



City Manager's Update February 2026



March 6, 2026

It has been an absolute joy to spend my first six weeks serving as Morro Bay's City Manager. I have felt genuinely welcomed by this community, and each day has deepened my appreciation for what a special place Morro Bay is. This city is defined not only by its extraordinary natural setting, but also by the warmth of its people, the strength of its civic pride, and the shared commitment to protecting and enhancing all that makes Morro Bay unique.

I could not be more pleased to be here. Every day I am thankful to the City Council for giving me to opportunity. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the community and, just as importantly, getting to work with our outstanding city staff. Across every department, I have found a team of dedicated public servants who care deeply about Morro Bay and who bring energy, professionalism, and heart to their work every day. It is exciting to join this team and to help lead our efforts to move the City forward in thoughtful, positive, and ambitious ways.

During these first six weeks, I have already had the opportunity to partner with the City Council subcommittee on Morro El and work with the San Luis Coastal Unified School District on negotiating the potential purchase of the Morro Elementary School site. This has been an important early priority and an example of the meaningful work underway to position the City for the future.

Morro Bay is truly an exceptional city. It is beautiful, vibrant, and full of promise. I am honored to serve this community, inspired by the welcome I have received, and excited for all that we can accomplish together in the months and years ahead. If you are reading this and we have not met, come by sometime and say hi.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "JC".

John Craig
City Manager
jcraig@morrobayca.gov
805-772-6206

Police

Police Chief Update

February was a busy and rewarding month for the department.

The Morro Bay Police Department continues its commitment to keeping our community safe through proactive policing and strong community partnerships. This month our patrol officers remain highly visible throughout the city, conducting proactive patrols in neighborhoods, business districts, and high-traffic areas. In addition to maintaining a strong presence, officers have been actively engaged in traffic enforcement efforts to improve roadway safety and reduce collisions. The department has also continued a heavy focus on narcotics investigations, working diligently and closely with the SLO County Narcotics Task Force to address drug-related activity and protect the quality of life in Morro Bay.

This month, the department proudly hosted our annual department meeting, recognizing the outstanding contributions of our team members. We are pleased to congratulate Lisa McClish, who was honored as Volunteer of the Year for her dedication and service to our department and community. Renee Osborne received the Professional Employee of the Year award in recognition of her exceptional work and commitment behind the scenes. Officer Billy Bower was named Officer of the Year, reflecting his professionalism, leadership, and unwavering commitment to public safety. These individuals exemplify the values and service-minded spirit of our department.

The City's new Massage Establishment Ordinance has been completed and formally adopted by the Morro Bay City Council. The ordinance will go into effect on March 12th and is designed to establish clear operational standards and regulatory guidelines for massage establishments within the city. This effort reflects our continued collaboration with City leadership to ensure appropriate oversight, support legitimate businesses, and enhance community safety. The police department is working closely with local massage establishments to ensure a smooth transition and compliance with the ordinance.

Fire

Incident Information

The Morro Bay Fire Department totaled 178 responses from February 1 through February 28, 2026. These responses include 2 fires, 107 medical and rescue responses, and 69 other incident type responses. The other incident types include public service assists, false alarms, cancelled runs, and hazardous events.

Fire Chief Update

The Fire Department recently completed a recruitment process to fill a vacant Firefighter position. We had over 230 applicants for this recruitment. We invited 22 applicants to interviews and 12 candidates participated. We have extended an offer to Jackson Whittaker coming to us from the Templeton Fire Department. Jackson will begin on March 30th pending successful completion of his background check.

The crews have been busy doing business inspections and creating a digital pre-plan for our commercial businesses. This program is connected to our CAD dispatch system, and crews can access information about a business they are responding to such as hydrant locations, fire department connections, storage of hazardous materials, and other pertinent response information. As the crews conduct an inspection, they add photos and details into the program that will come up when an incident is dispatched to that location. This program addresses a specific shortfall that was identified during our last ISO review and will improve the situational awareness of responders to hazards a specific address may contain.

The City applied to the California Board of Foresters for inclusion in the 2026 Fire Risk Reduction Communities (FRRRC) List. The city was not able to be included in the list, but we were given the option to apply as the fire department with different requirements. I received word we were approved for addition to the upcoming list. The final approval of the list will take place in June, and the list will be published on July 1st. By being added to this FRRRC list, any property within the Morro Bay Fire Department jurisdiction will be included in our coverage area. Once the list is approved, I will send out information on how homeowners can obtain documentation to submit to their insurance company. Inclusion on this list can be considered by insurance companies as a factor to determine risk and potentially lower rates or assist in maintaining coverage.

Finally, the Fire Department will be hosting an open house on Saturday, May 16th with station tours, public safety displays, presentations, games and food. More details to come soon.

Harbor

Harbor Vitality Director Update:

CMANC

- Mayor Wixom, Harbor Business Manager Thompson, and Harbor Vitality Director Munson attended the conference in Washington DC the week of February 9th.
- Harbor items discussed with federal legislators and agencies included:
 - Continued funding of USACE’s dredging of the federal channel
 - Repair of the revetments and seawalls
 - Dredging of the back-bay channel and State Park Marina
 - Shellfish crop insurance (oysters)
 - Funding for the North T-Pier
- The Harbor Department submitted Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) funding requests for feasibility studies for the revetments and back-bay dredging.
- The Harbor Department plans to submit Congressional Directed Spending (CDS) requests for the North T-Pier and back-bay dredging soon.
- After meeting with MARAD, the Harbor Department is considering applying for the Port Infrastructure Development Program grant for the North T-Pier.



Waterfront

- The Department has been preparing for single stall paid parking at the Boat Launch, which is scheduled to begin March 1st. Annual parking passes are available at the Harbor Department Office.
- After mid-year budget adjustments, the Harbor Department will move forward with restoring the Beach St. gangway, purchasing a new trailer for HP vessel 3869, and improving the boat dry storage facility location at the Triangle Lot behind the Maritime Museum. With funds remaining after the finger dock repairs at the boat launch slips, the department is seeking to replace the “Galley” 3-hour dock and gangway.
- The Department is hoping to re-release the Libertine RFP in the coming days.
- Staff met with the Friends of the Harbor Department; both are excited to promote new events and membership opportunities.

Harbor Patrol Statistics for January 1 to February 28, 2026

Bay Patrol	Land Patrol	Calls for Service	Emergency Response	Assist other Agency	Enforcement Contact	Training	Maintenance Action	Weather Advisory
161	401	303	32	114	61	81	438	27

Public Works

Maintenance

Landmark tree issue on Morro Ave.

A large branch broke off the landmark tree at the corner of Morro Ave and South on Monday. Our tree contractor assessed the massive branch and determined that, due to its weight and being pinned to the adjacent tree, a crane would be needed to safely remove the damaged branches. The road was closed overnight. On Tuesday, the crane and tree crew removed the damaged branches. The crane was extended to 110 feet and removed a branch weighing 6,700 pounds. Upon inspection of the branch at the break point, a crack had formed over time and had rotted the inside of the branch. A beehive with honeycombs had made a nest inside the hollow cavity.



695 Harbor Street

Our talented City maintenance crew is renovating parts of 695 Harbor Street to make room for our two Human Resources staff. Improvements include renovating an office, some flooring work, and exploration of creating a formal conference room. The move in, anticipated later this year, has triggered an office shuffle that will co-locate Chamber of Commerce staff and Visit Morro Bay staff as well.

Engineering

Construction – Coming Soon

Engineering staff are gearing up to start construction on two capital projects at around the same time. As of the writing of this update, the Morro Creek Bank Stabilization project is scheduled to start on Monday, March 16th. This project will re-fortify the creek bank since it's failure around three years ago. Construction will take about four weeks to complete.

The other project, Coleman Park Improvements, is going into construction just one week later on Monday, March 23rd. This project will offer a new restroom playground area, and accessible pathways and parking at Coleman Park. The City's goal is to have work done on this project before Memorial Day.

Utilities

Urban water Management Plan

The Utilities Division is embarking on the 2025 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP). The UWMP is a state-required update that evaluates current and future water supplies, demand, and long-term reliability. The plan helps ensure the community has a sustainable water supply and will include opportunities for public input as it is developed.

Administration (HR, City Clerk and City Attorney)



HIRING NOW

FULL TIME OPENINGS

- Senior Accounting Technician
- Senior Civil Engineer

PART TIME TEMPORARY OPENINGS

- Beach Lifeguard - Harbor
- Junior Guard Coordinator - Rec
- Jr. Lifeguard Aides & Instructors - Rec
- Pool Lifeguard
- Sports Official
- Swim Instructor

APPLY ON THE CITY WEBSITE AT
[HTTPS://WWW.MORROBAYCA.GOV/832/EMPLOYMENT-OPPORTUNITIES](https://www.morrobayca.gov/832/employment-opportunities)



Administrative Services (Finance and IT)

During February, IT staff completed a monumental phase of the Veteran's Memorial Building internet upgrade: there is now a fiber connection which will result in significantly increased speeds for upload and streaming. Projects like these have multiple phases that are largely invisible to the public and take many behind-the-scenes hours of effort. Congratulations to the IT team on meeting this milestone!

On the Finance side, February marked the official completion and adoption of the [FY 2024-25 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report](#) (ACFR), and the fourth consecutive year with No Audit Findings! While this does not surprise staff, it is still worth acknowledging and celebrating. This audit result reflects the excellent work performed by City staff each day of the year and is a particular achievement for the Administrative Services Department staff who review and process every single City financial transaction. Special thanks are due to Finance Manager Melissa Atchison and her staff in Finance for the diligence in the audit period and drafting of the financial report.

This month, Finance also provided a [midyear report and financial outlook update](#) to both the Citizens Financial Advisory Committee (CFAC) and City Council.

Lastly, this month the City was awarded the Meritorious Award from the California Society of Municipal Financial Officers (CSMFO) for the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operating Budget. Late last year, the City learned of being awarded a similar award from the Government Finance Officers Association. Staff will uphold the same standards of excellence as we embark on Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget development in March.



Recreation

Look at our updated Winter Community Classes! We've added new class times to better accommodate participant schedules and full use of our Community Center.

Recreation Services is also excited to be partnering with the MBAA 55+ to offer scholarships for MBAA members to participate in our fee-based Community Classes. We're looking forward to expanding access and welcoming even more community members into our programs.

Seniors

Cuesta Spring semester classes are in full swing! We're excited to offer a variety of classes in watercolor, art journaling, drawing, brain studies, mysticism, yoga and strength training. These are in addition to our ongoing classes such as ACES, PACE, Tai Chi, Ping Pong, Bocce ball, walking, bridge, chess and hand and foot.

We are also thrilled to introduce our new scholarship program, funded by MBAA...55+. This program will allow seniors who cannot afford fee-based recreation classes the opportunity to participate and enjoy these activities.

Youth Services

Youth Services has been busy with a variety of programs and events! Our before- and after-school program continues to serve an average of 45 students per day. We are currently preparing for Parent-Teacher Conference Week at Del Mar Elementary, when dismissal occurs an hour and a half earlier than usual. During that week, we anticipate an increase in participation that week due to expanded childcare needs.

Youth Services will also be hosting Holiday Hangout: Brick Challenge Camp during the SLCUSD Spring Recess (see flyer below for more details).

Over the past few months, we've also held several successful special events. Our second Family Dance: Glow in the Galaxy welcomed 126 attendees for a truly "out of this world" experience! In February, we hosted our annual Kids' Night Out: Valentine's Party, with 14 kiddos joining us for a sweet and fun-filled evening.

Kids Camp Pre-Registration opened on March 2nd, with full registration beginning March 30th. (see flyer below for more details)

We're looking forward to another exciting and engaging summer season!

WINTER 2026
Morro Bay Recreation Services
COMMUNITY CLASSES
Creating Community Between
People, Parks, and Programs.

- **Freestyle Fitness with Jenny**
 - Wednesdays 9:00-10:00AM
- **Pilates with Heather**
 - Mon. & Fri. 10:00-11:00AM
- **Dance FIT with Sally**
 - Wednesdays 5:30-6:30PM
- **Zumba with Erika**
 - Tues. & Thurs. 5:30-6:30PM
- **Zumba with Nicole**
 - Wednesdays 10:00-11:00AM
 - Fridays 9:00-10:00 AM
- **Open Flow**
 - Wednesday 6:30-8:00PM
- **Okinawan Karate**
 - Tues. & Thurs. 6:30-8:00PM

Drop-in rates available for most classes: \$6-\$15

MORRO BAY RECREATION SERVICES
1001 Kennedy Way, Morro Bay, CA 93442 - (805)772-6278
www.morrobayca.gov • www.facebook.com/CityofMorroBay

Morro Bay
Recreation Services
Presents

HOLIDAY HANGOUT

Brick Challenge Camp

Any sign-ups after the 13th will have an
additional \$30 late fee.
March 23rd - 27th, 2026

Monday:
Make Something
Monday

Tuesday:
Wheels, Wings and
Things (Pool Trip)

Wednesday:
Wild Wonder
Safari

Thursday:
Off to Space
& Del Mar Park Trip

Friday:
Everything is
Awesome Pajama
Party!

5 DAYS - \$190
4 DAYS - \$155
3 DAYS - \$125
2 DAYS - \$95
1 DAY - \$55

Register
by **March 13th**
At MR Rec. Office, Kids' Club or
Scan below to sign up



Search "Holiday"

COME JOIN THE FUN!

When: March 23rd- 27th, 2026
7:00 am - 6:00 pm
Who: Children 4-12 years old
Where: KIDS' CLUB
@ 501 Sequoia St # 25

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT ANGELICA AT (805)772-6279

GLOW IN THE GALAXY Family Dance

Jan. 2026



Kids Night Out!

February 2026



Morro Bay Recreation's
Kids' Camp
Childcare & Recreational Enrichment
for Children 4 - 12 yrs. old
at Del Mar Elementary Campus
501 Sequoia, Morro Bay
Hours: 7:00 am - 6:00 pm
Contact Info: ajepsen@morrobayca.gov
(805) 772-6279 kvega@morrobayca.gov

Join us for a Summer of
Time Travel Adventure!
**June 15th -
August 7th
2026**

H'O-YEAH Monday!
Funky Friday!
Timeless Tuesday
Wednesday Wonders
Take a Trip Thursday

\$50 Registration Fee

Weekly Prices:
Full Week - \$190
4 Days - \$155
3 Days - \$125
2 Days - \$95
Daily Rate - \$55
Summer School Package - \$80/Week
Scholarship's Available through CFEB

Registration opens March 30th!



Join our
Pre-Registration List!

Facilities

February brought a noticeable uptick in activity across our facilities and parks as we continue to ramp up seasonal usage. We hosted two memorial services this month, providing welcoming spaces for our community to gather and honor loved ones.

We were also excited to welcome the return of the Big, Bad, and Ugly surf competition to Morro Bay. The event utilized the Morro Rock beach area along with one of our facilities to host their dinner, bringing great energy and visitors back into town.

Overall, it's been a strong and steady start as facility and park reservations continue to build momentum heading into spring.

Sports

February marked the start of a new season for our Adult Softball and Social Kickball leagues, held on Monday and Wednesday evenings, respectively. Adult Softball has grown to five teams competing for the league title. In Social Kickball, a new champion will be crowned this season, as last year's titleholder, the "Rec-It" team, is regrouping for a return in the summer season.

Registration for the Junior Lifeguard Program will open in March. Morro Bay residents and scholarship recipients will have priority access starting on March 23, with registration opening by session on a staggered, day-by-day basis through the remainder of the week.

March will also mark the conclusion of both youth and adult basketball programs. Our end of season tournament will finish with an event style championship day on Sunday, March 8 at Morro Bay High School.

Coast Girls Softball season begins for participants ages 4–16 with Opening Day on March 14.

Aquatics

Aquatics Staff weathered the storm this February to keep the community in the pool and swimming! City Aquatics staff provided Lap Swim, Aqua Aerobics, Master's swim, private lessons and Water Polo Camp this month and are looking forward to spring programming which started March 1st. Spring Programming adds Little Rippers and Junior Guard Bootcamps on Sundays, getting our future Junior Lifeguard's to hit the beach with stronger swim skills and confidence.



Community Development

Permit Statistics

In February, the City issued 37 building permits and received 7 new building permit applications.

The Community Development Department now publishes up-to-date building and planning permit statistics, as well as a list of active projects on the Department's "Current Permit Applications and Statistics" webpage:

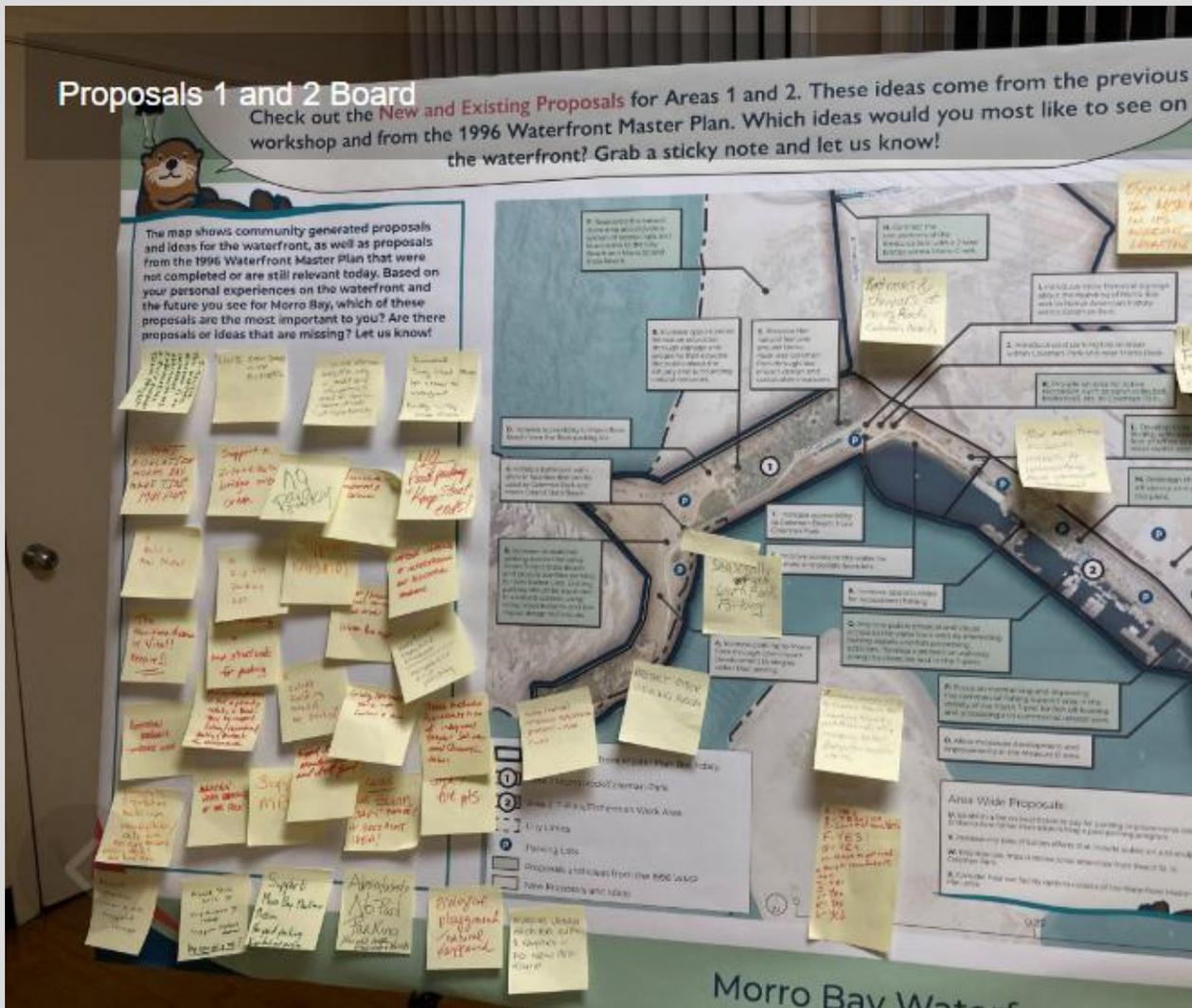
[Current Permit Applications and Statistics | City of Morro Bay - Official Website](#)

Waterfront Master Plan Update

We'd like to thank everyone who participated in our community workshop on February 25. We had over 90 participants at the meeting and received great feedback. The presentation, poster boards, and images of the feedback are available now on the Waterfront Master Plan website.

<https://www.morrobayca.gov/1116/Waterfront-Master-Plan>





This Thursday, the WMPAC will review a draft vision statement created from the feedback received at the workshop and Sea Level Rise Adaptation Strategies. Please join us in person at the Veteran’s Memorial Building or via Zoom at 3 PM. The agenda for the meeting is also available at the link below.

Agenda: <https://pub-morrobay.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=b1656a47-c3ce-4122-8daa-6921d0c3d8a5&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>

Stay tuned: At the next Community Workshop in May 2026, the City will present alternative concept plans for public input.

2026 Zoning Code Update

On February 24, the City Council adopted an ordinance to approve various amendments to the Zoning Code / Implementation Plan (IP), Title 17 of the Morro Bay Municipal Code, to reinstate a setback adjustment for sloping residential lots; reinstate a blufftop height limit on Front Street between Beach Street and Surf Street; clarifying the sign code’s standards for electronic changeable copy signs do not apply to message boards displaying time, temperate, or fuel prices; amending the City’s accessory dwelling unit (ADU) regulations to comply with State ADU law; and amending procedural requirements for amending the General Plan consistent with voter initiative A-24.

This is one of the public views outside the Veteran's Hall on Surf Street to be protected by reinstating the bluff top height limit.



The updated ADU and sign regulations take effect on March 26, 2026. The bluff top height limit and sloping lot adjustment amendments will take effect after they are approved by the Coastal Commission. Staff is working on sending these amendments to the Coastal Commission for consideration. A hearing date has not yet been set.