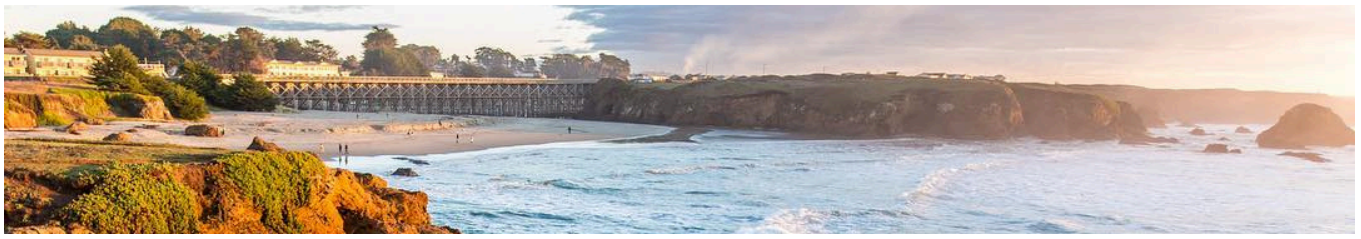


2024

Year in Review

CITY OF
FORT BRAGG





MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

Dear Fort Bragg Residents and Businesses,

As we enter 2025, I am proud to reflect on the incredible progress we made together in 2024. This year has been a testament to the dedication of our city staff, city council, and community, showcasing Fort Bragg's resilience and shared commitment to growth and improvement. The City celebrated its 135th anniversary—a milestone that honors our city's rich history and vibrant community spirit.

Strategic planning guided much of our progress, including completing the community Strategic Plan 2024-2028+, which reflects input from City Council, residents, businesses, regional partners, and staff. This roadmap, alongside newly established core values and updated mission and vision statements, lays the foundation for Fort Bragg's future.

In 2024, the City's newly established Economic Development Department advanced its mission to support local businesses and diversify the economy. Key achievements included launching an online business portal, creating funding programs like the \$650K Fort Bragg Business Boost Fund, and implementing façade improvement initiatives to enhance commercial districts. These efforts will foster entrepreneurship, strengthen businesses, and solidify the city's economic foundation.

The approval of the Municipal Broadband Initiative of \$14.6 million further enhances these efforts by providing essential infrastructure to attract new industries, support innovation, and deliver affordable, reliable internet to residents—improving

quality of life and creating opportunities for education, remote work, and digital connectivity.

To address housing challenges, we implemented forward-thinking policies, such as waiving minimum parking requirements and introducing ministerial design reviews, private/public partnership for housing development while pursuing a pro-housing designation from the state to unlock additional funding opportunities.

Transparency and collaboration remained central to our efforts, with initiatives like the e-news publication- City Manager Roundup, appointment of a Public Information Officer, user-friendly budget software, and Downtown Merchants Roundtable fostering meaningful community engagement.

Public safety remained a top priority in 2024, bolstered by successful emergency planning efforts to enhance the City's preparedness and resilience. Recruitment and retention of officers were strengthened through competitive compensation adjustments, wellness programs, and training opportunities alongside the completion of a long-term agreement with the Fort Bragg Police Association. Public safety initiatives also included increased narcotics-related arrests, advancing sustainability with 63% of the fleet now electric, and securing funding for the CRU Program, which addresses homelessness and mental health challenges reducing police calls by 27%.

MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

Infrastructure improvements were a key focus, with upgrades to the water treatment plant, raw water lines, and completion of the 2023-24 Street Rehabilitation Project. The Public Works Department secured over \$25 million in grant funding, representing 45% of the capital project budget for FY 2024/25, demonstrating our ability to leverage resources to benefit the community.

To create efficiency in how we work, we invested in Acella Software to further streamline the Licensing process for applicants and City Staff. The approval of 4leaf as an alternative building inspector and plan check services further reduces permit processing times set to launch in February 2025.

Financially, the City achieved significant milestones in 2024, including reaching 30% General Fund reserves and a \$3 million investment into the Section 115 Trust, ensuring fiscal stability and preparation for long-term pension obligations. To address the challenges outlined in the City's long-term 5-year financial projections, the City Council placed Measures T and U on the November ballot.

The approval of these measures by voters will further bolster the City's ability to provide critical services and support future growth, ensuring financial resilience in the years ahead. The City's commitment to strong financial practices was also recognized with the GFOA Budget Award and Excellence in Financial Reporting, affirming its dedication to transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility.

The C.V. Starr Community Center, a cherished gem in our community, successfully transitioned to City management in 2024. This milestone reaffirms the City's commitment to sustaining and expanding the Center as a cornerstone of connection, recreation, and economic vitality.

Importantly, we prioritized the learning and development of our City team—the engine that drives Fort Bragg forward. Through new organization wellness initiatives, a commitment to work-life harmony, training opportunities, and focused efforts on recruitment and retention, we have strengthened our workforce, ensuring they are empowered to continue delivering exceptional service to our community.

Reflecting on my first year as City Manager, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve this remarkable community. Over the past year, we have faced challenges head-on, celebrated significant milestones, and laid a strong foundation for Fort Bragg's future.

As we move into 2025, I am inspired by our shared vision for a city that cherishes its people, culture, and natural resources. Fort Bragg has immense potential to grow stronger, more connected, and more vibrant. With your continued trust and partnership, I am confident we can build on this momentum, unlock new opportunities, and achieve even greater success together.

Be sure to check out this edition for updates and highlights from each City Department, showcasing the progress and initiatives that are shaping Fort Bragg's future.

With gratitude and optimism,



City Manager
City of Fort Bragg



OUR MISSION

Fort Bragg is a small town nestled between the coast and the redwoods with a strong sense of community that seeks to preserve its environment while providing resilient public facilities and infrastructure and supporting a safe and vibrant economic, multi-cultural, and recreational experience for both locals and visitors alike.

OUR VISION

A California coastal destination with rich natural resources and rugged beauty, is transforming our future by weaving together our people, ecosystems, and economy to create community prosperity. We are making our mark in the 21st Century by creating climate-ready water and energy independence, housing and economic opportunities, accessible health care, community public safety, and education for all

OUR CORE VALUES

INNOVATION

Drives our city forward, encouraging creative solutions and continuous improvement by embracing new ideas and technologies to enhance quality of life.

SERVICE-ORIENTED

Responsive to the public and to each other to demonstrate our genuine commitment to create a Fort Bragg that serves us today and readies us for a successful tomorrow.

HONESTY & INTEGRITY

Emanate throughout our community to engender the trust, transparency, responsibility, and accountability that our citizens deserve.

COLLABORATION

Nourish civic pride and celebrates the diversity of our city and the meaningful municipal services that our residents and businesses rely on.

FAIR & ETHICAL

Principles and practices, Fort Bragg promotes an inclusive community culture of unity and equality that openly invites everyone to enjoy our unique coastal enclave.

CITY COUNCIL

MAYOR NORVELL



Thank you, Mayor Bernie Norvell, for your eight years of dedicated service to the City of Fort Bragg. Your leadership, commitment, and vision have been instrumental in shaping our community and fostering growth and progress. We wish you the best in your future endeavors and thank you for your invaluable years of service.

NEW APPOINTMENTS



Mayor Jason Godeke

Jason Godeke, who previously served as Vice Mayor on the City Council, has been unanimously appointed as the new Mayor. He expressed his gratitude to his colleagues for their support, stating, "I'm thankful for the opportunity to serve as Mayor and for the excellent mentoring I received from outgoing Mayor Bernie Norvell. I look forward to collaborating with the staff and the Council to continue enhancing economic opportunities for our community. This will begin with supporting the growth and affordability of housing and fostering healthy local businesses. We are fortunate to have a strategic plan that incorporates input from the community, staff, and council. My goal is to use this document as a guide for our priorities. It highlights our town's ongoing and emerging resilience, including improvements in water security, the availability of affordable high-speed internet through broadband, and the development of safe streets. In the next two years, I also hope to find a responsible approach for the cleanup and development of the former mill site."



Vice Mayor Marcia Rafanan

Marcia Rafanan, a devoted advocate for public safety and equity in Fort Bragg, has been appointed as the Vice Mayor. Her leadership experience and commitment to representing diverse voices in the community will be crucial in guiding the Council's work. Rafanan expressed her gratitude, stating, "I want to thank you all for the honor of serving as your Vice Mayor. Together, we must face challenges and appreciate the beauty and complexity of our city. I promise to listen to and address the needs and desires of our community and beyond. It is a privilege to stand before you."

CITY COUNCIL

ELECTIONS



Lindy Peters was re-elected to a four-year term with decades of experience and a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Fort Bragg. Re-elected by the community, Peters has identified several key priorities: first, to rezone the Mill Site through a Local Coastal Program amendment to promote sustainable development and support community growth; second, to revitalize Downtown Fort Bragg by improving public spaces and fostering a vibrant business environment; and third, to establish a Special Otsuchi-Fort Bragg Exhibit at the Guest House Museum to celebrate the lasting cultural exchange and friendship between the two sister cities

**Councilmember Lindy Peters
Reelected to a four-year end term**



As a long-time resident actively involved in local affairs, Hockett is passionate about supporting his community. As a local business owner and fisherman, he plays a crucial role in the Noyo Harbor. His presence on the Council will provide fresh perspectives and a continued commitment to the City's strategic goals.

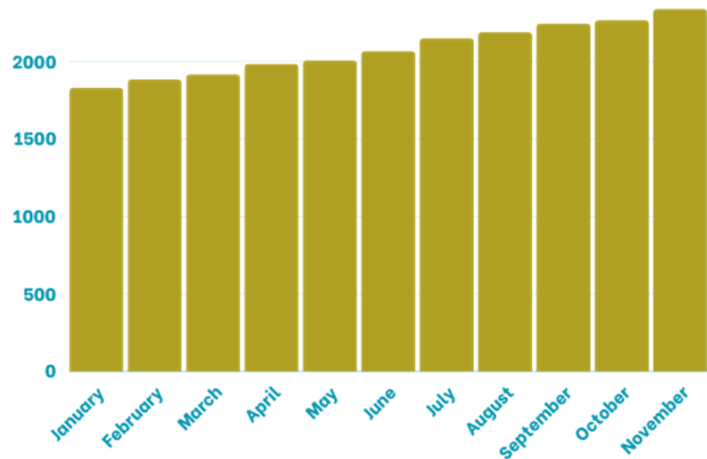
**Councilmember Scott Hockett
Elected to a four-year end term**

PARKS & RECREATION

CV STARR

The Fort Bragg City Council approved the integration of the C.V. Starr Community Center as a City-owned and operated facility, effective February 11, 2024. Since its opening in 2009, the Center has served as a vital community resource. Initially owned and operated by the Mendocino Coast Recreation & Park District, the facility faced financial challenges that led to its temporary closure in 2011. Recognizing its importance to the community, the Fort Bragg City Council placed a half-cent sales tax measure on the ballot to secure dedicated funding for the Center's operations, maintenance, and improvements. Voters approved Measure A in March 2012, ensuring financial stability for the facility through this special sales tax.

During 2024, the City successfully onboarded C.V. Starr employees into its workforce, ensuring a seamless transition into City operations while fostering collaboration and enhancing service delivery. The Center also focused on boosting membership, achieving consistent month-to-month growth by promoting its offerings and engaging more actively with the community.



MEMBERSHIPS

28% Increase Year over Year

2,339
TOTAL MEMBERSHIPS

7,994
AVERAGE MONTHLY ADMITTANCE

OKTOBERFEST

In line with the City's goal to stimulate the local economy in the shoulder season through increased events, the C.V. Starr Community Center partnered with Parents & Friends to host a successful OctoberFest. This event not only highlighted the Center as a hub for community engagement but also provided an economic boost by attracting attendees, vendors, and local businesses to participate in a lively celebration.



PARKS & RECREATION

CV STARR



10,665

JULY FACILITY
ADMITTANCE

39

WEEKLY FITNESS CLASSES



2ND GRADE SWIM

\$11,149

FUNDS RAISED

The CV Starr Center is Fort Bragg's hub for health and wellness, offering a variety of 39 fitness classes designed to suit every fitness level and interest. From calming Gentle Yoga to energizing World Dance and high-intensity Bootcamp, there's something for everyone. Popular offerings include Cardio Spin, Water Exercise, Circuit Training, and weight bar classes, ensuring a well-rounded selection for participants of all ages and abilities.

Despite these successes, the C.V. Starr Community Center continues to face challenges, particularly in addressing high operating costs, increasing membership, and recruiting lifeguards. These ongoing issues have impacted the Center's ability to resume full seven-day operations, highlighting the critical need for targeted workforce development and recruitment strategies.

To address these challenges, the City of Fort Bragg is exploring innovative solutions, including offering competitive incentives, bonuses, expanding outreach efforts, and strengthening partnerships with local organizations and schools to build a sustainable pipeline of qualified lifeguards and staff.

Through these efforts, the City reaffirms its dedication to sustaining and expanding the C.V. Starr Community Center as a cornerstone of community connection, recreation, and economic vitality. By overcoming these challenges, the Center can continue to serve as a vital hub and gem where residents of all ages come together to pursue wellness, build relationships, and enhance the quality of life in Fort Bragg.

This year, the C.V. Starr Community Center proudly took over the 2nd Grade Swim Program from MCRPD, continuing the tradition of teaching an essential life skill to Fort Bragg's youth. The Center successfully raised \$11,149 to support this initiative, providing local second graders with critical swim training—a vital skill in our coastal community. By equipping young residents with water safety and swimming abilities, the program not only promotes health and confidence but also underscores the Center's commitment to fostering a safer, more prepared community.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In July 2024, City Manager Isaac Whippy established a new Economic Development Department within City Hall, a milestone initiative approved by the Fort Bragg City Council. This department reflects the Council's commitment to its goal of being business-friendly by focusing on growing local businesses, diversifying the economy, generating revenue to support community initiatives, and creating and retaining quality jobs.

The establishment of the Economic Development Department underscores the City's dedication to building a vibrant future for Fort Bragg—one that prioritizes community needs, promotes sustainable practices, and provides opportunities for workers while enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors.

"We are committed to being proactive, collaborative, and forward-thinking when it comes to economic development," says City Manager Isaac Whippy. "Creating this new department is a pivotal step toward unlocking opportunities and fostering economic prosperity for our community."

Through leadership, partnership, and collaboration, the Economic Development Department aims to drive positive change and lay the foundation for a resilient, dynamic local economy.



1. Business Support:

Business Ombudsman Services. Supporting local businesses is a top priority of the Economic Development Department. Whether your business is navigating the permitting process, seeking resources, or in need assistance overcoming barriers – we are here to connect you to the resources your business needs to succeed. Check out our new website www.fortbraggbiz.com, and stop by City Hall to learn more about how we might support your business.

- Access to capital
- Navigating the City permitting process
- Site development
- Join Downtown Business Coalition
- Marketing
- Problem solving

2. Business Loan & Grant Programs

Small and medium local sized businesses are the cornerstone of our local economy. This year, City Council redirected American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds provided by the federal government to foster economic recovery and long-term resilience post-pandemic, to support local businesses through grants and loans with the following programs:

A. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

The Downtown Improvement Grant Program, an \$80,000 initiative aimed at enhancing the economic vitality and visual appeal of downtown Fort Bragg. This program is designed to support improvements that encourage increased business activity and investment in the heart of the city.

Focused on revitalizing Fort Bragg's commercial districts, the program will help fund enhancements to both the exterior and interior of storefronts, as well as other highly visible building features. By creating a more attractive and welcoming environment for residents, visitors, and potential investors, the program seeks to boost foot traffic, inspire local pride, and foster sustained economic growth.



B. FORT BRAGG BUSINESS BOOST FUND

Cultivating local enterprise and employment opportunities

The Fort Bragg City Council has approved \$650,000 to establish a revolving loan fund dedicated to supporting local businesses with access to affordable capital.

Small and medium-sized businesses often face significant barriers when seeking financing, including high-interest rates, stringent qualification requirements, and limited availability of traditional lending options. These challenges are exacerbated by the current economic climate, where rising costs and tightened credit markets disproportionately affect smaller enterprises. For many businesses, access to affordable capital is the determining factor between growth and stagnation—or even closure. The Business Boost Fund aims to fill this gap, providing a much-needed resource for businesses striving to thrive in a competitive and evolving marketplace.

This initiative builds on the success of the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Business Assistance Program, which demonstrated the transformative impact of targeted economic investments by funding six local businesses, creating or retaining 13 jobs, and driving local economic activity.

Loan Program Details:

- Interest Rate: 2.5%-4% + Loan Underwriting Fees
- Repayment Terms: 2-5 years
- Loan Amounts: Minimum \$10,000
Maximum \$200,000

FOR MORE INFORMATION

lpeterson@fortbragg.com
smcormick@fortbragg.com

(707) 961 2823 Ext. 108
416 N. Franklin Street, Fort Bragg, CA
95437

C. WAY-FINDING SIGNAGE DOWNTOWN

The City of Fort Bragg plans to implement directional way-finding signage throughout the Central Business District (CBD) and along Main Street. This initiative aims to improve navigation, enhance the downtown experience for visitors, and increase accessibility to key attractions, businesses, and public amenities.

Way-finding signage plays a critical role in creating a cohesive and user-friendly environment, encouraging foot traffic, and supporting local businesses by guiding visitors to points of interest. A prior study completed in 2015 by City staff outlined a framework for incorporating way-finding signs into the City, which will serve as the foundation for this project.



D. ENHANCE CITY'S MURAL PROJECT

Cultivating local enterprise and employment opportunities

The Fort Bragg Mural Project, in partnership with the Alley Way Arts Project, seeks to enrich the city's visual landscape by adding vibrant and culturally relevant murals to the Central Business District and other key locations. This initiative will celebrate Fort Bragg's unique history, culture, and values while enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the city. The project will engage local artists and community members to create murals that reflect Fort Bragg's character, fostering community pride and supporting local talent. The City Council approved \$25,000 will be used to cover materials, artist stipends, and other project costs, with a goal of completing four to five murals by the summer of 2025.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MUNICIPAL BROADBAND



This year the City completed design, construction plans, business model, financing strategy and operations plan to establish a municipal broadband utility. This important last-mile project will connect to the California State Middle Mile initiative and provide 100% of residents and businesses within city-limits access to affordable and reliable broadband. Many thanks to Congressman Huffman for allocating \$1 million of federally directed funding, and to the California Public Utilities Commission for contributing \$10.3 million in grant funding to make this project a reality.

“This initiative will play a vital role in closing the digital divide and ensuring equitable access to high speed internet for our entire community – it’s incredibly exciting”, stated City Manager Isaac Whippy. Indeed, access to affordable and reliable broadband is key to creating equity; impacting education, workforce development, economic development, healthcare, and public safety. City Council and Mendocino Unified School District Board have agreed, in principle, for the City to acquire Mendocino Community Network (MCN); due diligence activities are in process. If the City were to acquire MCN, the City would continue to service existing MCN customers outside city limits. All MCN staff would become city employees and customers could expect to receive the same great service, with even more offerings.

Construction begins in spring 2025, with the goal to complete by July 2026.

BLUE ECONOMY INITIATIVES

The City of Fort Bragg has been exploring how a strategic focus on blue economy opportunities could strengthen and diversify our local economy; improving livelihoods, while also nurturing healthy marine ecosystems. The blue economy includes traditional maritime activity that we have known for generations, like commercial fishing and tourism – and now a entire new collection of industries are emerging to address some our most challenging issues and support climate resiliency. These emerging opportunities include blue technology, marine biotechnology, mitigation banking, renewable energy, and aquaculture. Several agencies have invested funding to support this endeavor, including CA Sea Grant, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, CA Coastal Commission, CA Coastal Conservancy, CA Employment Department, US, Department of Commerce and many others.

Noyo Ocean Collective. The City of Fort Bragg, Mendocino College, Noyo Center for Marine Science, Noyo Harbor District and West Business Center continue to move regional blue economy initiatives forward. A sustainable approach to economic development in which economic vitality and environmental sustainability are compatible, outcomes are equitable, and community priorities are centered. Significant progress has been in 2024 such as:



- Development of website: www.noyoceancollective.org
- Secured funding to develop curriculum for rocky reef restoration program at Mendocino Coast Center, including diving certification.
- Developed the CEQA document to deploy California's first wave-powered desalination buoy, in partnership with Oneka Technologies. This innovative pilot project is expected to launch in spring 2025, and will be active for one-year.
- Noyo Center for Marine Science completed the new design phase for the Ocean Science Center on the Noyo Headlands, and completed entitlements for the first phase of construction – a multi-use building for education and research on marine mammals called the La-BONE-atory.
- Noyo Harbor District and West Business Center secured grant to expand markets for our commercial fishing fleet and a install new ice house.

FEDERAL & STATE PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout 2024, the City of Fort Bragg facilitated several workshops with Federal agencies and their sister State agencies to address coastal resiliency issues in and around Fort Bragg. Together we discussed local priorities, conducted site visits to gain a deeper understanding of individual projects' needs, and then mapped these priority projects to federal and state resources. Through relationship building and collaboration, we are making progress on several important projects that support community resilience. For example, Cal OES and FEMA are assisting with funding a seismic retrofit of the Fort Bragg Volunteer Fire Station on Main Street. The Army Corps. Of Engineers, CA Geological Society, and NOAA is helping us find a nature based solution that will allow for the removal of the sediment containment cell on Noyo Beach and perform a much needed ecosystem restoration in partnership with the tribal community.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Staffing has greatly improved in 2024. We welcomed three new police officers, two of which have been solo for several months and the third graduated the police academy in December 2024. This staffing has been beneficial in allowing more training as well as allowing officers to take time off with their families. We put an emphasis on organizational wellness with the support of City Manager Whippy, who prioritizes work-life harmony for all city staff.

While we said hello to new faces, we had to say goodbye to Officer Oscar Lopez who retired after nearly two decades of service to the Fort Bragg community. While Oscar retired, he is still a familiar face at the PD and events.



The advanced training police department staff attended in 2024 also increased. In total, our personnel attended 43 advanced schools in addition to what is mandatory every year. Also, Captain O'Neal was accepted into POST Command College, which is very competitive to attend. It is a 15-month, graduate level executive leadership course and is important for succession planning in the police department.



The police department also embarked on an overhaul of the firearms program. Funding was secured to completely replace our aging firearms, transitioning to state-of-the-art optics systems on new firearms. Also, the practice of officers sharing rifles has ended. This practice increases liability due to the fact each rifle is not set to an individual user.

By purchasing new rifles and individually issuing them, each officer can precisely set the optics to their preferences to increase accuracy and confidence.

Finally, besides all new duty handguns, every officer will also be issued a compact backup handgun, which will increase officer safety and decrease liability by utilizing a singular platform.

PUBLIC SAFETY

CARE RESPONSE UNIT

The Care Response Unit (CRU) continues to get attention for its success. This year, Fort Bragg PD was awarded a grant through Prop 47 funding which will inject **\$2.5 million in state funds** into our local community over the next four years, add three full-time living wage and two part-time living wage jobs to our local economy, and streamline access to temporary and permanent housing for coast residents struggling with homelessness. Prop 47 will allow CRU to expand services outside of Fort Bragg to more of the coast.

FIGHT FENTANYL CAMPAIGN

CRU administered a Youth Opioid Response grant and started Project Right Now, which touched the lives of over 550 youth in our area and taught them the dangers of fentanyl. CRU trained over 800 people in the use of Narcan to include 15 businesses, schools and organizations with over 1000 doses of Narcan distributed locally. It was also the driving force behind the formation of the Fort Bragg Fentanyl Task Force.

OUTREACH
TEAM

1,000
Doses of
Narcan
distributed

800+
narcan
Training



HOMELESSNESS

CRU has been extremely successful in changing the lives of those experiencing homelessness. They assisted over 250 coast residents with services related to social security applications, housing, substance use disorders, mental health illnesses and domestic violence recovery. Additionally, CRU managed the Extreme Weather Shelter, which provided over 650 bed nights in 2024 to those experiencing homelessness. CRU added a third full-time Social Services Liaison with the Prop 47 grant and secured external funding to maintain the program for another two years.



HOUSING



Increasing the housing supply is a key priority for the City of Fort Bragg, as outlined in the City's Strategic Plan 2024-2028+ and the City Council's goal of adding over 200 housing units by 2026. Housing affordability has become a significant challenge, with many residents finding it increasingly difficult to secure homes. The community faces a shortage of both rental and for-sale properties, driven in part by Fort Bragg's growing appeal as a place to live, retire, and work.

Fort Bragg Takes Proactive Steps to Address Housing Shortage

In 2024, the City of Fort Bragg continued its commitment to tackling the housing shortage through policy changes, partnerships, and collaborative efforts. These initiatives aim to expand the housing supply, support workforce housing, and create diverse housing options for all residents.

Streamlined Housing Regulations

The City has adopted several new housing regulations designed to increase housing supply and make the development process more accessible:

Simplifying the creation of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to provide more affordable and flexible housing options.

Streamlining the process of subdividing low-density residential parcels.

Allowing up to four units on single-family home parcels to increase housing density.

Permitting tiny homes as ADUs and enabling tiny home communities for innovative housing solutions.

Allowing Planned Unit Development projects on smaller parcels to maximize land use.

Mendocino Community Land Trust

Established in 2022, the Mendocino Community Land Trust helps facilitate workforce housing ownership by making it more affordable and ensuring long-term housing solutions for local workers and families. Staff will be completing the launch of the Trust in 2025.

Collaborations with Developers

The City is actively working with developers on projects that will add over 100 new housing units by 2025, including:

1. Harbor View Apartments: This project features 85 units and 10 buildings on a parcel south of the Noyo Bridge. Currently under review, it is expected to go before the Planning Commission in the first quarter of 2025.
2. Hazelwood Senior Project: A proposed 48-unit, three-story building at 860 Hazelwood designed to serve seniors. The developer plans to submit the application by October, with a Planning Commission review anticipated in January 2025.
3. Patton Parcel Development: The City is in discussions with a third developer about a potential housing project at the intersection of Highway 1 and Highway 20.

HOUSING



PURSUE PRO-HOUSING DESIGNATION

In 2024, the Fort Bragg City Council took a bold step toward addressing housing challenges by approving the pursuit of a Pro-Housing Designation from the State of California. On October 15, the Council directed staff to move forward with this program, which incentivizes cities to adopt zoning and land-use policies that make housing development easier, cheaper, and faster.

The Pro-Housing Designation recognizes municipalities that implement proven strategies to streamline housing production, including by-right permitting, simplified design review, reduced regulations, and financial incentives. Fort Bragg has already implemented initiatives earning 23 out of the 30 points required for the designation. Achieving this status will open up new opportunities for the City to access state funding to support housing development.

City Council Approved Pro-Housing Policies

To secure the designation, the City Council directed staff to implement the following policy changes:

- *Eliminate Minimum Parking Requirements for Residential Development* : Removing parking minimums will reduce costs and barriers for residential projects.
- *Establish a Ministerial Approval Process for Multifamily and Mixed-Use Housing*: This policy simplifies the approval process for these developments, accelerating housing production.
- *Replace Subjective Design Standards with Objective Standards*: Transitioning to objective standards improves approval certainty and reduces delays.
- *Waive or Reduce Development Impact Fees for Affordable Housing Projects*: Offering financial incentives for developments that include lower-income housing units supports the creation of affordable housing.

On November 12 & December 9, the City Council advanced these efforts.



PLANNING DEPARTMENT

150

Building
Permits
Approved

Key Department Updates:

Community Engagement and Housing Progress

Community Housing Workshops: The department hosted two Community Housing Workshops with the Community Development Committee, fostering dialogue on housing challenges and solutions.

Pre-Application Meetings: Eight pre-application meetings were held, including discussions with two developers planning major housing projects—one proposing 80+ units and another proposing 56+ units.



60

Code
Enforcement
Complaints

49

Planning
Entitlements

Policy Advancements

Resolutions and Ordinances:

Brought 26 Resolutions before the Planning Commission to address a range of planning and development topics.

42

Limited
Term
Permits

Presented eight Ordinance Amendments to the City Council, including:

- Outdoor Dining
- Planned Unit Development
- Urban Lot Splits
- Tiny Homes and Tiny Home Communities
- Accessory Dwelling Units
- Parking Standards in the Central Business District
- Fire Sprinklers

20

Sign
Permits

2

Cannabis
Permits

Local Coastal Plan Amendment: Submitted a Local Coastal Plan Amendment to the Coastal Commission to align housing-related and other ordinances in the Coastal Land Use and Development Code (CLUDC) with the Inland Land Use and Development Code (ILUDC) and State law.

Mobile Vending Adjustments: Refined the allowable locations for mobile vending, ensuring balanced opportunities for vendors while maintaining public access and safety.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PLANNING COMMISSION

In 2024, the City bid a heartfelt farewell to two long-serving and dedicated Planning Commission Chairs, Jeremy Logan and Scott Deitz. Their leadership and commitment have been invaluable to the city, and their contributions will have a lasting impact on Fort Bragg's planning efforts. Thank you, Commissioners.

At the same time, we were pleased to welcome two new Planning Commissioners, Katie Turner and Ryan Bushnell. Their fresh insights and enthusiasm will undoubtedly enrich the commission's work and help guide the city's planning initiatives in the years ahead.

PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

In alignment with the City of Fort Bragg Strategic Plan 2024-2028 Council approved a couple of key process improvements in 2024, with implementation underway and a planned launch in February/March 2025.

These initiatives are designed to streamline, educate, and expedite the permitting process through measures such as pre-application meetings, software upgrades, and alternative plan checks and inspections. Since 1994, the City has relied on the Mendocino County Planning and Building Department for building inspection services. However, feedback from housing workshops highlighted community concerns about the need for faster and more efficient permitting and plan check processes.

In response, the City explored alternative solutions and selected 4-Leaf Inc. for a Pilot Project to address these concerns. With extensive experience in building services, 4-Leaf Inc. will provide an additional option for expedited building inspection services with a 10-day turnaround, allowing the City to evaluate its effectiveness and improve operational efficiency.

Additionally, the investment in Acella Software is set to enhance the user experience for applicants and staff, ensuring a more efficient, accessible, and transparent process for all.

PUBLIC WORKS

The Public Works and Engineering Department has made significant strides in 2024, achieving a series of milestones that enhance infrastructure, improve public facilities, and secure a sustainable future for Fort Bragg. These accomplishments reflect the City's commitment to community development, safety, and environmental stewardship. Highlights of 2024 Achievements include:

PROJECT UPDATES

- Wiggly Giggly Playground : February 10 marked the much-anticipated reopening of the Wiggly Giggly Playground. This vibrant space now provides an upgraded recreational area for children and families to enjoy.
- Fort Building Transformation: The Fort building is undergoing an exciting transformation into a tribal learning center, creating a vital resource for education and cultural enrichment.



- The 2024 Streets Rehabilitation Project has been successfully completed, improving the pavement and functionality of up to eight streets throughout Fort Bragg. This comprehensive project also incorporated essential upgrades to the downtown pedestrian core, enhancing safety, accessibility, and aesthetics for residents and visitors alike. Key components of the project included:

1. Street Pavement Rehabilitation: Significant upgrades were made to streets across the City, ensuring smoother surfaces and extended lifespan.
2. Downtown Enhancements: Improvements in the Central Business District included bollard installations, street striping, and the rehabilitation of stamped asphalt crosswalks. These upgrades ensure long-term viability and enhance the pedestrian experience in Fort Bragg's busiest areas.
3. Crosswalk Rehabilitation: Many downtown crosswalks, originally rehabilitated in 2012, had begun to show wear. This project restored them to optimal condition, improving safety and aesthetics in the downtown pedestrian corridor.

PUBLIC WORKS

- The CV Starr HVAC Project and Solar Facilities Project moved forward with contracts awarded.
- Beautification and Sustainability: Art-wrapped dual waste and recycling bins were delivered as part of the Art and Recycling Beautification Project.
- Pedestrian safety improvements, including extended red curbs at crosswalks, were implemented.
- The City of Fort Bragg, in partnership with Conservation Works, successfully planted eight new trees at the Fort Bragg Dog Park. This meaningful project, funded by the Environmental Grant Program of the Community Foundation of Mendocino County, reflects the City's commitment to increasing green space and fostering a healthier ecosystem.



The initiative aimed to address "tree deserts" in the community, enhancing habitat and biodiversity while providing residents with a hands-on opportunity to connect with their environment. Beyond ecological benefits, the addition of these trees contributes to the social and health advantages associated with green spaces, creating a welcoming and serene environment for park visitors and their canine companions.

This project brought together City staff, Conservation Works, Climate Fellows, Friends of the Dog Park volunteers, and students from Fort Bragg High School, showcasing the power of collaboration and community engagement.

- Contracts were awarded for the 2025 Pavement Preservation Project, Storm Water Trash Capture Devices, and the Recycled Water Feasibility Study. The Water Systems Distribution Plan and the Waste Water Collection System Master Plan are well underway, with completion anticipated by fiscal year-end.

The Public Works Department successfully secured over \$25 million in grant funding, with \$22.39 million allocated for water projects and \$2.72 million in other state grants. These funds represent approximately 45% of the total capital project budget for the 2024/25 fiscal year, demonstrating the City's dedication to leveraging external resources for community benefit.

Looking Ahead As Fort Bragg looks to 2025, the department continues to focus on innovation, sustainability, and collaboration. Projects like bio-solids storage and solar panel installations at the Waste Water Treatment Plant exemplify the City's forward-thinking approach. These accomplishments are a testament to the hard work and vision of Fort Bragg's City Council and its commitment to creating a thriving, sustainable community.

FINANCIAL MATTERS



Fort Bragg's financial health reached new heights in 2024, marking a year of exceptional progress and fiscal responsibility. The City's General Fund reserves are now at their highest level in history, totaling \$5.8 million, and achieving the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) recommended reserve level of 30%. This milestone reflects the City's commitment to prudent financial planning and ensuring long-term stability.

Despite statewide economic challenges, Fort Bragg has maintained a balanced budget with revenues exceeding operating expenditures, ensuring no service cuts. For the ninth consecutive year, the City delivered a structurally balanced FY 24/25 General Fund proposed budget. Projections for the fiscal year ended FY 23/24 ended indicate revenues of \$13.1 million and expenditures of \$12.2 million, resulting in a projected surplus of \$838,000. This surplus not only underscores the City's strong fiscal practices but also positions Fort Bragg to continue meeting community needs while maintaining financial flexibility.

This year, the City prioritized the retention and support of its police department team by providing Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) for police officers and signing a long-term four-year contract with the Police Union. These steps ensure competitive compensation, bolster staff retention, and reflect the City's dedication to maintaining a safe and secure community.

In addition to building reserves, the City made strides in reducing debt by paying off two significant water enterprise loans, strengthening its ability to reinvest in vital infrastructure and public services. Recognizing the City's largest financial challenge—CalPERS pension obligations—the establishment of a Section 115 Trust has created a financial buffer to curb market volatility and stabilize future pension costs.

The passage of Measures T and U in the November ballot further solidified the City's financial outlook. These measures will provide critical funding to support community priorities while helping the City keep pace with the rising costs of delivering essential government services.

These achievements are a testament to the City's strategic financial management, focused on sustainability and adaptability. As Fort Bragg looks ahead, this strong fiscal foundation—bolstered by the additional funding from Measures T and U—will enable continued investment in essential services, infrastructure, and community-focused initiatives while preparing for future uncertainties.

