

# **2022 City Council Candidate Briefing**

## **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

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### **BACKGROUND**

The Public Works Department's mission is to provide quality services with commitment, courtesy, and pride. In partnership with the Burlingame community, the Department strives to offer cost-effective and environmentally responsible services in the areas of design, construction, operation, and maintenance of public works infrastructure. This ensures that Burlingame remains a beautiful and vibrant city in which to work and live.

The Public Works Department (PWD) is comprised of seven major divisions: Engineering, Facilities, Sewer, Streets and Storm Drainage, Vehicle and Equipment, Water, and Waste Water Treatment Plant.

The primary function of PWD is to provide essential public services to the community such as:

- High-quality drinking water
- Operation and maintenance of the sanitary sewer system
- Safe roads and sidewalks
- Storm drainage and flood protection
- Traffic signals
- Street lights
- Parking facilities
- Facilities and fleet maintenance

PWD operates and maintains:

- 105 miles of drinking water pipeline system with seven storage reservoirs/tanks
- 100 miles of sanitary sewer collection system with 40 miles of laterals
- A wastewater treatment plant
- 17 pump stations
- 84 miles of roadways with traffic control devices, signals, and street lights
- 116 miles of sidewalks
- 50 miles of a storm drainage system that includes pipelines, creeks, and channels
- 200,000 square feet of building facilities
- 24 public parking facilities
- 115 vehicles and 137 pieces of City of Burlingame equipment

PWD is also responsible for implementing the City’s Capital Improvement Program to upgrade or replace aging infrastructure and works closely with the Community Development Department to review private development projects for conformance with City standards.

The Public Works Director provides management oversight and is responsible for the preparation of PWD’s annual budget. The Director serves as an advisor to the City Manager; other departments; the Traffic, Safety and Parking Commission; and the City Council on matters involving public works issues. The Director also represents the City on regional public works and transportation matters with Caltrans, Caltrain, the City/County Association of Governments, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the San Mateo County Transportation Authority, and the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency.

**MAJOR DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES**

***Broadway Railroad Grade Separation:*** The existing at-grade railroad crossing at Broadway continues to cause severe traffic congestion and safety problems along the Broadway Corridor and adjacent areas. The California Public Utilities Commission has ranked the Broadway at-grade crossing as the number one priority for a grade separation upgrade in California based on safety considerations. PWD has been working with the California Public Utilities Commission and the Peninsula Joint Powers Board to address the problem. Two years ago, the City completed the Project Study Report (PSR) with a \$1M grant from the San Mateo County Transportation Authority. The PSR explored several alternatives and identified a preferred alternative. Based on strong public support through an extensive public outreach process, the City Council unanimously approved the preferred alternative, which consists of partially raising the railway tracks and partially depressing the roadway. The preliminary design and environmental certification of the grade separation project has been completed and approved by the Federal Transportation Administration. Additionally, the City has completed value engineering to further enhance the project and reduce costs. The project is currently in the final design phase to get ready for construction, provided funding availability. The City is working with regional, state, and federal agencies to obtain funding to begin construction. Upon completion of construction, the project will eliminate the hazard associated with train-motor vehicle collision, improve traffic congestion, and culminate in a state-of-the-art train station.

***El Camino Real Rehabilitation:*** Approximately five years ago, the City, in collaboration with Caltrans, formed the El Camino Real (ECR) Task Force to identify feasible options to address various safety issues related to roadway, sidewalk, and drainage

infrastructure, while preserving the historic character of the eucalyptus grove along the ECR corridor. The Task Force, which included several community members and a technical team consisting of an outside consultant, City staff, and Caltrans staff, made several recommendations at the conclusion of the process. Based on the recommendations, Caltrans initiated the environmental scoping for the project, conducted environmental studies, and certified the project Environmental Impact Report. Caltrans is currently in the process of initiating the detailed engineering design for the ECR corridor.

***Undergrounding of Overhead Powerlines Along El Camino Real:*** As part of the development of the ECR Project, the City Council established the El Camino Real Undergrounding Utility District and purchased approximately \$18 million of CPUC Rule 20A credits (used for undergrounding power lines) at a substantially discounted rate. The total estimated cost of the project is approximately \$25 to \$30 million.

***Burlingame Sea Level Rise (SLR) Shoreline Protection Project:*** In collaboration with San Francisco International Airport, the City of Millbrae, and OneShoreline, the City has initiated the development of the SLR Shoreline Protection Project. OneShoreline has received approximately \$4 million in State grant funds, which will be utilized to conduct project preliminary design and environmental studies. The design and construction of the Bay Trail will be included as part of the SLR Shoreline Protection Project.

***Old Bayshore Highway Project:*** The City Council recently approved the feasibility study and a preferred alternative for the Old Bayshore Highway Project. The project will beautify the corridor, including bike lanes, wider sidewalks, trees, landscaping, and access improvements to the Bay Trail. The estimated project cost is approximately \$13 million. Funding is not currently available to complete the project; however, staff will apply for relevant federal and state grants as they become available.

***Highland Avenue Garage Project:*** Through a public-private partnership, the City now has a new parking garage in the Burlingame Avenue Downtown Area. The new garage provides a total of 386 parking spaces, including 23 Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.

***Citywide Bike/Ped Master Plan Update:*** In 2020, the City Council approved a new Bike/Ped Master Plan. The City last updated the Bike/Ped Master Plan in 2004, resulting in the completion of several projects. The new plan addresses the growing needs of the community in terms of bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

***Capital Improvement Program:*** Much of the City's water system, sewer system, and storm drainage infrastructure was built over 100 years ago and has served its intended

design life. Per the City Council's direction, PWD prepared a robust Capital Improvement Master Plan and initiated its implementation. As a result, over 60 miles of deteriorated potable water and sanitary sewer pipelines have been replaced with new pipelines. PWD is currently working on several projects to upgrade portions of the remaining 145 miles of aging potable water and sewer pipelines citywide. Furthermore, in 2009, the community approved a ballot measure to upgrade the 100-year old storm drainage system. PWD has implemented several high priority projects to minimize flooding since the passage of the ballot measure and is currently working on many neighborhood storm drainage improvements that will be under construction in the coming months.

In addition, PWD is working on several projects to upgrade the City's infrastructure, including street resurfacing, curb and gutter replacement, sidewalk repairs, traffic signal upgrades, bicycle facilities, and facilities improvements.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information regarding Public Works Department programs and projects, please contact Syed Murtuza, Public Works Director, at 650-558-7230 or [smurtuza@burlingame.org](mailto:smurtuza@burlingame.org).