



New Year Reflections from Mayor Bernie Norvell

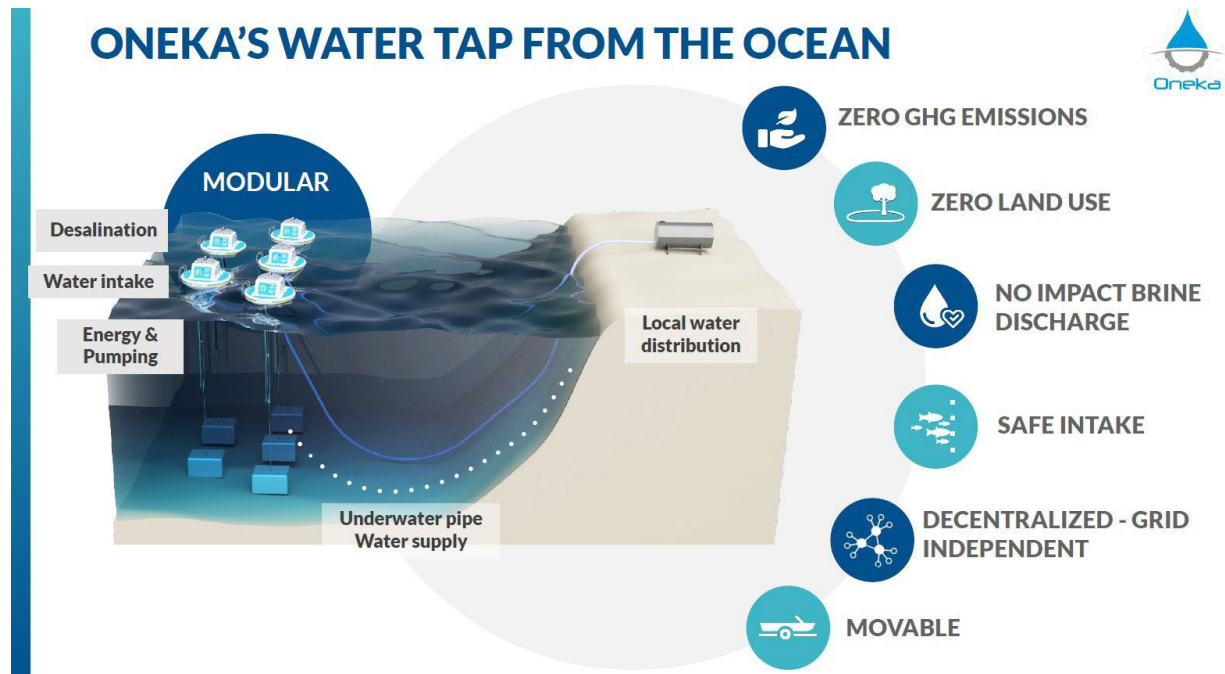


We cautiously started 2022 hoping for the best and learning from all the challenges of 2021 and 2020. Surviving sometimes competing emergencies, the City fared better than predicted. The community members and City staff have continued to be resilient, and their efforts are not forgotten. Taking the time to reflect on these accomplishments is something to be shared and celebrated. I want to share some of these successes and express gratitude for your contributions. Wishing you and your family health and happiness in 2023.

Water

For the third year in a row, California was in a drought, and this had a significant effect on the community’s ability to expand services. The City’s Public Works Department initiated an effective “Save our Water” water conservation campaign by participating in numerous community outreach events, providing water conservation device kits consisting of low-flow shower heads, bath and kitchen sink aerators, toilet tank banks, and other water-saving devices. Recapturing water buckets, educational activity books, reusable water bottles, and other gadgets were also provided to the community at no cost. The City’s Water Treatment Plant produced 199.5 million gallons of drinking water in 2022 (the lowest production total recorded since 1981). This was all due in part to restaurants, hotels, and our residents working together to curtail water use and conserve when it was most important.

As the City continues to be adaptable in the face of water restrictions, there come opportunities to be at the forefront of innovation. Introducing ONEKA, an all-in-one, wave-powered desalination system where everything needed to produce drinking water from seawater is self-contained on a buoy at sea. This partnership was developed out of the Blue Economy Symposium. ONEKA’s wave-powered sustainable desalination mission is an initiative goal to make oceans a sustainable and affordable source of drinking water



Public Works

The Public Works Department facilitated many City projects in 2022 in the areas of water, sewer, parks, storm drains, and streets. One of the largest projects that was finalized was the Maple Street Storm Drain and Alley Rehabilitation Project. This long-awaited project consisted of the replacement of 1,700 linear feet of storm drain including new drain inlets along Maple Street, road paving, and six alleyways as well as the replacement of several sections of sidewalk with accessible (ADA) curb ramps. Total projected costs of \$1.7 million were met and funded by local street sales tax and local partnership program funds.



Another project that the City embarked on was the 2021 Cure-in-Place Pipeline. This important project rehabilitated approximately 9,480 linear feet (1.8 miles) of existing sewer pipe by lining internally via a cure-in-place process throughout various locations within the City. This project was funded by internal funds and a cost of \$192,000.



The most recent public works project to be completed was the School Zone Radar Speed Sign Replacement. This project was completed within the projected time frame during the Winter Break in December 2022. The project replaced seven unrepairable radar speed signs with new solar-powered electronic speed detector signs bringing a much needed improvement to the safety of the perimeter school zones along Chestnut, Sanderson, Lincoln, and Dana Streets. This project was funded using local streets tax in the amount of \$49,500.00

The Public Works Dept. field crews are also always tirelessly working on preventive measures. They cleaned, maintained, and prepared the thousands of linear feet of storm drain lines and inlet locations throughout the City in preparation for the upcoming rain and storm season. This proved a success considering very little to no flooding was reported. Great work!

The partnership between the City of Fort Bragg and the Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District for the CV Starr Community Center continues to be strong. Both City and CV Starr staff worked together on several small projects under \$45,000 each. They arranged, prepared, and completed several projects, including the Men's and Women's Locker Room Floor Replacement, Leisure and Competition Swimming Pool Plumbing Replacement which included the replacement of the two industrial heaters. Other completed projects included installation of powered doors to the natatorium, chemical controller change out, lighting controller upgrade, leisure pool slide bolt replacement, and other small repair/replacement projects.

Economic Development

The Blue Economy Symposium and Learning Festival was a great success. This unique partnership united the City of Fort Bragg, Noyo Harbor District, Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo, Mendocino College, Mendocino County, West Business Development Center, and Noyo Center for Marine Science. This event explored efforts and



opportunities within the blue economy that would diversify our economy on the Mendocino Coast while also improving the local livelihoods of our low-moderate income community while nurturing our environment and protecting coastal resources. Efforts are ongoing to solve one of the Noyo Harbor's most needed projects – a fuel dock – and also looking into replacing the only ice house in the harbor.



These projects and many more are imperative to the health of the harbor. A profound thanks to the many partners and our staff who contributed to this success.

Housing

Danco's Plateau project in collaboration with the City has completed construction which has allowed 68 community members to move into permanent supportive housing. The integrated community will have twenty-three senior cottages, twenty-five workforce duplexes, twenty for the homeless, three shared community buildings, and a manager unit. This unique mix of housing had not been attempted locally before and will serve as a good model for future developments of this kind.



The Plateau also includes activity areas for all three groups and even basketball courts. There has always been strong support from the City Council on projects like this.

More great news on the newly established Housing Mendocino Coast - a community land trust incubated by the City for the purpose of providing home ownership and rental opportunities for our workforce was just awarded funding in the amount of \$820,000. Thanks to Congressman Jared Huffman for securing Congressional Community Project Funding to purchase a future property for the sole use of creating workforce housing.

Public Safety

The men and women of FBPD have servants' hearts. They resolve the problems many of us avoid. City Council and community leaders played a major role in the selection of a new, permanent Chief in



July. The Department has stabilized and a strategic plan was developed. Their new motto of "Concern, Compassion, Courage" is a testament to their commitment to our community. FBPD is still conducting organizational restructuring to better meet the needs of the people of Fort Bragg. Several new officers were hired and trained this year as well.

Several officers attended advanced training to better protect our city. An example of the outcome of one of these trainings is DUI collisions are down 33% over 2021 and several suspects were arrested for sales of fentanyl, a dangerous opioid killing our kids. More advanced training is being brought here to Fort Bragg to ensure our officers have all the modern police training while saving thousands in tax dollars.

I am especially proud of the Care Response Unit (CRU) program. Two Social Services Liaisons work in the Police Department, side-by-side with officers to immediately assist people in a mental health crisis, the homeless, and those with substance abuse disorders. They "fill the gap" and connect those in need with resources, staying with them as they navigate many systems. This approach is entirely new and dubbed the "Fort Bragg Model." It has gained the attention of politicians and researchers as the CRU program has cut police officer response to these calls by over 40%, reunited over a dozen

homeless individuals with family in other areas, arranged for several people to get into drug rehab, and found stable housing solutions for many. When the Plateau opened, CRU members were first to identify a major gap on the first day and immediately began coordinating resources to assist in the success of the program. CRU also coordinated the Emergency Weather Shelter program, housing over 60 people during nights with rain and extreme cold. It seemed odd to many people CRU would be part of the Police Department, but it has proven more successful than ever imagined.



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 about the numerous merchants and property owners engaged in downtown revitalization efforts to support a vibrant and prosperous Central Business District? Or that the new local culture ad hoc committee will meet on the second Tuesdays of the month at 4PM at Town Hall? 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.