

Community Development & Infrastructure Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue II
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Building communities from the ground up. Striving to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public by providing essential services for daily life.

Earth Day

Mary Ann LoBalbo, Zero Waste Program Coordinator



Earth Day was celebrated on April 22nd and 23rd with events for the community in Watsonville and Santa Cruz. The County Recycling & Solid Waste Services hosted a booth where visitors came to learn how to properly sort their waste and get ideas on how to lower their single-use plastic waste.

There was a corn hole game to teach how to sort household trash. The boards represented the carts used for Organics, Recyclables, Trash, and even Household Hazardous Waste. The bean bags had images of various

waste items on them. The object of the game was to correctly match the waste item with the appropriate cart. Properly sorting waste is an easy way to help the planet by minimizing waste being landfilled and reducing greenhouse gas generation. Visitors learned the importance of not contaminating their recyclables and were encouraged to get recycling information from their local curbside trash hauler. Samples of laundry detergent and pre-treat stain solutions that come in non-plastic containers were handed out. Reusable silicone bags that can be used instead of Ziplock bags were displayed. The County's Sanitation Team helped plan the 2023 Santa Cruz Earth Day and had their own booth for outreach and education. They showed families how to collect their cooking grease in a can to be disposed in the trash, rather than going down the drain (which causes sewer back-ups). They informed visitors how wet wipes (including the ones labeled as "flushable") are not flushable and clog drain lines. Photos were displayed that showed negative impacts/clogging to wastewater pipes when grease, oil and wipes are disposed down the drain. Other booths had information about how taking the bus, walking, or cycling helps to lower carbon emissions in the air, suggested environmentally friendly products to check out, and showed learning opportunities and fun facts about science and the environment. Together with so many booths of information, the Earth Day celebration events were fun and a positive opportunity to interact with the community and provide education about the County's Sanitation District and Recycling & Solid Waste Services. We look forward to Earth Day 2024 but every day on our planet is an opportunity to make informed choices about our impacts on the environment. We can do better together!



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What a Winter

Steve Wiesner, Assistant Director Public Works– Transportation



In early 2023, Santa Cruz County experienced a series of atmospheric river (AR) storms that left the region grappling with an unparalleled onslaught of rainfall and related challenges. These storms, characterized by concentrated streams of moisture-laden air, resulted in widespread flooding, landslides, and significant disruption to daily life.

AR storms are powerful weather systems that bring copious amounts of moisture to the West Coast of North America. While these storms are not uncommon in California and our County the series of atmospheric river events during 2023 reached unprecedented intensity.

We witnessed an astonishing amount of rainfall during these storms. Over a span of nearly 3 months, the region was drenched by an extraordinary deluge of precipitation, surpassing historical records. Rainfall totals reached several times the average for the region, causing rivers to swell, creeks to overflow their banks, levee breaches and low-lying areas to become flooded. The relentless downpours wreaked havoc on infrastructure, leading to road closures,

power outages, and disruptions in essential services.

The immense volume of storm runoff overwhelmed our creeks and rivers, resulting in extensive flooding throughout the County including areas such as downtown Soquel, Felton Grove, the Interlaken area, and the entire town of Pajaro in Monterey County. Low-lying coastal regions were particularly vulnerable, with surging tides compounding the impact of the already swollen rivers resulting in dramatic coastal impacts such as damage to regional piers, buildings and the demise of the Cement Ship in Seacliff.

Moreover, the steep terrain and unstable soils in the Santa Cruz Mountains contributed to a heightened risk of landslides. Our mountainous regions experienced significant landslides and downed trees blocking roads, threatening structures and damaging many private and County maintained roads. The combination of flooding and landslides posed significant challenges to emergency response and road repairs.

The Road Crew swiftly mobilized at the onset of these AR storms to address the impact on the County's road infrastructure. They promptly assessed the damage, prioritized areas requiring immediate attention, and worked tirelessly to clear debris, fallen trees, and landslides that obstructed roadways. They worked around the clock for days and weeks at a time. Their swift and dedicated response helped restore access and ensure the safety of residents and emergency personnel.

In early January Public Works Engineering Assessment Teams were deployed and began documenting and estimating the permanent damage to County Roads. The 12 AR events during January, February and March caused damage to nearly 190 locations on county-maintained roads estimated to cost nearly \$90 million to repair. The culmination of storm damage resulted in 2 major Federal Disaster Declarations which will help fund response and recovery efforts. The bulk of these sites will take several years to repair, however, due to the extraordinary efforts of Transportation Staff in conjunction with local engineers and contractors we have already begun repairing many of the highest priority sites and have completed 30 sites to date with another 48 actively in construction. All this work is being done in careful coordination with many other key support groups within the Public Works Division such as Fiscal, Clerical and Administration. We can't thank them enough for their support with these emergency repairs.

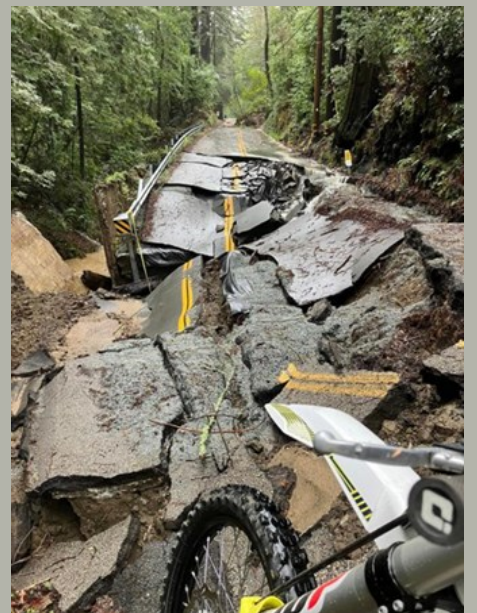
Please join me in commending the heroes of our Transportation, Roads, and Drainage Section for their dedication to service in protecting the health and safety of our communities.



Road and Drainage Crew response metrics for January, February and March storms.



- 2,497 Service Requests
- 18,217 County crew regular hours worked for storm response or clean up.
- 5,040 County crew overtime hours worked for storm response or clean up.
- Approximately 298 road closures.
- 99,913 Cubic yards of slide and tree debris cleared off roads and drainage channels. County crews and contractors.
- Approximately 45,000 sandbags and 900 tons of sand delivered to the community.
- 4,060 Potholes patched



Hello ADU

Suzanne Ise, Principal Planner

The **HelloADU** program offers help to unincorporated area homeowners navigating the process of adding an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) or a Junior ADU (JADU) to their properties.

CDI Planning Division (Housing) has contracted with non-profit **Hello Housing** to administer this program. It supports homeowners who are ready to take the next steps to create an ADU or JADU on their properties, but could benefit from free guidance and expertise. HelloADU provides project feasibility, project management, cost estimating and contractor selection guidance to help participants navigate the process of designing, constructing, and renting an ADU or a JADU.

While the idea of developing a second unit is compelling to many homeowners and can add income and increase property values, the process

can be daunting. This is especially true for homeowners facing life transitions that make ADUs attractive, including new empty nesters, growing households, seniors wishing to age in place, and those seeking to create affordable housing for friends and family.

By offering free feasibility and project management services to qualified homeowners, the County and Hello Housing can partner with local homeowners to create new housing and address the housing crisis while helping local homeowners increase the value of their properties. This program has been funded for a 3-year pilot period.

Program applications are available in English and Spanish at <https://www.helloadu.org/new-santa-cruz-county-how-to-apply> for qualified homeowners in unincorporated areas of the county. To stay informed, subscribe to a newsletter at <https://www.helloadu.org/subscribe>. **The application period closes July 31.** Local designers, architects, builders, or contractors who wish to join Hello Housing's ADU Professionals registry may do so at <https://www.helloadu.org/join-our-professional-network>. Please join us in greeting Hello Housing staff and new HelloADU applicants at the UPC over the next several years.



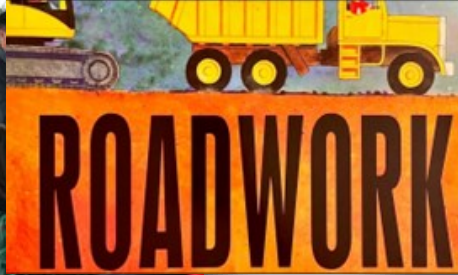
County of Santa Cruz ADU Incentives Program

Dreaming of building an
ADU or a JADU?

Apply Now
www.helloadu.org



CDI UPDATES



NEW EMPLOYEES

Jose Castaneda

Disposal Site Maintenance Worker

Krislyn Delgado

Accounting Technician

Margaret Nichols

Personnel Technician-Extra Help

Shane Vega

Heavy Equipment Mechanic II

Alejandro Medina Abrajan

Treatment Plant Operator in Training

Jacqueline Lopez Sanchez

Public Works Dispatcher

Omar Harasis

Public Works Maintenance Worker I

Norma Arteaga

Accounting Technician

Justin Stanford

Student Worker I-Extra Help

William Patterson

Student Worker III - Extra Help

Jay Bradford

Chief Building Inspector

Mark Conolly

Principal Planner

Fernanda Dias Pini

Planning Technician

Evelyn Gonzalez

Planning Technician

Sydney Niiyama

Planning Technician

PROMOTIONS

Sandro Garcia

Treatment Plant Operator

Jennifer Buckley

Engineering Associate

Mark Howland

Engineering Associate

Jacob Smrt

Public Works Maintenance Worker II

Anthony Sanchez-Robeson

Sanitation Maintenance Worker II

Miguel Magana

Sanitation Maintenance Worker II

Christine Hicks

Administrative Service Manager

Eduardo Morales Mendez

Public Works Maintenance Worker II

Derek Nelson

Public Works Maintenance Worker II

Robert Newey

Public Works Supervisor

Nicolas Padron

Public Works Supervisor

Benjamin Caldwell

Public Works Maintenance Worker III

Joshua Miller

Public Works Maintenance Worker III

Taylor Walton

Public Works Maintenance Worker III

Michael Lam

Planner II

Evan Ditmars

Planner III

Victoria Miller

Planner II

Aaron Landry

Provisional Code Compliance Manager

RETIREES

Douglas DuBois

Elsa Aguilar

