

Mayor Donaldson Report

Below is a summary of board meetings I attended:

Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC)

September 23, 2026



Update on the State Route 156 / Castroville Boulevard Improvement Project

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) presented an update to the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) Board of Directors on the State Route 156/ Castroville Boulevard Interchange Project. The project will construct a grade-separated interchange at the intersection of State Route 156 and Castroville Boulevard, replacing the existing traffic signal. The project is designed to improve safety, reduce traffic delays, facilitate regional and agricultural freight movement, and enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity within the Castroville area.

With the allocation of construction funds by the California Transportation Commission in June 2026, the State Route 156/ Castroville Boulevard Interchange Project now has the funding necessary to proceed into the construction phase. The cost of the construction is \$75.5 million. Funding sources include \$15.389 million in local TAMC Measure X and Regional Development Impact Fee funds, \$48.2 million in Senate Bill (SB) 1 Trade Corridor Enhancement Program funds, \$10.3 million in SB 1 Local Partnership Program Competitive funds, and \$1.576 million SB 1 Local Partnership Program Formula funds.

Caltrans District 5 is currently working to finalize the bid package documents and complete all remaining administrative activities necessary to advertise the project for construction bids in Fall 2026. Advertisement of the project will mark the final step before the award of a construction contract and the start of major construction activities.

Construction of the State Route 156/ Castroville Boulevard Interchange Project is anticipated to start in Spring 2027 and be completed in Fall 2029. It should be noted that the start and end of construction dates are dependent on the progress of ongoing utility relocation work currently underway and weather conditions.

Kim Shirley's Council Report for Tuesday, October 27, 2026

For questions or comments, please reach out to me:

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Friday, September 18th- ReGen Monterey Board Meeting- Besides the usual consent agenda items and financial reports, the bulk of today's meeting was mainly taken up by a closed session item and a presentation on the upcoming SB 54 Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Responsibility Act. This new legislation, that goes into full effect in January 2027, is meant to hold manufacturers of products responsible for not only making packaging that is either recyclable or compostable, but it also holds them financially responsible for the entire lifecycle of their products. By 2032, the goal will be to have 100% of the single-use packaging and plastic single-use food ware be recyclable or compostable. This legislation will greatly reduce the volume of plastic sold in California and will push manufacturers to move towards simplifying their packaging, and invest in reuse and refill systems. It will effectively reduce the confusion for consumers as it eliminates the need to read the number in the recycle arrows and decide if something gets recycled or not. ReGen is currently reviewing all of the state guidelines for materials and will begin to look for exemptions for items we can't currently recycle or compost. As this legislation continues, we may find materials we can begin collecting and will be reimbursed for the costs of implementation. In the meantime, it's up to the jurisdictions to collect all materials deemed to be recyclable or compostable (we already do). It's likely that the needs of this legislation will be worked into the RFP as we solicit proposals from waste haulers for the new franchise agreement.

Saturday, September 19th- California Coastal Cleanup Event- I joined Sustainable Del Rey Oaks (SDRO) in the largest cleanup event of the year. We were stationed at Laguna Grande park, along with Sustainable Seaside and the Monterey High Dewasters, to clean up the Laguna Grande area as well as Roberts Lake. As you might imagine, we found all kinds of trash mostly associated with take out food, items from the unhoused population, and things that had flown from cars off Highways 1 and 218. It's always a sobering event to see the amount of trash that's left in our beautiful waterways. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped gather this trash before it reached Monterey Bay.

Tuesday, September 22nd- City Council Meeting- We began our council meeting with proclamations for Stormwater Awareness Week and National Hispanic Heritage Month. Next began the bulk of our meeting with a presentation from the executive director of the Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC) Todd Muck who was providing an update on the FORTAG project in DRO. Besides acknowledging there have been some construction challenges and letting us know that he's talking with the President of Granite Rock construction who is building the project, assuring us we will end up with a high quality

project, he also provided us with some critical dates and information. He shared that the project is 75% complete. He also shared that Carlton would be open on Sept. 28th, and that although it's not part of the project, he's committed to helping us work with Granite Rock to make sure our corp yard is properly paved at the end, as Granite Rock has clearly benefited from using both that site and the Garden Center site for staging their equipment. Additionally, he shared that the construction would be completed by Nov. 25th. At the same time, there have been official delays which also allows a contract extension through Feb. 23rd, which is time that will be used for the finishing touches (landscaping, etc.). It was also noted that the Frog Pond will likely open at the beginning of November. Todd Muck was joined at the podium by a representative of BKF who is managing the project and also assured the council that we will end up with a quality project in the end. There was lots of talk about items they have on a punch list which will address the construction issues that had been noted and that they plan on completing all of these items by the end of the project. Two items that still did not seem answered were the warranty information of the project (is there one?) and who actually needs to sign off on the project, noting that it's completed, before it's turned over to the city. I suggested Todd or another rep from TAMC return to future council meetings to provide us updates and the answers to these questions, but I'm not sure if that will happen. When I asked what the city could do to assist with project completion, it was mentioned that it would be helpful if our city manager would attend the weekly meetings. He historically had not been attending them, so I hope that changes. It was clear that we all had different levels of frustration about the project, but I believe now is the time to work together to find solutions to the construction issues and to finish the project to all of our satisfaction.

After passing the consent agenda, we got into New Business and addressed the only item which was to consider approval of the City of Del Rey Oaks Vision Zero Plan. This was an easier presentation, also from TAMC, explaining what have been our biggest safety issues for drivers and pedestrians. By passing this plan it would allow the city to then more easily go after grants that could support projects to help improve our honestly pretty low rate of accidents in DRO, which mainly occur on HWY 218. Given that Cal Trans is the one who owns 218, I'm hoping they'll be more open to projects now that we have this plan. During this item, I encouraged our Police Chief/ACM to bring this plan to the Public Safety committee so we can start brainstorming and talking about ideas that might improve the safety for our residents and for those who are driving/walking/riding through DRO. This plan easily passed with support from all the council members.

Wednesday, October 7th- Seaside Groundwater Basin Watermaster Meeting- Today's meeting wasn't very long, but it was important in that we passed the annual budgets for 2027 (the Watermaster works on a calendar year budget). These included our administrative budget, which essentially stayed the same as last year, as well as our Monitoring and Management Program, which includes our Operations and Capital budgets. In addition we approved 6 contracts that were included in the Monitoring and Management Program.

Every year, we estimate the cost of replenishment water from the operating and proposed water projects. This “Replenishment Assessment Unit Cost” was easily approved. We also approved the cost sharing model to update the Seaside Groundwater Basin Modeling. The Watermaster will be paying 50% and the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District and M1W will be collectively covering the other 50%. It was noted that the board may want to revisit future cost sharing so that it’s more equal towards the Watermaster.

Lastly, we approved a revision to the rules and regulations by adding a policy for producers who operate without a working meter. Since we ran across this issue earlier in the year, we opted for a policy that allows us to either use a historical peak production amount or a peer comparison production. With either one, we can allow the producer to provide information that might help us with our decision. And if it turns out the decision puts too much extra work on our staff, we’re allowed to charge an administrative fee to cover the costs.

Monday, October 12th- Monterey-Salinas Transit Board Operations Performance Committee Meeting-

This was my first time on this new committee, and I enjoyed the topics we covered. Although we didn’t make a quorum, we were still able to review the updates listed in the “Action Items.” In regards to our operations performance, we continue to grow our ridership month over month. What was interesting was that some of that growth stems from the increase in the use of van pools. With a stipend and the use of a vehicle, it can greatly decrease the cost for travel to workplaces. Much of our van pools are being used in agriculture, but MST is continuing to reach out to other industries such as hospitality and medical facilities.

We received an update on the pilot program for the Uber voucher program in south county. Since we’re not able to get taxis in that area, we’re partnering with Uber to supplement rides, which would allow residents to get places within their city or even make a longer trip up to Salinas. Several dozen residents enrolled, but they aren’t using the service, likely because the technology can be such a hurdle for the older population. It also can still be costly if you’re riding on your own and not pooling with several other people. A solution for the technology issue is to allow them to book a ride by phone, so they’ll see if that helps. The pilot program ends at the end of this year.

Our next update was about the College EcoSmart Pass Program which is a partnership with the local colleges and allows students to ride anywhere for free during the time they’re in school. Ridership has continued to grow over the 5 year period for this program, and MST will be looking to renew and revamp this program in the following year, mainly looking at maybe a new name and getting a longer commitment from the colleges.

Lastly, we received an update on the Salinas Rapid Bus Transit Center Relocation, mainly about the community outreach that’s been done regarding potential new locations and different variations of bus, bike, and car lanes.

Monday, October 12th- Monterey-Salinas Transit Board Meeting- Please see the MST board highlights in our agenda packet.

Monday, October 19th- District 4 Roundtable- CSUMB's College of Business and Institute for Innovation & Economic Development- This event, hosted by County Supervisor Wendy Root Askew, was an opportunity for elected officials and local leaders to learn about the potential opportunities for collaboration and learning through their non-profit organization. CSUMB's College of Business, which interestingly is the only local university offering a business degree, hosts a non-profit called "Institute for Innovation & Economic Development" which matches collaborative, interdisciplinary faculty, professional staff, and students with local projects focusing on businesses and agencies throughout the area. Their facilitated approach allows students, especially 1st generation college students and low income students, to gain hands-on experience working with small businesses, entrepreneurs, or local agencies to promote innovation and sustainability for economic growth. It's truly a win-win for everyone! The goal of this roundtable was to inform the attendees and expand their collaboration with our local connections. Given the size of our city and our lack of available staff, it seems hosting a project for a CSUMB student would be ideal, allowing the student to become experienced with city work and providing Del Rey Oaks with a needed service. I appreciated learning about this opportunity and will keep it in mind!

**Council Report from Councilmember John Uy
October 27, 2026 Meeting**

I. Council Report: Regular Meeting of the DRO City Council on September 22, 2026



Dear Del Rey Oaks Neighbors,

One of the things I appreciate most about serving our small city is that the decisions we make at City Hall are never very far removed from the people they affect. We know our neighborhoods, we see the construction happening along our roads, and we understand how even the smallest improvements can make a difference in everyday life.

Our September 22 City Council meeting brought several important matters before us, including the ongoing FORTAG construction, a new traffic safety plan, improvements to our housing regulations, financial oversight, and greater transparency in City operations.

Throughout these discussions, I was reminded of something I believe deeply: **Good government is not simply about getting things done. It is about getting things done right, listening to the people we serve, and being responsible with the trust placed in us.**

FORTAG: Welcoming Progress While Expecting Quality

One of the most important discussions involved the Fort Ord Regional Trail and Greenway (FORTAG) project.

We received an update from Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) Executive Director Todd Muck regarding the project's construction and progress.

I have long appreciated FORTAG's vision of creating safer, more accessible connections for pedestrians, bicyclists, families, and people with disabilities. Once completed, this trail has the potential to become a wonderful community resource, connecting our neighborhoods, schools, parks, and surrounding communities.

However, supporting a project's vision does not mean overlooking problems with its execution.

The Council raised concerns about construction quality and unfinished work, including exposed reinforcing steel, visible cracks in newly constructed concrete, and damage to City property. We were informed that these concerns are being documented for correction before the project is considered complete.

I believe our residents deserve both the benefits of this important regional investment and the assurance that the work is completed safely, properly, and to an acceptable standard.

We also recognize the patience of our neighbors who have endured traffic delays, road closures, construction noise, and disruptions to their daily routines.

Progress should never come at the expense of quality, safety, or accountability. I remain hopeful about what FORTAG will bring to our community, and I believe continued communication and careful follow-through will be essential as construction approaches completion.

Vision Zero: Making Every Journey Safer

Another meaningful item was the Council's adoption of the City of Del Rey Oaks Vision Zero Safety Action Plan, developed in collaboration with TAMC.

Vision Zero is based on a simple but powerful belief: Traffic deaths and serious injuries are preventable, and our roads should be designed with human safety in mind.

According to the City's safety analysis, 16 injury-related traffic collisions occurred between 2019 and 2023, including two serious injuries and one fatality. All three of the most severe collisions occurred along Canyon Del Rey Boulevard.

These numbers may appear small compared with those of larger cities, but every number represents a person, a family, and a life affected.

For me, traffic safety is personal. It is about children walking to school, older residents crossing the street, families enjoying our neighborhoods, and every driver, cyclist, and pedestrian returning home safely.

Adopting this plan also positions Del Rey Oaks to pursue future federal transportation safety grants. While adoption does not automatically fund improvements, it gives us a foundation for identifying priorities and working with our regional and state partners.

I am pleased that our City is taking this proactive approach. My hope is that this plan will translate into practical, measurable improvements that residents can see and experience.

Getting the Details Right: Our Updated ADU Ordinance

We also completed the process of updating the City's Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance to align with current California law.

At our August meeting, I raised a concern about language addressing development impact fees for smaller ADUs. State law exempts ADUs measuring **750 square feet or less** from these fees,

and I wanted to ensure our ordinance clearly included homes measuring exactly 750 square feet.

I was especially pleased to see that this clarification was incorporated into the ordinance presented for its second reading.

It may seem like a minor wording change, but details like these matter. A few words in a municipal ordinance can affect a homeowner's application, expenses, or understanding of the law.

I appreciate the work of our City staff and colleagues in ensuring that the final language is clear and consistent with state requirements.

For me, this is an example of the value of careful review and constructive collaboration. We do not need to agree on every detail immediately, but we should always be willing to listen, improve, and get things right for the people we serve.

Being Responsible With Public Funds

Our Council also considered an important financial decision involving approximately **\$7.27 million** designated for the South Boundary Road improvement project.

These funds were previously allocated by the Fort Ord Reuse Authority and have been held in a non-interest-bearing escrow account while project planning and implementation continue.

The Council authorized moving the money into an interest-bearing escrow account, while preserving the original restrictions governing how the funds may be used.

I appreciate this practical approach to managing public resources.

When funds are set aside for a particular purpose, our responsibility does not stop at safeguarding the principal. We should also look for reasonable, responsible ways to preserve and potentially increase their value.

Our financial reports also remind us to pay close attention to the distinction between the City's overall cash balance and funds that are legally restricted for particular projects. A healthy account balance does not necessarily mean every dollar is available for everyday City expenses.

I will continue to value careful financial oversight, clear reporting, and decisions that protect our City's long-term interests.

Transparency and Better Public Service

We also approved a contract with CivicPlus for a system to help manage California Public Records Act requests.

Public access to government records is an important part of an open and accountable local government. The proposed system is intended to help City staff organize requests, track response deadlines, and maintain more consistent communication with the public.

The contract carries an initial cost of approximately \$11,099, with annual recurring services of approximately \$12,685.

As with any technology investment, I believe we should consider not only its cost but also whether it makes our City more responsive, efficient, and accessible to the residents we serve.

Good technology should make government easier to work with, not more complicated.

Celebrating Our Community and Caring for Our Environment

Our September meeting also recognized National Hispanic Heritage Month and Stormwater Awareness Week.

These observances reflect two important parts of community life: celebrating the people and cultures that enrich our shared experience, and caring for the natural environment we all depend upon.

National Hispanic Heritage Month is an opportunity to recognize the contributions, traditions, and stories of Hispanic Americans whose presence has helped shape our communities and our country.

Stormwater Awareness Week reminds us that protecting our waterways begins with everyday choices, from preventing pollution to caring for the natural spaces surrounding our homes.

Del Rey Oaks may be small, but our sense of community and responsibility extends well beyond our boundaries.

A Continuing Commitment to Our Neighbors

As I reflect on this meeting, I am encouraged by the opportunities ahead of us.

We are improving connections between neighborhoods, planning for safer streets, updating City regulations, protecting public resources, and finding better ways to serve our residents.

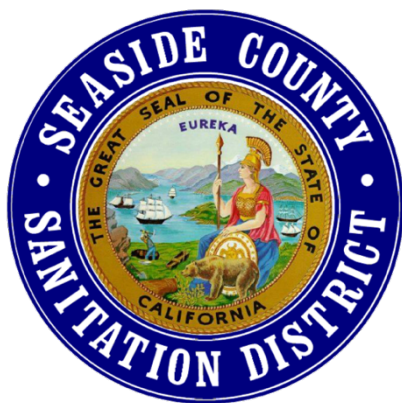
Not every decision will be easy. Some projects will encounter setbacks, some policies will require closer examination, and some concerns will take time to resolve. What matters is that we remain willing to ask thoughtful questions, listen respectfully, and work toward solutions.

I am grateful to our residents who stay engaged, share their concerns, and continue to care about the future of Del Rey Oaks. I also appreciate our City staff, public safety personnel, fellow Councilmembers, and regional partners who contribute their time and expertise to this work.

Our community deserves leadership that listens, follows through, and never loses sight of the people behind every decision.

It continues to be a privilege to serve Del Rey Oaks. Thank you for the trust, kindness, and sense of community that make our little city such a special place to call home.

II. Council Report: Regular Meeting of the Seaside County Sanitation District (SCSD) Board of Directors – October 13, 2026



Dear Del Rey Oaks Neighbors,

Some of the most important work in local government happens quietly, often beneath our feet and out of sight.

Our sewer system is a good example. Most of us rarely think about it until something goes wrong. Yet maintaining this essential infrastructure is one of the ways we protect public health, our homes, our environment, and the quality of life we

enjoy in Del Rey Oaks.

As your representative and Second Vice Chair of the Seaside County Sanitation District (SCSD), I appreciate the opportunity to help oversee the wastewater collection infrastructure serving Del Rey Oaks, Seaside, and Sand City.

At our October 13 Board meeting, we reviewed sewer maintenance activities, infrastructure conditions, and inspections designed to prevent problems before they affect our communities.

I would like to share a few highlights and explain why they matter to us here in Del Rey Oaks.

Keeping Our Sewer System Healthy and Reliable

I was especially encouraged by the District's ongoing preventive maintenance efforts.

According to the September operations report, approximately **39,218 feet of sewer mainlines were cleaned in Del Rey Oaks during September alone**, bringing our reported fiscal-year total to 40,242 feet.

For perspective, Del Rey Oaks has approximately 42,240 feet of sewer mainlines within the District's system.

That is a substantial amount of maintenance for our small community, and I sincerely appreciate the hardworking crews who perform this essential service.

Even more encouraging, the August and September reports showed **no reported sewer stoppages or sanitary sewer overflows** across Del Rey Oaks, Seaside, and Sand City.

That is welcome news for all of us.

However, I also believe that successful maintenance is about more than how many feet of sewer lines we clean. We must understand which sections need frequent attention, whether older pipelines are showing signs of deterioration, and where we should invest before small problems become expensive emergencies.

One area deserving continued attention is the use of sewer cameras to inspect the condition of our underground infrastructure. While extensive cleaning was reported in Del Rey Oaks, no camera inspections were recorded for our city during the fiscal year through September.

Cleaning keeps pipelines operating, but inspections can help identify cracks, root intrusion, and structural deterioration that ordinary cleaning may not reveal.

The goal should always be to prevent problems rather than simply respond to them.

Planning Today to Avoid Bigger Expenses Tomorrow

Another important consideration is the District's ongoing Sanitary Sewer Master Plan.

At the July Board meeting, staff reported that the plan was approximately 50 to 60 percent complete.

This planning effort is particularly important because it can help us better understand the condition of our infrastructure, identify future repairs and replacements, and anticipate the financial resources needed to maintain a reliable system.

As the representative of Del Rey Oaks, I want to ensure that our city has a clear understanding of any future infrastructure needs and their potential financial implications.

Our community has limited resources, and planning ahead gives us a much better opportunity to prioritize improvements, explore funding options, and avoid unexpected financial burdens.

Good infrastructure planning may not always be exciting, but it is one of the most responsible investments we can make for future generations.

Keeping Grease Out of Our Sewers

We also reviewed the District's Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) Management Program.

This program addresses a common but preventable problem: grease and food waste entering sewer lines, accumulating over time, and potentially causing blockages or overflows.

The District currently oversees approximately 165 food-service establishments, including restaurants and other businesses that prepare and serve food.

During the April through June 2026 reporting period, District staff conducted 40 inspections. Three establishments did not meet inspection requirements, and one had corrected the identified issue by the time the report was prepared.

These findings remind us why consistent inspections, follow-up, and education are so important.

I believe we should continue working collaboratively with local businesses to encourage compliance while ensuring that unresolved problems receive appropriate attention.

This is also a useful reminder for our households: Keeping cooking grease, fats, and oils out of our drains is a simple way each of us can help protect the sewer system.

Sometimes, protecting our community begins with small everyday habits.

Fairness for Homeowners and Responsible Growth

Another matter I continue to follow is the District's implementation of sewer capacity fees for accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

In July, the Board approved an ordinance amendment authorizing proportional sewer capacity fees for ADUs in accordance with California law.

As our communities explore additional housing opportunities, it is important that homeowners receive clear, understandable information about applicable fees.

I believe these assessments should be fair, transparent, and proportional to the additional demand placed on the sewer system.

We need to balance the responsibility of maintaining essential infrastructure with the importance of treating homeowners fairly.

These two goals can, and should, go hand in hand.

Remembering a Dedicated Public Servant

I also want to take a moment to remember our colleague, Jerry Blackwelder, whose dedication and years of service to the Seaside County Sanitation District and our neighboring communities deserve our gratitude.

Public service often involves work that receives little recognition, yet its impact can be felt for many years.

Jerry's commitment to serving others is a meaningful reminder of the value of thoughtful leadership and community dedication.

My heartfelt condolences go to his family, friends, and colleagues. May his legacy continue to inspire all of us who have the privilege of serving our communities.

Looking Ahead With Appreciation

I would like to sincerely thank District Manager Greg McDanel, District Engineer Thomas Korman, the engineering team, maintenance crews, and our fellow Board members for their continued service.

Maintaining a reliable sewer system requires planning, technical expertise, consistent attention, and a genuine commitment to the communities we serve.

I am grateful for the work happening behind the scenes every day to keep these essential services operating safely and efficiently.

For Del Rey Oaks, my priorities remain straightforward: **Protect public health, maintain our infrastructure responsibly, plan for future needs, and ensure that our residents' interests are well represented.**

We may not see the sewer lines beneath our streets, but the care we give them today makes a meaningful difference in the community we leave for tomorrow.

Thank you, as always, for the opportunity to represent our wonderful little city.

III. Council Report: AMBAG Board of Directors Meeting – October 14, 2026

Dear Del Rey Oaks Neighbors,

One of the wonderful things about living in Del Rey Oaks is that we enjoy the closeness of a small community while being part of a much larger and beautiful Monterey Bay region.



Many of the challenges and opportunities that shape our future, from transportation and energy costs to environmental protection and regional growth, extend beyond our city boundaries. That is why having a voice in regional decision-making matters.

As your representative on the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) Board of Directors, I have the opportunity to work alongside leaders from Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties to help address these shared priorities.

Our October 14 meeting agenda highlighted several promising initiatives. I would like to share a few that I believe are especially meaningful for our community.

Preparing for a Future With More Electric Vehicles

One of the major topics was the Monterey Bay Electric Vehicle Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Framework, a regional planning initiative supported by a \$750,000 state transportation planning grant.

The goal is to prepare our region for the growing use of electric vehicles while ensuring that charging infrastructure remains accessible, reliable, and resilient during emergencies.

The numbers are interesting. Our region currently has approximately 1,000 publicly available EV chargers, but projections indicate that approximately **5,000 chargers may be needed by 2030 and 18,000 by 2045.**

That is a significant increase, and it raises important questions about where chargers should be located, whether our electrical grid can support them, and how we can ensure that smaller communities and households without home charging are not left behind.

The draft roadmap outlines 12 strategies, including expanding charging access at apartment communities, exploring solar-powered charging stations with battery storage, improving accessibility, and strengthening charging reliability during power outages.

What I particularly appreciate is that the planning goes beyond simply installing more chargers. It recognizes that infrastructure must work for people in their everyday lives.

For Del Rey Oaks, I see opportunities to explore future partnerships and funding that could help us improve transportation options without placing unnecessary financial burdens on our residents.

A cleaner transportation future should also be a practical, affordable, and dependable one.

Helping Families and Small Businesses Save Energy

Another encouraging initiative was the Central California Rural Regional Energy Network (CCR REN), a collaborative program designed to help communities improve energy efficiency and reduce costs.

The program received approximately \$36 million for initiatives primarily covering 2025 through 2027.

So far, its commercial program has distributed more than \$600,000 in incentives, allowing 39 small businesses and nonprofit organizations to receive energy-efficiency improvements at no cost. Within the AMBAG region, 12 participating customers received more than \$160,000 in improvements.

These are meaningful investments, particularly for small businesses and nonprofit organizations that may not have the resources to make such upgrades independently.

The program also offers a residential energy-modeling tool that helps homeowners explore potential savings from energy-efficiency improvements. Staff are promoting free energy-saving kits with simple items such as LED lightbulbs and power strips.

I appreciate initiatives like these because their benefits can be felt directly in our homes and businesses.

For families managing rising living expenses, even modest reductions in monthly utility bills can make a difference.

I hope we can continue exploring ways to connect Del Rey Oaks residents and businesses with programs like these, particularly when assistance is available at little or no cost.

Building Stronger Communities Through Energy Resilience

Beyond energy savings, AMBAG is also working with regional partners to identify potential resilience centers and funding opportunities for public facilities.

These efforts include improving heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems and expanding cooling capabilities at libraries and community centers.

As we experience changing weather patterns, rising temperatures, and occasional power disruptions, facilities that can support residents during emergencies are becoming increasingly important.

For smaller communities like ours, regional collaboration offers a valuable opportunity to share expertise, explore grants, and learn from successful projects in neighboring jurisdictions.

I believe preparedness is one of those responsibilities best addressed before an emergency occurs.

Listening to the People Behind the Plans

One aspect of the electric vehicle planning effort that I found particularly meaningful was its emphasis on community participation.

AMBAG and its partners collected more than 750 survey responses from underserved communities, with approximately 75 percent submitted in Spanish and Mixteco.

The responses helped identify transportation challenges, gaps in EV awareness, and the practical difficulties people experience during extreme weather.

I appreciate this approach because good regional planning should reflect more than technical studies and projections. It should also reflect the voices and experiences of the people who will live with the results.

Different communities have different needs, and smaller jurisdictions deserve thoughtful consideration alongside larger cities.

When we listen carefully, we make better decisions. When we include more voices, we build stronger communities.

Responsible Management and Regional Accountability

Our meeting agenda also included important administrative and financial matters, including updates to procurement procedures, financial reporting, and policies governing emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

These may not be the most visible aspects of regional government, but they are essential to maintaining public confidence.

As technology evolves and public agencies manage increasingly complex programs, we must continue balancing efficiency with transparency, responsible spending, privacy, and sound judgment.

I believe regional organizations should be held to the same standards of accountability that we expect from our own City government.

Our residents deserve to know that public resources are being managed carefully and that regional investments are producing meaningful benefits.

Looking Ahead Together

I am grateful to AMBAG Executive Director Maura Twomey, the dedicated staff, and my fellow Board members for their continued work on behalf of our Monterey Bay communities.

Regional partnerships remind us that even though Del Rey Oaks is a small city, we are part of something much larger. We can contribute to regional solutions while ensuring that our own residents' needs and perspectives are represented.

What encourages me most about these initiatives is their potential to make everyday life a little better, whether through lower utility costs, improved transportation options, greater environmental responsibility, or better preparation for the future.

My commitment remains to bring the interests of Del Rey Oaks to the regional table, look for opportunities that benefit our community, and ensure that our little city continues to have a meaningful voice in decisions that shape our shared future.

Thank you for the privilege of representing Del Rey Oaks. It is an honor to be part of a community where people care deeply about one another and the place we call home.