

## Council Report from Vice Mayor John Uy November 19, 2024

### I. Council Report: Regular Meeting of the DRO City Council on October 22, 2024

I had the distinct honor of participating in our City Council meeting on October 22, 2024, a night filled with pride, gratitude, and commitment to our community's shared values. I'm deeply thankful to our Mayor, fellow council members, and each of you for making these moments possible.

As we opened our session, I had the privilege of reading two proclamations that resonate deeply with me and, I hope, with all of you. We declared October as both LGBTQ+ History Month and Filipino-American History Month in Del Rey Oaks. Each proclamation stands as a tribute to resilience, love, and the vibrant diversity that strengthens our city. We celebrated the immense contributions and stories of our LGBTQ+ and Filipino-American communities—stories that show the unbreakable power of love, unity, and pride.

**LGBTQ+ History Month:** This month recognizes the long and courageous journey toward equality and acceptance for the LGBTQ+ community. Our city reaffirms its commitment to inclusivity and respect for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. We acknowledge the many pioneers who have contributed to advancing equality and creating safe, welcoming spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals.

**Filipino-American History Month:** The Filipino-American community holds a unique place in our city's heritage, with roots stretching back to the earliest Filipino settlers in California. This month commemorates the vibrant culture, enduring spirit, and countless contributions of Filipino-Americans to our social, economic, and cultural life. We honor the sacrifices and successes of Filipino-Americans, particularly those in our own community, and reaffirm our commitment to celebrating our city's diverse cultural heritage.





*Photo caption: Celebrating Filipino-American History Month with a taste of tradition! I was honored to bring Filipino favorites—crispy lumpia and savory pancit—to our City Council meeting. It's a joy to share these dishes with everyone, honoring the rich heritage and contributions of Filipino-Americans to our community. Mabuhay!*

In New Business, we reviewed the **Project Specific Maintenance Agreement (PSMA) with Caltrans for the Fort Ord Recreation Trail and Greenway (FORTAG)**. This project aligns with our goals to expand public access to nature and enhance recreational spaces for residents and visitors alike. The discussion covered several key aspects to ensure that FORTAG will be a long-lasting and sustainable asset to our community.

**Long-Term Maintenance Costs:** A central point of discussion was the financial impact on the city's Public Works operations. I inquired about anticipated maintenance expenses over the next decade, assessing how to incorporate these costs into future budgets without compromising other essential city services.

**Funding Opportunities:** Exploring additional funding sources is essential for a project of this magnitude. I expressed interest in pursuing state and federal grants, as well as potential private

partnerships, to help offset the financial impact of maintaining FORTAG. This proactive approach could help secure the trail's long-term success.

In the future, as we progress with this project, **the following should be considered and put in mind:**

**Sustainability Measures:** Recognizing the importance of environmental stewardship, we should explore the possibility of integrating sustainable practices within the FORTAG maintenance plan. Suggestions can include using drought-resistant plants and solar-powered lighting, which could mitigate future maintenance costs while aligning with our city's commitment to environmental responsibility.

**Public Use and Safety:** Safety remains a primary concern, particularly at undercrossing areas where visibility and accessibility are crucial. We should discuss the implementation of regular safety audits and potentially establishing community feedback mechanisms to address public concerns promptly.

**Community Involvement:** FORTAG presents a unique opportunity for community engagement. The Council can propose partnerships with local organizations and volunteer groups for trail maintenance and beautification efforts. By fostering a sense of ownership, we hope to encourage residents to take pride in this public space.

**Impact on Local Traffic:** Given the potential increase in foot and bicycle traffic, the Council should review possible impacts on local roads and parking near the trail's entry points along Highway 218. Ensuring smooth traffic flow and implementing safety measures for both residents and visitors will be key considerations as the project progresses.

**Coordination with Caltrans:** While Del Rey Oaks will handle the majority of trail maintenance, Caltrans retains responsibility for certain infrastructure aspects. The Council should discuss establishing clear communication protocols between our Public Works Department and Caltrans to address any urgent issues swiftly.

## **II. Council Report: Joint Planning Commission and City Council Special Meeting – October 30, 2024**

On this day, the City Council and Planning Commission received a presentation on the Revised 6th Cycle Housing Element based upon comments from the State Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) and discussed changes to the Adopted 6th Cycle Housing Element.

I want to start by acknowledging the tremendous work that has gone into these revisions to the 6th Cycle Housing Element. I'm deeply grateful to our planning consultant, Denise Duffy and Associates, and to our city hall staff for their dedication, thoughtfulness, and hours of work in

refining this element to ensure it meets the needs of our community. This document is a testament to their dedication to making Del Rey Oaks an inclusive, safe, and forward-looking city. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do.

As I look again at our 6th cycle housing element and examine these revisions, I'm struck by how much progress has been made in areas that truly matter to our residents and our community. I'll start by highlighting some of the positive changes, which I think really bring us closer to creating a balanced, inclusive housing strategy.

**First**, the enhanced focus on affordable housing is something I believe we can all support wholeheartedly. The inclusionary housing policies that require a 20% affordability commitment in new developments demonstrate a genuine commitment to maintaining affordability in our city. For many residents, affordable housing means staying close to family, keeping jobs within reach, and preserving the fabric of our community. By adding density bonuses and streamlining processes for developers who build affordable units, we're encouraging the kind of development that serves everyone, not just a select few.

**Second**, I appreciate the attention given to special needs and vulnerable groups. This revision addresses groups who often face the biggest housing barriers: the seniors, individuals with disabilities, large families, and our homeless population. Programs like home-sharing and the ADU incentives are creative solutions that allow us to meet these needs in ways that are both financially and socially sustainable. I believe these initiatives can really foster a sense of community and stability for those who need it most, and I'm grateful that we're moving forward with a mindset of compassion and inclusion.

**Third**, the efforts to streamline permitting and incentivize ADU development are commendable. Accessory Dwelling Units are a practical solution for our residents who want to contribute to the city's housing needs while enhancing their own properties. Offering fee waivers, streamlined permitting, and even grants make ADUs a viable option for more residents, helping us meet housing needs in an affordable, flexible way that preserves our neighborhoods' character. Thank you for making this process easier and more attractive for our residents.

**Fourth**, I'm encouraged by the addition of Environmental Justice and Safety Elements. These changes reflect a forward-looking commitment to protecting our residents from environmental and safety risks, such as flood and fire hazards. Addressing these issues head-on is essential as we prepare for future growth, ensuring that new developments don't just add housing but contribute to a safer, healthier community for all.

That said, as with any plan of this scope, there are a few areas where we, as residents, may want to look a little closer and make sure we're setting ourselves up for sustainable success.

**One key area of concern** is, of course, water supply. Water is a critical resource, and I know we're all keenly aware of how essential it is to make sure we have a reliable water source to support this growth. Delays in securing water could slow down new housing development and



especially impact our affordable housing goals. I'd encourage us to keep an open line with water authorities to prioritize water availability and explore alternative water solutions if needed. It's important that we keep these plans on track without compromising resources for our residents.

**Another point to consider** is the new mixed-use zoning, especially in terms of increased density. While mixed-use zones and higher-density developments are valuable for meeting housing goals, they may also bring challenges, such as increased traffic, added pressure on infrastructure, and potential changes to our community's character. These projects offer great promise, but they also call for careful oversight. We want to balance density with the infrastructure and resources needed to support it, and I look forward to continuing discussions to ensure this balance is well maintained.

**A third concern** is the reliance on external funding for several affordable housing programs. While grants and external resources are essential, there's a risk of some programs falling short if funding doesn't materialize. This could affect the availability of affordable units and the timeline of our goals. I think it's wise to explore contingency strategies and perhaps build some flexibility into the budget to help keep these initiatives moving forward.

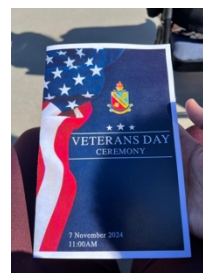
**Finally**, the reduced parking requirements for higher-density projects are worth considering carefully. Reducing parking helps make developments more affordable and environmentally friendly, but we want to make sure we don't inadvertently create parking issues in the surrounding neighborhoods. Residents in high-density areas already face parking challenges, and it would be beneficial to monitor these changes and make adjustments as necessary.

Overall, I am proud of the direction we are moving in and believe that, with the thoughtful oversight of this council and the planning commission, we can ensure these plans benefit all our residents. This housing element takes significant steps toward addressing our housing needs with a fair, practical, and inclusive approach, and I'm deeply grateful to our planning consultant and staff for leading us on this path.

Thank you again for your hard work, your collaboration with HCD, and your commitment to our community. Together, I believe we are building a brighter, more inclusive future for Del Rey Oaks.

### **III. Council Report: Representing Del Rey Oaks in the Veteran's Day Ceremony at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center - November 7, 2024**

As your Vice Mayor, it was my distinct honor to represent our city at a profoundly moving Veteran's Day ceremony held at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center on November 7, 2024. This event was a heartfelt tribute to the veterans whose dedication and



sacrifices have helped protect our freedoms, enrich our communities, and inspire us with their selfless service.



Gathered among elected officials from across the Monterey Peninsula, local leaders, and a community of veterans, I was reminded of the strength that unity brings. It was both humbling and inspiring to meet with so many veterans whose stories of resilience and bravery span generations and conflicts. These heroes have served not only in battle but as beacons of hope and honor, carrying forward the values we hold so dear.





The ceremony at the Defense Language Institute was beautifully conducted, with moments of solemn reflection and gratitude for those who have served and continue to serve. As we stood together in solidarity, I felt a deep sense of pride for our Monterey Peninsula, a community that understands the importance of honoring those who put everything on the line for our nation.

Through this ceremony, I left with a renewed commitment to support our veterans, who deserve our unwavering respect and recognition, not just on this day but every day. On behalf of Del Rey Oaks, I extend my heartfelt thanks to each veteran and their families for their sacrifice and their enduring contributions to the fabric of our nation. Let us honor them by working together to build a community worthy of their courage and legacy.



#### **IV. Message of Vice Mayor John Uy on Veteran's Day – November 11, 2024**

Today, as we pause to honor the courage and commitment of our veterans, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the heroes among us who have defended the freedoms we cherish. Veteran's Day is a time to remember that our peaceful, everyday lives have been made possible by the sacrifices of those who stepped forward, raised their hands, and answered the call to serve.

To each veteran, from every branch and every generation, we thank you. Your service is a testament to the resilience and strength of our nation. You have carried forward the ideals of liberty, justice, and unity, often at great personal cost. The values you've defended are woven into the fabric of our community, reminding us all of what it means to serve something greater than ourselves.

On behalf of Del Rey Oaks, I want to express our deepest gratitude not only to our veterans but also to the families who stand by them. Your support, sacrifice, and steadfast commitment are a vital part of this legacy of service.

Let us honor our veterans not just today, but every day, by upholding the principles they've fought to protect. May we strive to be worthy of their courage and work together to build a community that reflects the spirit of service, unity, and freedom.





**V. Council Report: Regular Meeting of the Seaside County Sanitation District (SCSD) Board of Directors – November 12, 2024**



I am pleased to provide you with an update on our recent **Seaside County Sanitation District (SCSD) board meeting** held on November 12, 2024. *As 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair and your representative on the SCSD board, I am committed to ensuring that our voices are heard and that decisions made reflect the best interests of Del Rey Oaks and our shared community values.*

At the meeting, we addressed several significant items, including two that directly involve potential changes to the SCSD's policies and voting structure. Here's a closer look at these agenda items and what they mean for us.

**1. Proposed Amendments to the SCSD Code (Item 6.A)**

The board reviewed a proposal to make specific changes to Titles 1, 4, and 5 of the SCSD code. These changes could impact how the district enforces certain regulations, assesses fees, and manages appeals processes. However, the information presented was minimal, without detailed background, rationale, or impact analysis to help us understand the necessity and potential effects of these changes. Given that modifying our code is a serious matter, I fought and asserted that more substantial information was needed. The Board has sent the item back to SCSD staff, requesting a thorough report with a complete analysis and context before it returns to the board. This decision ensures we can consider these changes carefully and transparently, with clear insights to share with our communities.

**2. Seaside's Proposal for Weighted Voting (Item 6.B)**

Another significant item was a proposal from the City of Seaside to adopt a weighted voting system in SCSD, which would give the City of Seaside more influence over board decisions based on their population. As your representative, I am particularly mindful of how such a change could impact Del Rey Oaks, whose representation could be diminished if voting power is determined by population size.

To responsibly consider such a proposal, I voted to postpone any action on this item until after March 2025, allowing SCSD staff ample time to develop a comprehensive report. We specifically requested an analysis that includes the potential benefits and drawbacks of weighted voting, as well as how it could affect regional cooperation and fairness across all member cities. While the City of Seaside has expressed strong interest in this change, we believe it is crucial to approach it with a complete understanding of its implications and to ensure our residents' voices are represented fairly.

## Engagement and Transparency

I want to emphasize that the board's decisions reflect a commitment to keeping all constituents informed and involved. We are asking SCSD staff to engage more openly with all member cities and provide us with robust information so that we can make well-informed decisions. Our priority is to uphold transparency and fairness in SCSD operations, ensuring that each city's unique needs and contributions are respected.

## Next Steps

Moving forward, we anticipate receiving more detailed reports on these items, which will allow us to conduct a careful review and engage with our residents on any significant changes. I will continue to advocate for transparency and equitable representation on behalf of Del Rey Oaks.

## VI. Council Report: AMBAG Board of Directors Meeting – November 13, 2024

It is an honor to share with you the meaningful work happening at the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) as we envision and plan a sustainable, resilient future for our region. On November 13, 2024, the AMBAG Board came together with hearts and minds focused on long-term growth, transportation, environmental sustainability, and community well-being.



During the meeting, we delved into plans for the future of our region through the ambitious **2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS)**. This plan will play a vital role in shaping the future of transportation, housing, and sustainability across our communities, focusing on creating a connected, resilient, and equitable region.

At its heart, the 2050 MTP/SCS is a bold, forward-looking roadmap that aims to address the pressing needs of today while anticipating the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow. This plan is not just about managing growth but about thoughtfully aligning it with environmental stewardship and social equity. Our goals are to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, promote more efficient land use, and make our communities safer and more accessible for everyone.

Here are some key aspects of the MTP/SCS that are particularly exciting:

**Integrated Transportation Networks:** The plan prioritizes the development of a sustainable transportation network that includes expanding public transit options, enhancing pedestrian

and bike-friendly routes, and supporting the transition to electric vehicles. By doing so, we aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while making it easier and safer for residents to get around, whether they're commuting to work, running errands, or enjoying our beautiful region.

**Smart Growth and Housing:** As our communities grow, the MTP/SCS emphasizes housing development that is close to transit hubs, employment centers, and essential services. This approach, known as "smart growth," helps reduce long commutes, preserve open spaces, and ensures that housing remains affordable and accessible for all income levels. Del Rey Oaks and surrounding areas stand to benefit greatly as we pursue balanced development that respects our landscapes and minimizes environmental impact.

**Climate Resilience and Sustainability:** Preparing for climate change is central to the MTP/SCS. The strategy includes plans to protect infrastructure from the impacts of climate change, such as sea-level rise and extreme weather. We are also committed to ensuring that transportation options are not only sustainable but resilient, so our infrastructure can adapt to future conditions.

**Public Engagement and Local Collaboration:** Developing a plan this comprehensive requires collaboration, and AMBAG is dedicated to involving local communities throughout the process. By gathering input from residents, local leaders, and stakeholders, we're ensuring that the MTP/SCS reflects the diverse needs and values of each community. This collaborative spirit strengthens the plan and reinforces our commitment to inclusive, responsive governance.

The 2050 MTP/SCS is about building a future where transportation and land use meet the needs of our environment, economy, and residents. I am inspired to see AMBAG leading this transformative effort and am honored to represent Del Rey Oaks in these conversations. As this plan takes shape, I look forward to updating you on our progress and inviting you to be a part of this exciting journey toward a sustainable, vibrant Monterey Bay Area.

Thank you for your trust and support in making Del Rey Oaks a forward-thinking and resilient community.