natural disasters and emergencies. Fairgoers learned how to build personal and family emergency kits, prepare evacuation plans and find their way out of a smoke-filled building. One fascinating exhibit, “The Big Shaker,” the world’s largest mobile earthquake simulator, mirrored the effects of a magnitude 8 earthquake. Emergency preparedness training sessions were also tailored to seniors, persons with disabilities, and pet owners.

Popular with the fair crowd was the Public Works Agency’s display of its flood and road hazard rapid response vehicles. PWA staff explained their role during emergency situations like mudslides, downed trees and powerlines, and localized flooding. Staff also shared how to prepare homes for the winter storm season.

“Many people don’t typically think of Public Works as being first responders,” Sheriff Ahern noted. “But Public Works is always around - they are the guys who constantly work behind the scene to make things happen. They do the work that no one wants to do.”

While Public Works does operate behind the scenes, they share the common goal of all Alameda County agencies and departments: To serve the community with integrity, compassion and excellent customer service.

Did You Know ...?

Alameda County residents living in a “Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)” currently receive a discount on flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)? That’s right!

This discount is possible because the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District voluntarily participates in the NFIP Community Rating Service (CRS) Program. You’ll be happy to know flood insurance is available not just for homeowners, but for renters, too!

Keep in mind, you don’t have to live near water to experience flooding. Consider buying a flood insurance policy if your house could be flooded by excessive rainfall, an overflowing creek or pond, or water running down a steep hill.

Act now! If you wait for a flood season warning on the evening news to buy a policy, it could be too late as there is a 30-day waiting period before coverage takes effect.

For more information, visit the Public Works Agency’s FEMA National Flood Insurance Program webpage by clicking here.
I LOVE WALK AND ROLL!

Walk to School Week | October 2-6, 2017

What began as a simple idea—students and families, school leaders, and local officials walking and rolling to school together for health, safety and the environment—has become an international event with an important local focus. During Walk to School Week, the PWA helped organize events for 6,200 students at 11 public schools in unincorporated Alameda County.

No matter how they walked or rolled, a fun time was had by all raising awareness about creating safer routes for walking and bicycling to school. The event promotes the importance of increasing physical activity among children, pedestrian and bicycle safety, reducing traffic congestion and showing concern for the environment. Held annually during the first week of October, Walk to School Week builds connections between families, schools and the broader community.

Did you miss it? No worries! Join in next year… and every year… for Walk (and Roll) to School Week!

UPDATE:

Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Your Input is Critical to the Plan’s Success!

The Public Works Agency is currently updating its Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for Unincorporated Areas, last adopted in 2012. The updated Plan will develop strategies to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety; increase access to work, school, shopping, recreation, and transit; and facilitate more walking and biking in the Alameda County Unincorporated Areas. It will also include goals and policies, bicycle and pedestrian networks, safety and education programs, and funding/implementation strategies to provide more opportunities to walk and bike in the Alameda County Unincorporated Areas.

Multiple workshops will be held throughout the update process to obtain community input and feedback on existing conditions and potential improvements. An interactive mapping tool (WikiMap) allows you to provide comments, identify locations for infrastructure improvements, and help guide the development of goals, policies, and improvements included in the Plan. The WikiMap will close on Friday, Nov. 17, 2017.

Click here to visit the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update webpage for workshop schedules and additional information throughout the update process.

Your Ideas Matter

So Let Your Voice Be Heard!

Public Works is continuing the process of updating the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Robust community participation and input is critical to building a successful bicycle and pedestrian network that exceeds all goals. For more information, please visit the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan website.