



New Year Reflections from Mayor Bernie Norvell

As a new year begins, and we think back on 2021, I feel fortunate to know Fort Bragg as home. 2021 was a challenging year, filled with overlapping and sometimes competing emergencies. And despite all the difficulties, the commitment and diligence of City staff and community members gives us many causes to celebrate. I want to share some of these successes and express gratitude for your contributions. Wishing you and your family health and happiness in 2022.

Water

California is not a stranger to drought, and this year required everybody to double their efforts. Many thanks to residents for supporting our new water conservation program, which reduced the City's water consumption by 30% in the summer and fall. Together, we responded quickly not only as a city, but also as a region. We partnered with Mendocino County to supply safe drinking water to coastal residents and businesses, and the State of California provided funding to purchase and install a desalination-reverse osmosis treatment system, which can produce upwards of 288,000 gallons per day, when high tide and low flow events offer brackish water. The City also applied for and secured emergency funding and grants for our Raw Water Line Project (\$8.8 million), as well as an upcoming project to provide future use of ground wells. In fact, if we were to combine 2021 and 2022, we're looking at \$20.4 million in water resiliency and sewer upgrade projects. A heartfelt thanks to our many state and regional partners, and our entire community and staff who contribute to this success.



Portable Desal Unit

Economic Development

The City is taking the lead to generate a regional conversation and explore how a strategic approach to opportunities within the "Blue Economy" could drive our local economy; improving livelihoods and wages, while also nurturing healthy marine ecosystems. Regular meetings are taking place between the City, Noyo Harbor District, Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo, Mendocino County, Mendocino Community College, West Business Development Center and Noyo Center for Marine Science at the table. Together we are planning a citywide community-oriented event the third week of May. Be sure to reserve May 21 and 22, 2022 and join this exciting conversation.



Housing

The City continues to prioritize housing and our efforts are yielding results. After five years of partnering with the affordable housing developer, Danco, to help secure planning entitlements, financing, and building permits – the project broke ground in 2021 and is scheduled for completion in 2022. This project brings twenty-three senior cottages, twenty-five workforce duplex/triplex, twenty Permanently Supportive Units for homeless, three shared community buildings and a manager unit. The City assisted with \$3 million in Homeless Emergency Aid Program funding, over \$3 million in Infill Infrastructure Grant funds, as well as \$250,000 from the City's Housing Trust Fund; and we are currently awaiting response for additional grant funds to bolster programmatic support to ensure the success of residents and the project broadly.



Another exciting housing project in the works is Housing Mendocino Coast - a community land trust incubated by the City for the purpose of providing home ownership and rental opportunities for our workforce. City Council understands that land is a finite community asset, and we want to assure some land is preserved for the purpose of housing folks earning up to 120% of the area median income (AMI). In 2021, the necessary paperwork was filed to establish a charitable 501(c)(3) organization for this goal. In Spring 2022, staff will present a strategic plan outlining approaches for moving this project forward.

Finally, in 2021, the construction plans for the City's Preapproved Accessory Dwelling Unit Program were updated to include a one-bedroom and two-bedroom unit designed in the Craftsman style. These plans were shared with the cities of Point Arena and Crescent City to facilitate the development of much needed housing.

Public Safety

The men and woman serving our community as emergency responders run toward danger every day to protect us. It's a collective effort and all involved are actively doing their part to strengthen programs and build resiliency. For example, the Police Department has focused on developing a cohesive, long-term and stable team by promoting from within, recruiting locally, sending cadets through the academy and offering continued educational opportunities; our volunteer Fire Department received Community Development Block Grant funding to plan improvements to their station on Main Street; and the City contributed new Emergency Evacuation Maps intended for visitors at lodging sites to navigate the City in an emergency event.

I am particularly proud of the collaboration between the City of Fort Bragg, Adventist Health, Redwood Community Services, and the County of Mendocino to utilize \$1 million of Measure B funding to provide a four bed crisis respite location on the coast. In addition, the Police Department applied for CA Department of Justice funding to create a crisis worker position within the Police Department. These efforts will help us provide assistance in the diagnosis, treatment and recovery from mental health illnesses, rather than compound issues with criminal proceedings and jail.

Quality of Life

I'm certain that many important accomplishments have been excluded from my list of highlights, as this letter of reflection would otherwise become a novel. An entire book could be written on any item mentioned, including the many that weren't. Did you know that 18 community members spent over 60 volunteer hours to tackle the complex issues surrounding the name of Fort Bragg? Or about the numerous merchants and property owners engaged in downtown revitalization efforts to support a vibrant and prosperous Central Business District? The strength and character of our community is impressive, and I am honored to serve as Mayor. I, alongside my fellow Councilmembers and staff will continue to make decisions in the best interest of the community, to view public resources with respect, and keep our gaze on the horizon to ensure long term success. Thank you for placing your trust with us.