Overview
The County of Alameda is working on a corridor improvement project along Hesperian Boulevard between the I-880 freeway overpass and A Street in San Lorenzo. The intent of the corridor improvement project is to make the street safer for people walking, biking, and driving, to revitalize and beautify the Hesperian corridor, and increase community pride. The Alameda County Arts Commission is working alongside the County’s Public Works Agency to include public artwork in this project.

NEW! - Project Update
Artist Vanessa Marsh has completed the designs for the stencil-sandblasting of sidewalks in the commercial corridor of Hesperian Boulevard. This update includes a selection of the stencil imagery and the layouts for the different sidewalk areas. The designs will be presented to the Members of the Alameda County Arts Commission for approval on December 8, 2021. Arts Commission Director, Rachel Osajima will provide a brief project update at the Unincorporated Services Committee Meeting on Wednesday, December 1, 2021 and the Eden Area Municipal Advisory Council on Tuesday, December 14, 2021. It is anticipated that sandblasting will take place in Spring-Summer 2022, depending on the other construction activities. The design work for the street light pole banners and the utility box wraps will begin in 2022 with installation following the completion of the construction activities.

Artist Vanessa Marsh created 50 unique designs for the stencil-sandblasting project. The overall theme of the artwork is “The Sky Above and Below.” The silhouetted designs feature images of trees and birds including Sycamore, Olive, Madrone, and Honey Locust trees as well as Sparrows, Hummingbirds, Blackbirds, Sandpipers, Gulls and Hawks. There are 7 locations for the project along Hesperian between Post Office Rd and Via Mercado.

There is one change to the locations of the stencil-sandblasted artwork. The small plaza at the Southeast corner of Hesperian Boulevard and Paseo Grande in front of the Wells Fargo bank was one of the locations specified for art. However, the concrete at this location was poured and treated with a checkerboard pattern designed by the landscape architect for select other corners. With this treatment, sandblasting is no longer a viable option for this location. The project team agreed to relocate the artwork location to the area on the West side of Hesperian between Paseo Grande and Via Mercado. This is in front of the recently approved Village Green mixed use development which is anticipated to be built in the next few years. This is a much larger area than the small plaza. It is likely to be an area with a lot of community activity, making it a very good replacement site for the public art.

Project Description
The public art program for Hesperian Boulevard has multiple components:
1. Stencil-Sandblasting, Street Light Pole Banners, and Utility Box Wraps: Artist Vanessa Marsh was commissioned to create unique designs for projects that will take place in two phases. Marsh’s designs are based on photographs she takes of San Lorenzo’s trees, plants and birds. She will create drawings from her photographs and then digital files will be created that will be used by the stencil fabricator to make the stencils. The stencils are then used to sandblast the designs into the concrete. Marsh’s photographs of the area will also be the basis for the designs for the street light pole banners and utility box wraps. The designs for the banners and utility box wraps are still in design development and will be shared in a future Community Update.
Project Background

The public art program for Hesperian Boulevard has multiple components (continued):

2. Temporary printed mural on the Lorenzo Theater: Artist John Wehrle was commissioned to create an original painting that will be digitally reproduced as a supergraphic and installed on the Hesperian Blvd-facing wall of the Lorenzo Theatre. The original painting is now part of the County’s art collection. The temporary mural will be printed on a material suitable for outdoor applications and will be on view for at least one year. The Lorenzo Theater is currently under reconstruction related to the fire that occurred in June 2020. The estimated time for completion of fire reconstruction is November 2022. The County will consider a more definitive timeline for installation of the temporary mural toward the end of 2022.

3. Temporary Projects in the Commercial Corridor: Public art funds are reserved for additional temporary public art projects along Hesperian Blvd to help enliven the commercial corridor. The Arts Commission Staff will work with the Public Art Advisory Committee and the County’s Economic and Civic Development Department to develop this program. Updates about this plan will be provided in the future.

Community Involvement & Artist Selection Process

Community involvement and engagement are at the core of this project. Community members were involved in the project by contributing to a community survey about San Lorenzo, participating in a community roundtable and community meetings, providing comments about the artists' proposal designs, and serving on the artist selection committee.

Artist Vanessa Marsh was selected through the following open, competitive process to create the designs for the Stencil-Sandblasting, Street Light Pole Banners and new Utility Box Wraps. The Artist Selection Committee met on September 13, 2019 to review the qualifications and past work of the artists in the Project Pool of artists identified from the Alameda County Arts Commission’s Artist Registry. The Artist Selection Committee selected 6 artists as semi-finalists who were invited to create proposals for the project. The artist semi-finalists were reviewed and approved by the Alameda County Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) and the Members of Arts Commission. On October 16, 2019, a Community Roundtable was held with the artist semi-finalists at the San Lorenzo Library. During the Roundtable, community members had the opportunity to share thoughts about the special characteristics of San Lorenzo and how those characteristics should be reflected in the proposals for the public art. Community members also contributed ideas through an online survey. The artist semi-finalists considered the community survey and Roundtable comments when developing their proposals. The proposals were on display for community members to view in-person at the San Lorenzo Library and online from December 20, 2019 – January 30, 2020. Community members were encouraged to submit comments describing why each of the artists’ proposals may or may not be a good match for the community. All of the comments were shared with the Artist Selection Committee and the Committee was asked to consider the comments when making a recommendation of which artist to select for the project. The Artist Selection Committee reconvened on February 4, 2020 to review the proposals and interview the semi-finalists. At that meeting, the Committee recommended that artist Vanessa Marsh receive the design contract for the project. On February 27, 2020 the Alameda County Public Art Advisory Committee reviewed and approved Marsh as the recommended artist. On March 10, 2020 the Eden Area MAC reviewed and approved Marsh as the selected artist. The selection of Marsh was approved by the Members of the Alameda County Arts Commission on May 13, 2020. Marsh’s contract was approved by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors on June 30, 2020.

Artist Selection Committee

The Artist Selection Committee members for this project are:

- Christine Dowell, Community Representative
- Jordan Espinoza, Community Representative
- Norman Fobert, Community Representative
- Susan Olsen, Community Representative
- Kathie Ready, Community Representative
- Marcus Tikotsky, Artist & Community Representative (Sept mtg)
- Diane Wydler, Community Representative
- Danielle Wilson, Library Manager, San Lorenzo Library
Project Management
The Alameda County Arts Commission staff manages this project utilizing the same approach used for past public art projects involving community outreach and engagement, an open competitive selection process, and multi-step reviews and approvals. This process was used in recent public art projects in the unincorporated areas including the Ashland/Cherryland Community Identifier, Cherryland Community Center, Cherryland Fire Station, Castro Valley Streetscape Improvement Project, Castro Valley and San Lorenzo Libraries, San Lorenzo Community Identifier, and REACH Ashland Youth Center.

Artwork Stencil-Sandblasting

The following pages include a selection of the final designs for the stencils as well as the layout of the stencils at the seven locations created by artist Vanessa Marsh for the Hesperian Boulevard Corridor Improvement Project.

Photographs of early 72” x 72” and 12” x 12” sandblast test samples.
Artwork Designs: Stencil-Sandblasting
The following pages include a selection of the final designs for the stencils as well as the layout of the stencils at the seven locations created by artist Vanessa Marsh for the Hesperian Boulevard Corridor Improvement Project.

Location #1 - Northwest corner, Post Office Road
Madrone Trees & Gulls

Location #2 - Southeast corner, Post Office Road
Madrone Trees & Hawks

Artwork copyright Vanessa Marsh, 2021. All rights reserved.
Location #3 - In front of Ros Donuts and Straw Hat Pizza
Sycamore Trees & Sparrows

Location #4 - Northeast corner, Paseo Grande
Olive Trees & Blackbirds
Location #5 - Walkway in front of Wells Fargo
Sycamore Trees & Sparrows

Location #6 - In front of storefront between Wells Fargo and the Lorenzo Theater
Honey Locust Trees & Hummingbirds

Artwork copyright Vanessa Marsh, 2021. All rights reserved.
Location #7 - In front of future Village Green Development
Southwest corner, Paseo Grande (plan above) and Northwest corner Via Mercado (plan below)
Sycamore Trees, Sparrows, Sandpipers & Hawk
Project Update – Temporary Printed Mural for the Lorenzo Theater

Artist John Wehrle’s painting that will be reproduced as a large-scale supergraphic on the Hesperian Boulevard-facing exterior wall of the Lorenzo Theater is complete. The design complements the architectural style of the theater, features sycamore trees, and references elements found in the murals painted by Anthony Heinsbergen that are inside the theater. The temporary mural will be printed on a material suitable for outdoor applications and will be on view for at least one year. The Lorenzo Theater is currently under reconstruction related to the fire that occurred in June 2020. The estimated time for completion of fire reconstruction is November 2022. The County will consider a more definitive timeline for installation of the temporary mural toward the end of 2022.

Background Information about the Temporary Mural on the Lorenzo Theater: In 2017, through an open competitive process involving the community, artist John Wehrle was selected to create the San Lorenzo Community Identifier Mural project and additional street enhancements including utility boxes along Hesperian Boulevard. Wehrle’s contract was approved by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors on January 9, 2018. As an additional aspect of the street enhancements, Wehrle was commissioned to create an original painting that will be reproduced as a large-scale supergraphic on the Hesperian Boulevard-facing exterior wall of the Lorenzo Theater. The Arts Commission Staff worked with the Economic & Civic Development Department (ECD), the Lorenzo Theater Advisory Committee, and the Artist Selection Committee for the Community Identifier project, to develop the concept and review the artwork design. Osajima gave an update and showed images of the artwork to the Unincorporated Services Committee on July 22, 2020.
About the Alameda County Arts Commission & the County’s Public Art Ordinance
The Arts Commission was established in 1965 by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. The Members of the Arts Commission govern the services of the Commission and act in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors concerning the arts and the cultural environment in the County. The Arts Commission is comprised of fifteen community members appointed by the Board of Supervisors, and seven ex-officio members representing County Departments and leading educational and cultural institutions. The Arts Commission’s programs are managed by a staff of four full-time County employees. The Office of the Arts Commission is proud to be a division of the County’s Auditor-Controller Agency/Clerk-Recorder’s Office led by elected official Melissa Wilk. The support and leadership provided by Melissa Wilk is critical to the work of the Arts Commission. The Auditor-Controller Agency/Clerk-Recorder’s Office has an extensive leadership role with the County government and the Arts Commission.

The Alameda County Arts Commission is dedicated to improving the quality of life in Alameda County by nurturing a thriving environment for the arts; promoting economic opportunities for Alameda County’s artists and arts organizations through services such as arts funding, public art, and arts education; encouraging public participation in the arts and actively advocating for the arts. The Arts Commission supports all art forms including visual, performing, literary, traditional, and media arts. All of the Arts Commission’s services are based on the belief that the arts and creativity are an essential part of every successful and thriving community.

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors established Alameda County’s “Percent for Art” ordinance in 1994. The Public Art Program provides for public art elements connected to capital improvement projects undertaken by the County. By ordinance, the Arts Commission Staff are responsible for the management and administration of the Public Art Program. All aspects of the program are conducted in-house by the Arts Commission Staff. The goals of the Public Art Program are to generate positive, uplifting art experiences that create a sense of place, foster involvement with and respect for the regional community and users of the buildings, and promote the economic vitality of the County. For each site, unique artworks are created by professional artists and are integrated into the design of the structure or landscaping. Artwork is purchased or commissioned through an open, competitive process. The Public Art Program is administered with guidance from the Public Art Advisory Committee, a body of nine appointed community members.