

# Mayor Donaldson Report

Below is a summary of board meetings I attended:

**Transportation Agency for Monterey County  
(TAMC)**



February 25, 2026

## **24<sup>th</sup> Annual Transportation Excellence Awards**

The Transportation Agency presented their 24th Annual Transportation Excellence Awards to honor community members, programs, and projects that made a significant contribution to improving transportation networks in Monterey County.

This year's awards honorees are:

- Individual: James Herrera, Reporter, Monterey Herald, was recognized for his coverage of transportation related projects and programs for the daily newspaper; most notably for his continuous coverage of two regional Measure X funded projects, the Fort Ord Regional Trail and Greenway (FORTAG) Canyon Del Rey segment in the cities of Del Rey Oaks and Seaside and the Imjin Parkway Widening and Roundabout Project in the City of Marina.
- Program: "Safe Routes to School North County Participatory Budgeting Steering Committee" made up of residents and community advocates in the communities of Aromas, Castroville, Las Lomas, and Prunedale. The Steering Committee worked with Safe Routes to School program partners Center for Community Advocacy, Ecology Action, Monterey County Health Department, Monterey County Public Works Facilities & Parks Department, and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, to identify barriers to safe access for eleven public schools across North Monterey County.

Steering Committee members presented their recommendations for projects on North Monterey County Unified School District property to the district's Board of Directors and the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors and successfully got both Boards to approve their recommendations in October 2025. The Transportation Agency Board of Directors

subsequently approved Measure X and Regional Surface Transportation Program funds to implement the Safe Routes to school projects in North Monterey County.

- Project: The Bardin Road Safe Routes to School Improvements Project, The City of Salinas, Kimley-Horn & Associates, MNS Engineers, and the Don Chapin Company were recognized for the project's design to improve vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle access to Bardin Elementary School. Funded through the Active Transportation Program and Measure X, the project addressed safety concerns around Bardin Elementary School, where limited crosswalks and the absence of bicycle facilities previously forced families to share space with fast-moving vehicles.

Collectively, the safety improvements and enhancements transformed Bardin Road from a barrier into a connected multimodal corridor that supports neighborhood-to-neighborhood and school-to-community connectivity.

Board comments after the ceremony include the following:

“I think that it’s really important that we all recognize that it’s not just the process and outcomes that we highlighted today, but the fact that kids in our community are watching their parents and grandparents participate and be a part of the solutions, rather than just sitting at home and saying I wish someone would. You are doing and that’s the important piece that is going to reverberate through that community for a long time to come.” – Chris Lopez, Supervisor, District 3

“Ultimately , what I see here is that most of the times the Board looks at Excel documents, budget items, and so on, and today we are actually seeing the people. And ultimately, that’s what I want to recognize.” – Chaps Poduri, TAMC Chair

Summaries of each honoree and their achievements are available on the TAMC website:

<https://www.tamcmonterey.org/>

### **Safe Routes to School & Safe Streets Together Monterey County Campaign**

The Measure X Safe Routes to Schools Program has supported safer walking and bicycling for youth and families across Monterey County since 2018, building a foundation of community-based safety education and infrastructure needs. Building on this work, the Monterey County Vision Zero Plan is now being developed to identify and prioritize the projects and programs needed to eliminate severe and fatal traffic crashes countywide. Safe Streets Together Monterey County serves as the public-facing safety campaign that will help implement the Vision Zero Plan, reinforcing Safe Routes to Schools goals and advancing countywide safety policies through education, outreach, and behavior-change messaging.

The three initiatives – the Monterey County Vision Zero Action Plan, the Measure X Safe Routes to School Program, and the Safe Streets Together Monterey County campaign – are all key components of a comprehensive approach to prevent severe injuries and fatalities. Together, they provide the policy framework, infrastructure investments, and community-focused behavior-change tools needed to create safer streets for all.

### **TAMC Board Authorizes the Transfer of Project Funding and Implementation for the King City Multimodal Transportation Center to the TAMC Rail Program**

The Transportation Agency’s Board of Directors authorized TAMC’s Executive Director to begin discussions with Caltrans and the City of King to transfer project funding and implementation for the King City Multimodal Transportation Center project to the TAMC Rail program.

The authorization came after the City of King requested that TAMC become the project sponsor for the Multimodal Transportation Center project, with the departure of several City staff with many years of experience working on the project. The City of King has secured funding for the project from the State Rail Assistance, Interregional Transportation Improvement Program, Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program, and Senate Bill 125. Upon Board approval, TAMC staff will coordinate with Caltrans and the City of King to transfer the funding to TAMC to fund project-related planning activities.

The City of King has been planning for the re-establishment of passenger rail service since 2006, including development of the King City Multimodal Transportation Center. The project would be served by Amtrak Coast Starlight in the near term and is included in the 2024 State Rail Plan to be served by four round trips of a new intercity passenger service in the long term.

## Monterey One Water (M1W)



February 23, 2026

### ***Informational Items:***

- Executive Officer Paul Sciuto provided update on Pure Water Monterey
- Director of Finance Lawrence Chiu provided an update on the budgeting process and the development of the 2026/27 budgets is on track
- Assistant General Manager Tamsen Mc Narie advised that M1W received the "Large Plant of the Year" award from California Water Environment Association
- Rachel Gaudoin, Communications and Legislative Manager, provided an update on M1W's participation in the Salinas Valley Basin GSA Water Leadership Institution and reported on the execution of a contract for social media support aimed at increasing community engagement

### ***Board Actions:***

- Director Williamson and Director Hibino were elected to serve another term as Chair and Vice Chair
- Awarded Contract to Airgas USA, LLC for Liquid Oxygen for the Advanced Water Purification Facility (AWPF) in the Not-To-Exceed Amount of \$309,396
- Approved Third Contract Amendment with H2O Innovation for the Reverse Osmosis (RO) Threshold Inhibitor for the Advanced Water Purification Facility (AWPF) in the Not-To-Exceed Amount of \$115,897.86
- Approved First Contract Amendment with Thatcher Company for the Liquified Chlorine for the Salinas Valley Reclamation Project (SVRP) in the Not-To-Exceed Amount of \$1,061,625
- Director of Finance Lawrence Chiu, along with Willdan Financial Services, presented on alternative wastewater rate structures. After review, the Board approved a motion to maintain the current flat rate structure

## **Kim Shirley's Council Report for Tuesday, March 24, 2026**

**Friday, February 20th- ReGen Monterey Board Meeting-** As usual, lots of interesting things in today's meeting, but as Chair, I was also balancing the time constraints of our Directors, so after passing the consent agenda, we jumped ahead to voting for our Special District commissioner for LAFCO (Local Area Formation Commission of Monterey County). After a discussion with the Directors and listening to public comment, our board voted for Jonathan Ahmadi.

Next, we received the financial report for January and then moved on to our discussion/Action portion of our agenda, where all items passed unanimously. First, we received our 2025 Audit Statements, which was a pleasure since there were no findings (in other words, all is good!). After that, we approved the proposed amendments to our purchasing policy, which was more detailed than our last one and increased the threshold for purchases that need to go to the Board for approval (from \$75,000 to \$200,00). Some of the additional details included procurement processes, an emphasis on local preferences, and the incorporation of environmental considerations into purchasing.

Our next item was approving all of the contracts needed to construct our Covered Aerated Static Pile Composting Facility. This is a project we've been talking about for a long time, so it felt good to move forward on this, and I know the staff was excited to take this step. The good news about this item is that it should not only improve the efficiency of our composting system, but it will also cut down on odors.

Continuing with the idea of advancing our systems, our next item was approving the landfill leachate and sump control upgrades for several modules of our landfill. This approval of \$725,000 will allow our staff to build out and upgrade to a centralized monitoring system, which has reliable alarms and improved operational awareness. This upgrade will not only save staff time but will also lower the risk of pump failures, overflows, and delayed responses during off-hours.

For an additional source of revenue, we agreed to the next item: to authorize our General Manager to execute a disposal agreement with Environmental Resource Recovery, dba Valley Recycling II. This disposal agreement for waste from the San Jose area will provide us with 5 years of stable income, with a possible 3 year extension, at a rate that is 25% higher than our current outside contract with Greenwaste. They'll also provide us with needed alternative daily cover (ADC), which is also very helpful (we cover the landfill every night with ADC).

Our last item was approving a procedure that would allow our General Manager (or someone they designate) to suspend all or portions of our operations and to direct

evacuation or shelter-in-place actions during high-risk emergency events where unmitigable risk to life, safety, or environmental compliance exists. Seems like a no-brainer, right? Yup, it was.

**Tuesday, February 24th- City Council Meeting-** This was the first meeting in a long time where we went past 9 pm and had to vote to continue the meeting (we did, 3-2 decision, with Uy, myself, and the Mayor voting to continue). Although the big item we voted on didn't go as I had hoped, I believe we had some really good discussions.

To begin, we had proclamations honoring Black History Month (Feb.) and Women's History Month (March). Next, the Mayor presented a Seaside High School student (Estrellitah "Star" Hernandez) and a Monterey High School student (Idil Aktan) with certificates of recognition for their very competitive Mooselodge scholarships they won. I always love seeing students!

Students are a hard act to follow, but our next presentation was given by Paul Sciuto, the General Manager for Monterey One Water (they process our wastewater and produce drinking water through Pure Water Monterey). Besides giving the public an update on their facility, it was also to inform us that an increase in rates will be coming soon. If you're interested in these topics, I would encourage you to go back to our council recording to view this presentation.

After passing the consent agenda, we got into the big topic of the evening, which was deciding on a development process for our former Ft. Ord parcel. I'm happy we took the time for this topic, spending almost 3 hours talking about how we wanted to move forward. We received lots of public comments, with most of them expressing their desire for us to move forward with a "request for proposals" which would give the city an opportunity to fine-tune our interests in what we'd like for the property, and then send that out nationally as an invitation for proposals from developers. It's a tricky parcel, but given the significant step for our city, I agreed that this process would get us started in the right direction by potentially attracting more developers and allowing our residents to get involved from the very beginning. Ultimately, Mayor Donaldson convinced Council Members Hallock and Burger to vote with him on a different process in which the city will reach out only to the developers who have already shown interest (a total of 4). With this effort, it sounds like we'll likely have two serious responses. Our development team (the city manager, city attorney, our economic development consultant, and our environmental planner) will choose a developer to present to the council from those responses. I realize this option was chosen because one of those developers had already done their homework on the parcel and was in attendance at the meeting. They also chose this option because it would be quicker and cheaper. Even though I did not vote for this option, I was happy to finally have our first conversation at the council level on development.

Our next item was an update on the former Garden Center parcel. Since we were running late, we didn't get many details covered, but we're essentially in a "stay tuned" status. I was happy to hear the city manager talk about wanting to take his time, host town hall meetings, and find something that will be financially sustainable for the city.

Lastly, we quickly passed the first reading for an ordinance that added a prohibition to metal detecting activity on city property in the former Ft. Ord (for safety reasons).

**Thursday, February 26th- Monterey Peninsula College Education Center Status Announcement and Vision for the Marina Campus event-** I was invited to this event both as an elected official and as an MPC faculty member, so I couldn't resist. Getting the official recognition as an Education Center for our Marina Campus was truly an accomplishment. Exciting things will be happening at that facility as it continues to be built out, becoming a hub for many career technical training classes. The Marina Education Center was where I taught my first health class 18 years ago, so I was happy to see how far it's come.

**Wednesday, March 4th- ReGen Finance Committee Meeting-** The big topic for today's meeting was the rate increase proposal for fiscal year 26-27. We're looking at a roughly 5% increase for solid waste and other waste materials, recycling, and commercial food scraps, and a 10% increase for clean wood and residential organics. This equates to a \$0.44 increase for residential services in DRO and a \$2.75 increase for commercial. This increase still keeps us well below the average rate for disposal when compared to other local landfills in Monterey County, Santa Cruz County, and San Jose. Several reasons for this increase include funding our CalPERS unfunded liability costs, the increasing cost of capital expenditures, higher cost of employment, regulatory mandates, and inflation. Another large consideration is working to close a future funding gap we'll experience when our largest outside waste contract ends in 2036. Slowly increasing our rates so that we're essentially self-sufficient at that time allows us to lessen the impact of that loss, while also building revenue that can help fund infrastructure maintenance and new projects that will provide us with a return on investment (landfill gas projects). It also allows us to negotiate favorable out-of-district contracts when we reduce our reliance on those contracts. Overall, it was a great discussion, which took 1.5 hrs to review, which helps the staff be well prepared when this conversation moves to the entire board later in the month.

**Monday, March 9th- Monterey-Salinas Transit Administrative Performance Committee-** In this meeting, we received the State and Federal Advocacy updates. In the State update, it was mentioned that we're looking for \$5 million for additional mitigation that's required for our SURF! Busway project. They also noted that with our tax returns, it's looking like the May revision of the budget will have a better outlook than originally proposed. For the Feds, budget proposals are being missed, and the Infrastructure bill will expire at the end of September. With that, MST is still seeking federal funding from our

representatives for trolleys (Panetta), double-decker buses (Schiff), and money for our new operation and maintenance location in Salinas (Lofgren).

**Monday, March 9th- Monterey-Salinas Transit Board Meeting-** Please see the MST board highlights in our agenda packet.

**Council Report from Councilmember John Uy  
March 24, 2026 Meeting**

**I. Council Report: Regular Meeting of the DRO City Council on February 24, 2025**



Dear Del Rey Oaks Neighbors,

I would like to share a brief report with you following our City Council meeting on February 24, 2026. This meeting included moments of recognition and reflection, as well as important discussions about public safety, infrastructure, economic development, and the future of several City-owned properties. The agenda included proclamations for Black History Month and Women’s History Month, recognition of two outstanding local students, a regional water infrastructure presentation, routine financial and administrative matters, and three key new-business items involving former Fort Ord property and public safety.

We began the evening by recognizing Black History Month and Women’s History Month. These proclamations were meaningful reminders that the strength of our community comes from honoring the dignity, contributions, and stories of people whose leadership and sacrifices have helped shape our country and our local values. The proclamations emphasized equity, inclusion, justice, and mutual respect as essential parts of a healthy and thriving Del Rey Oaks.

We also had the privilege of recognizing two remarkable students, Estrellitah “Star” Hernandez of Seaside High School and Idil Aktan of Monterey High School, for being selected to attend the 2026 Moose International Youth Awareness Scholarship Program. According to the certificates in the packet, they were among only five students in California chosen for this opportunity. It was a proud moment not only for them and their families, but also for our broader community, because investing in young people is one of the most important ways we build a stronger future.

A major presentation that evening came from Monterey One Water, which provided an informational update on its capital projects, strategic priorities, and wastewater rate study. Their presentation highlighted the agency’s mission of providing safe and resilient water solutions, their current priorities of electrical reliability, biosolids management, and a treatment master plan, and the ongoing Pure Water Monterey expansion project, which includes an expanded facility size of 7.6 million gallons per day, supported in part by a \$21 million EPA WIFIA loan and \$42 million in grant funding. The presentation also outlined the upcoming public process for possible rate changes, including board discussion in March, mailed notice to parcel owners in April, and a public hearing and protest period in June. As someone who knows how essential reliable water service is to everyday life and public health, I felt it was important to center both long-term infrastructure needs and affordability for residents.

One of the most important policy discussions of the evening involved the City-owned former Fort Ord parcels (APN 031-191-026). Staff presented options for how the City should move forward in selecting a development partner for these parcels. The packet outlined three paths: coordinating with Monterey Peninsula Partners and IL Housing Solutions, conducting a targeted solicitation with interested Fort Ord-experienced developers, or issuing a new formal Request for Proposals (RFP). Staff noted that a broader RFP would take more time and more staff resources, but it could also produce stronger competition, stronger financial returns, and enhanced community benefits. The staff report also stated that future processing costs could be offset through developer-funded deposits or reimbursement structures. Based on the materials and the right way of doing this, my position was to support the more transparent and protective RFP option so the City can move forward in a way that is competitive, fair, and well-documented. I believe that is the right instinct. These parcels are important public assets, and the public deserves a process that protects taxpayers, reduces legal risk, and gives Del Rey Oaks the best chance at a thoughtful and beneficial outcome. However, the majority of the Council voted for the targeted solicitation with interested Fort Ord-experienced developers, outvoting us in favor of the RFP option.

Council also received a status update on the former Garden Center building in Work Memorial Park. The staff report indicated that this item was for a verbal update regarding the current status of the site, possible economic development opportunities and constraints, and interpretation of the deed restriction affecting the parcel. The packet also referenced a 2021 Economic & Planning Systems report analyzing reuse and development potential for City-owned properties. Based on your notes, your focus was appropriately on long-term use, realistic costs, funding opportunities, and how the site might eventually be activated again for meaningful community use without overburdening the General Fund. This is an important site, and I share the view that we should keep looking for a practical path that respects both community value and fiscal responsibility.

Another key item was the first reading of an ordinance to prohibit unauthorized metal detecting activity on City property that was formerly part of Fort Ord. Staff explained that although digging and excavation had long been regulated on former Fort Ord lands because of the risk of unexploded ordnance, metal detecting had not been expressly prohibited in the City code. The proposed ordinance would close that gap and make unauthorized metal detection unlawful in those districts, while still allowing such activity when specifically authorized for development, City projects, or state or federal remediation purposes. Staff also stated that the City consulted with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, which found the proposed ordinance changes adequate. From a community standpoint, this is a prudent and safety-focused measure. Residents should be able to understand clearly where these rules apply and why they matter, but the central principle is straightforward: public safety must come first.

Overall, I came away from this meeting reflecting on how local government often asks us to hold several responsibilities at once: celebrating our shared values, recognizing our youth, maintaining strong public finances, planning responsibly for future development, and

protecting public safety. That balance matters. My goal remains to serve Del Rey Oaks with care, transparency, and a genuine commitment to what is best for our residents today and for the generations who will come after us.

Thank you, as always, for your trust, your engagement, and your love for our community.

## **II. Council Report: Regular Meeting of the Seaside County Sanitation District (SCSD) Board of Directors – March 10, 2026**



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Dear Del Rey Oaks neighbors,

I want to share a brief update from the Seaside County Sanitation District (SCSD) meeting held on March 10, 2026. The meeting agenda focused primarily on routine but important oversight items that help keep our regional wastewater system financially sound, legally supported, and operationally maintained.

The Board reviewed and accepted the District's Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025 Annual Financial Report. The audit reflected a clean opinion, meaning the District's financial statements were found to be fairly presented. Financially, the District reported about \$20.7 million in net position, with approximately \$7.1 million in cash and investments, \$3.0 million in revenues, and \$2.1 million in expenses for the fiscal year. Net position increased by about \$906,000, which is a positive sign of the District's continued financial stability.

The Board also received the February 2026 Operations Report, which is the District's regular maintenance snapshot. According to the report, there were no mainline stoppages, no lateral stoppages, and no overflow/SSO locations reported in Del Rey Oaks, Sand City, or Seaside for the month of February. The report also showed continued sewer line cleaning and maintenance work across the District, which is the kind of behind-the-scenes work that helps prevent bigger and more expensive problems later.

In addition, the Board considered and approved an updated Professional Services Agreement with the Monterey County Counsel's Office for legal services, with a not-to-exceed amount of \$10,000 per fiscal year. This updates the District's older agreement and helps ensure the District continues to have legal support when needed.

Overall, this was a practical and steady meeting focused on the basics that matter: sound finances, system maintenance, and making sure the District has the professional support it needs to serve the public responsibly. While these items may not always make headlines, they

are essential to protecting public health, maintaining infrastructure, and ensuring reliable sewer service for our communities.

### **III. Council Report: AMBAG Board of Directors Meeting – March 11, 2026**

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I would like to share a brief update from the AMBAG Board of Directors meeting held on March 11, 2026. The meeting focused on several important regional matters involving transportation planning, sustainability, finance, and governance across Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties.



The Board reviewed AMBAG’s ongoing sustainability and energy initiatives. These included continued work on the Central California Rural Regional Energy Network, a major regional partnership supporting clean energy access and efficiency in underserved communities, as well as progress on the Monterey Bay Electric Vehicle Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Framework, which is helping the region plan for EV infrastructure that is more equitable and resilient to climate impacts.

On transportation, the Board considered Formal Amendment No. 10 to the Monterey Bay Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program, which updates the region’s federally required transportation programming document. While technical in nature, this type of action is important because it helps keep regional transportation projects properly coordinated, eligible, and moving through the funding pipeline.

The Board also received information on the Draft FY 2026–27 Overall Work Program and Budget, a summary of public comments on the Draft 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, and an update on Regional Early Action Planning Grants 2.0. These discussions reflect AMBAG’s long-term role in helping shape how our region plans for transportation, housing, sustainability, and growth.

Overall, this was a thoughtful regional planning meeting centered on coordination, long-range investment, and making sure the Monterey Bay region remains financially responsible, environmentally forward-looking, and connected across jurisdictions. Regional agencies like AMBAG may work behind the scenes, but their decisions help influence the future of infrastructure, mobility, and sustainability for communities like Del Rey Oaks.