

COMMUNITY NEWS
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Azalea Mitch Ascends to Top Public Works Spot

Public Leader Dedicated to Clean Water and Stewardship of Public Infrastructure

San Mateo, CA — Years ago, a young Azalea Mitch could only imagine what would come from volunteering with Engineers Without Borders to help ensure communities overseas have access to clean drinking water. Now, she is director of the City of San Mateo's Public Works Department and a champion for environmental sustainability. Azalea Mitch, P.E., began serving as interim director in late 2020 and City Manager Drew Corbett appointed her to the permanent position April 4, 2021.

She is responsible for overseeing the Public Works Department, with a primary mission of being stewards of the city's infrastructure through a \$42.3 million budget and 143 full-time staff.



Mitch started at the City of San Mateo in 2018 as deputy director overseeing divisions responsible for the wastewater treatment plant, storm and sanitary sewers, asset management, and roads and traffic field maintenance. She has been instrumental in the \$1 billion Clean Water Program, a massive expansion of the City's wastewater treatment plant that incorporates sea level rise mitigations and innovative solutions for producing recycled water. Her promotion ensures consistent infrastructure stewardship of the City's largest transportation improvements, including Caltrain's 25th Grade Separation Project that will be finalized this fall and will provide safety improvements as well as reduce train horn noise.

"Public Works truly has a measurable effect on the community. We are constantly interacting with our infrastructure from the roads we drive on, to the sewer system we use every day," Mitch said. "The entire Public Works team – including our wastewater treatment staff, engineers, maintenance crews and administrative assistants – provides essential services around the clock. I am proud to work alongside our staff who have risen to the challenges of the pandemic and I'm eager to continue leading this department."

Mitch earned a Master of Environmental Management from Yale University and a Bachelor of Science in Civil and Environmental Engineering from University of California at Berkeley. Before joining the City of San Mateo, she was the city engineer/engineering services manager at the City of Menlo Park. She has worked across the nation and has over two decades of professional engineering experience in both the private and public sectors.

"Azalea Mitch is a skilled leader whose experience and passion for the Public Works profession is an asset to our organization. I have seen firsthand how dedicated she is to this work and I'm pleased to appoint her to this permanent role," said City Manager Drew Corbett

San Mateo's Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance and construction of the City's infrastructure including streets, sidewalks, traffic signals, street lights, publicly-owned parking lots, sewers and storm drain systems, open creeks and drainage canals, dams, flood-control lagoon and levees. The department also operates the wastewater-treatment plant that serves San Mateo, Foster City, Hillsborough and portions of unincorporated San Mateo County.

Mitch lives in Menlo Park with her husband and son, and their beloved cat, Garfie, whom she calls "Lady G." For more information about the Public Works Department, visit: www.cityofsanmateo.org/publicworks.

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