



**DATE:** February 28, 2022  
**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Edward C. Starr, City Manager

# CITY MANAGER'S MONTHLY REPORT FEBRUARY 2022

## OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

- **Metro Board Asks for Gold Line Funding**

The Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has submitted a request for up to \$16.5 billion of the state's \$46 billion surplus to Governor Newsom and the State Legislature to fund transportation projects in the southland area, including a \$748 million extension of the Gold Line (now the L Line) light rail system from Pomona to Montclair.

If funded, the Gold Line project would extend the light rail system 3.3 miles from Pomona to the Montclair Transcenter — the designated eastern terminus of the Gold Line — giving Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties their first shared light rail connection. Metrolink already provides a commuter rail connection between the two counties through the San Bernardino Metrolink Line.

Completing the Gold Line to Claremont is identified as part of the "Twenty-Eight by '28" initiative projects prioritized by Metro for completion before the 2028 Olympiad in Los Angeles. The San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA) has responsibility for completing the Gold Line from Claremont to the Montclair Transcenter. The \$16.5 billion ask includes funding for the Montclair segment of the project.

Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins, her predecessor, Phil Washington, and the Metro Board have demonstrated strong support for the extension of the Gold Line to Montclair. In a letter to Governor Newsom and key Legislators dated December 8, 2021, the Metro Board emphasized that the historic state surplus can be used to eliminate gridlock and reduce pollution in the region. Metro has supported the extension of the Gold Line since placing it in the agency's [Long Range Transportation Plan](#)<sup>1</sup> in 2009.

For Montclair, the arrival of the Gold Line is critical to the long-term success of the City's completed and planned [transit-oriented development projects](#)<sup>2</sup> in north Montclair. Three major

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dailynews.com/2020/09/25/100-miles-of-rail-plus-freeway-bus-and-bicycle-projects-included-in-400-million-la-metro-plan/>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dailybulletin.com/2020/09/23/a-20-year-plan-for-montclair-place-calls-for-6300-residential-units/>

residential projects (The Paseos, Arrow Station, and Alexan Kendry) have already been completed. One mixed-use project (The Village at Montclair) is scheduled to start construction by May of this year. Further, City staff is currently reviewing plans for two additional housing projects and two mixed-use developments for North Montclair, and more are expected.

Montclair's transit hub is designed to capitalize on the Gold Line, providing a vital link for connecting commuters, students, shoppers, visitors, and others who will use the light rail system to travel back and forth between San Bernardino County and the San Gabriel Valley, Pasadena, and Los Angeles. Compared to the Metrolink train, the Gold Line provides less expensive, more frequent service and is expected to move drivers from their cars to the light rail system. A study completed in 2020 by Metro projects an estimated 8,000+ daily boardings for the Gold Line at the Montclair Transcenter.

If Governor Newsom and the Legislature authorize funding, the Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority plans to complete the Gold Line to the Montclair Transcenter by 2028.

In addition to the Gold Line, Metro is asking for \$10 billion for capital funding of specific public transit projects, including the following:

- Expanding bus rapid transit and bus-only lanes throughout Los Angeles County.
- The [East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor](#)<sup>3</sup> — this rail corridor is a 14-station, 9.2-mile light rail system that would run along Van Nuys Boulevard and East San Fernando Road.
- The L Line [Eastside Extension](#)<sup>4</sup>, Phase 2 — from its eastern terminus in East Los Angeles, the extension would run along Atlantic Boulevard to Lambert Road in Whittier. The light rail would also serve the cities of Commerce, Montebello, Pico Rivera, and Santa Fe Springs.
- The C Line ([Green Line](#)) [light-rail extension](#)<sup>5</sup> — this \$1 billion extension project would provide light rail from Redondo Beach to Torrance.
- The [Inglewood Transit Connector Project](#)<sup>6</sup> — this project includes a 1.6-mile elevated, automatic people mover connecting the Crenshaw/LAX rail line to sports venues, including the new SoFi Stadium in Inglewood.
- The [Sepulveda Transit Corridor](#)<sup>7</sup> — the corridor would connect the Westside of Los Angeles with the San Fernando Valley via a rail line under or along the 405 Freeway. The estimated cost of the project is \$10.8 billion.
- The [West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor](#)<sup>8</sup> — this 19-mile light-rail line would connect southeast Los Angeles County to Downtown Los Angeles, and connect to the

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dailynews.com/2018/05/26/metro-on-track-for-a-push-on-east-san-fernando-valley-transit-corridor-project/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.whittierdailynews.com/2021/11/12/how-you-can-find-out-the-latest-on-proposed-metro-light-rail-line-from-east-la-to-whittier/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dailybreeze.com/2021/02/15/metro-rail-line-extension-to-torrance-tracking-closer-to-possible-2028-opening/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.dailybreeze.com/2020/04/23/inglewood-95-million-closer-to-building-a-people-mover-for-nfl-fans-concert-goers/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dailynews.com/2021/12/01/metro-starts-environmental-review-process-for-sepulveda-transit-corridor-project/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.metro.net/projects/west-santa-ana/>

cities of Artesia, Cerritos, Bellflower, Paramount, Downey, South Gate, Cudahy, Bell, Huntington Park, Vernon, and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County.

- **Governor Relaxes Mask Mandate**

As the Omicron variant of the coronavirus recedes and fewer hospitalizations are reported, California lifted its universal mask mandate for indoor public places effective Tuesday, February 15, 2022. Lifting of the mandate applies to counties without local mask orders of their own, including San Diego, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties, as well as swaths of the San Joaquin Valley. Los Angeles County has retained its mask orders.

Face coverings will still be required for unvaccinated residents indoors and those in select settings such as nursing homes or while aboard public transit. Relaxing the [two-month-old order](#)<sup>9</sup> reflects the state's progress in its battle against the Omicron variant. However, public health officials warn that continued vigilance will be vital in keeping California safe.

Concurrent with lifting the mask mandate, the Public Health Department also increased the attendance thresholds for indoor and outdoor "[mega-events](#)"<sup>10</sup> — subject to additional recommendations and requirements surrounding coronavirus testing and vaccination verification — from 500 to 1,000, and 5,000 to 10,000, respectively.

State officials are also working on plans to update school masking requirements. However, every person on a K-12 campus must continue wearing masks indoors for the interim. The Department of Health and Human Services wants until the end of February to decide whether to change its rules on masking indoors for school students, teachers, and staff. The extra time will allow school communities to discuss proposed changes.

According to state data, COVID-19 cases have dropped by nearly 75 percent since mid-January. If the trend continues downward, Health and Human Services anticipate making the change at the end of February. The overall objective, however, is to keep schools open. While California is home to twelve percent of the country's public school students, it has experienced only one percent of total school closures. Governor Newsom attributes this low closure rate to the mask mandate. The latest advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends universal indoor masking by all students (ages two years and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.

California is also lifting the requirement that visitors to hospitals and nursing homes test negative for the coronavirus.

Some public health officials and experts, however, remain wary of removing all guardrails, aware that new coronavirus variants are possible in the months ahead. Hopes for a definitive end to the pandemic have been dashed many times, and it would be unwise to drop both masking and vaccine requirements when such uncertainty remains. Based on that

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-12-13/california-orders-statewide-mask-order-starting-wednesday>

<sup>10</sup> <https://covid19.ca.gov/mega-events/>

perspective, state Public Health Officials have long maintained that California's COVID-19 response must evolve as conditions change.

[A recent poll](#)<sup>11</sup> by the Public Policy Institute of California found that COVID-19 remains the top issue in voters' minds. While 67 percent of those surveyed said they believe the worst of the pandemic is behind us, that number is down from last May when 86 percent of respondents expressed the same concern.

Ahead of the masking changes, some California counties have also initiated the repeal of vaccination mandates to enter certain businesses; however, those counties have generally achieved high vaccination rates among their residents. For example, in San Francisco, 83 percent of residents five years of age and older are fully vaccinated, and two in five residents have received a booster shot. By contrast, in Los Angeles County, 69 percent of residents are fully vaccinated, and one in three residents have received a booster. In San Bernardino County, only 56.9 percent of the population is fully vaccinated, and fewer than one in five residents have received a booster shot.

The five counties in the state with the highest percentage of their population fully vaccinated are Marin County (85%), Imperial County (85%), Santa Clara County (84%), San Francisco County (83%), and San Mateo County (82%). California is also the only state in the union where some counties have a fully vaccinated rate below 45 percent.

Counties maintaining masks and proof of vaccination on entry requirements have softened or are considering reducing rule requirements. For example, to enter indoor businesses, unvaccinated customers can now cite religious beliefs or qualifying medical conditions, but they must typically show a recent negative coronavirus test administered by a testing facility that provides the person's name. These counties justify the maintenance of stricter rules because they continue to have high transmission rates.

Public health officials anticipate that many residents of California will continue to exercise caution and wear masks when entering indoor businesses, despite the relaxation of the mandate. A new [study](#)<sup>12</sup> by scientists at UC Berkeley and the California Department of Public Health illustrates the effectiveness of masks in preventing coronavirus infection. Published by the CDC, the study found that those who always wear a mask in indoor settings were less likely to test positive for the coronavirus than those who did not routinely wear masks.

People who wore N95 or KN95 masks in public indoor settings had an 83 percent lower chance of testing positive; surgical masks had a 66 percent lower chance; and cloth masks had a 56 percent lower chance.

Statewide, many doctors recommend caution, arguing that shedding masks too quickly could lead to the emergence of a new variant. Of particular concern are classrooms and day-care centers that cater to younger children. For children ages 2 to 4, for whom there is currently no authorized vaccine, masks remain the best layer of protection. At elementary, middle, and

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ppic.org/publication/ppic-statewide-survey-californians-and-their-government-february-2022/>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7106e1.htm?s\\_cid=mm7106e1\\_w#contribAff](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7106e1.htm?s_cid=mm7106e1_w#contribAff)

high schools student populations have had the opportunity to be vaccinated and, in some cases, boosted. Nonetheless, the state is concerned that dropping mask mandates for schools too quickly could result in a rise in outbreaks.

Public health officials are also concerned about children with [underlying health issues](#)<sup>13</sup> who could benefit from extended mask mandates.

Low vaccination rates among children are also a concern as the state moves away from mask mandates. In San Francisco, 73 percent of children five to eleven years old are vaccinated with at least one dose. In LA County, only 32 percent of children in the same age group have been vaccinated. In San Bernardino County, according to [Vaccination data - Coronavirus COVID-19 Response](#)<sup>14</sup>, only 18.7 percent of children in this age group have been vaccinated.

Although [rates vary wildly](#)<sup>15</sup> depending on the county and school district, only one in four elementary school children had been fully vaccinated in California as of last week. That compares with under two-thirds of twelve- to seventeen-year-olds who have been fully vaccinated.

In most places in California, most students at elementary schools are still not vaccinated, even with one shot, complicating the challenge of keeping schools open for in-person instruction and putting more children at risk of contracting the disease.

When the Pfizer vaccine for younger children became available last November, the expectation was high that most parents would jump at the opportunity to have their children vaccinated. However, after three months, most parents are still holding off, despite aggressive efforts to overcome obstacles, including offering gifts to children who show up for the vaccine, as well as \$50 gift certificates to their parents for groceries.

The slow pace cannot be blamed simply on the fact that the pediatric vaccine is the most recent one to come on the market. After a similar amount of time, many more twelve- to fifteen-year-olds had been vaccinated, indicating that the younger age group presents unique challenges.

Beyond vaccine resistance, there are multiple logistical barriers that have disproportionately affected five- to eleven-year-olds. One is that there are fewer places where young children can get the vaccine than there was last year for teenagers and adults. Amid these difficulties, there is at least one positive development: pharmacy chains like CVS and Walgreens have begun to offer the COVID-19 vaccines to children — the first time they have provided vaccines of any kind to young children.

Public health officials also note that parents must be convinced that even though children are at low risk of becoming seriously ill from Covid, they can still die from it.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-02-07/home-health-nurses>

<sup>14</sup> <https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccination-progress-data/#progress-by-group>

<sup>15</sup> <https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccination-progress-data/#progress-by-group>

What is daunting is that all these challenges will likely be multiplied when California begins administering vaccines to even younger children — a process that was expected to [happen soon](#).<sup>16</sup>

However, a decision on the availability of vaccination for children younger than 5 has now been delayed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which announced on February 11 that it would [delay a meeting this week on Covid-19 vaccines for children under 5 years old](#)<sup>17</sup> after new data from Pfizer and BioNTech convinced regulators to wait for more information about the effectiveness of a third dose. The FDA was quick to point out that the delay was not the result of safety concerns.

Pfizer and BioNTech have been testing a third shot after announcing in December that trial data showed two doses produced an insufficient immune response in toddlers. Nonetheless, in January, the FDA asked both companies to submit data to support emergency use authorization for the first two shots in the expected three-dose series, as the Omicron variant sickened more children than at any other point in the pandemic.

The FDA attributes the delay to extreme caution so that parents of small children can be confident with the vaccine.

- **California Has Launched the California Mortgage Relief Program**

California has launched the California Mortgage Relief Program to assist qualified homeowners who have fallen behind on their housing payments. With \$1 billion in federal funds, the program will help homeowners who had a financial hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**California Mortgage Relief Program Key Points:**

- Homeowners who missed at least two mortgage payments before December 27, 2021, may be eligible for funds to get caught up.
- There is a maximum benefit of \$80,000 available to each qualifying household.
- The one-time grant provided through this program is not a loan and does not need to be paid back.
- The California Mortgage Relief Program is separate from the CA COVID-19 Rent Relief program (still open to renters and landlords).

Homeowners can **check their eligibility and apply** through an online portal at <https://camortgagerelief.org/>.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.latimes.com/science/story/2022-02-02/covid-vaccines-for-kids-under-5>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/02/11/fda-delays-kid-vaccine-meeting-pfizer-more-data-00008261>



- **Single Rate Payer Health Plan**

A controversial proposal to create [a state-funded single-payer health care system](#)<sup>18</sup> died in the Legislature earlier this month. According to a legislative analysis, the single-payer plan could cost between \$314 billion and \$391 billion annually, financed by [a series of tax hikes](#). Single-payer supporters, however, say that sum is smaller than what Californians pay for private insurance.

The state Assembly [had to pass the bill by February 7](#)<sup>19</sup> for it to stay alive, but its author chose not to bring the bill up for a vote — probably to avoid a contentious vote on the funding plan. The bill’s powerful sponsor, the California Nurses Association, [was critical of the author](#)<sup>20</sup> for failing to move the plan forward.

The single-payer proposal was divided between two bills — [one that would create a program](#)<sup>21</sup> called California Guaranteed Health Care for All and [one that would fund it](#)<sup>22</sup> via increased taxes.

Governor Newsom, who did not favor the bill, promoted the benefits of [his plan](#),<sup>23</sup> which would expand access to Medi-Cal, the state’s health care program for low-income Californians, to all eligible residents regardless of immigration status.

- **Historic Drought Continues**

According to a new [study](#)<sup>24</sup> conducted by researchers at the University of California, the current drought in America’s Southwest has made the region [the driest it’s been in 1,200 years](#)<sup>25</sup>, causing scientists and meteorologists to classify the event as a mega-drought. Researchers looked into the period between 2000 and 2021 and found that the last 22-year stretch is the driest spell dating back to 800 AD — as far back as the data goes.

Blame for the drought is placed directly on climate change. While drought conditions are familiar to the region, the effects of a warming planet appear to be making it far worse. Researchers also noted that [human-caused climate change is a significant driver](#)<sup>25</sup> of the destructive conditions and offered a grim prognosis: even drier decades ahead.

The study notes that mega-droughts, characterized by prolonged periods of dryness that span more than two decades, were integrated into the historical geological record. Long before

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<sup>18</sup> <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2022/01/health-care-taxes-california/>  
<sup>19</sup> [https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2022/01/california-single-payer-health-care-vote/?utm\\_source=CalMatters+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=da289b23b6-WHATMATTERS&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_faa7be558d-da289b23b6-151172040&mc\\_cid=da289b23b6&mc\\_eid=4181c00a62](https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2022/01/california-single-payer-health-care-vote/?utm_source=CalMatters+Newsletters&utm_campaign=da289b23b6-WHATMATTERS&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_faa7be558d-da289b23b6-151172040&mc_cid=da289b23b6&mc_eid=4181c00a62)  
<sup>20</sup> [https://www.nationalnursesunited.org/press/nurses-condemn-california-assembly-giving-up-on-bill-guarantee-health-care?utm\\_source=CalMatters+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=da289b23b6-WHATMATTERS&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_faa7be558d-da289b23b6-151172040&mc\\_cid=da289b23b6&mc\\_eid=4181c00a62](https://www.nationalnursesunited.org/press/nurses-condemn-california-assembly-giving-up-on-bill-guarantee-health-care?utm_source=CalMatters+Newsletters&utm_campaign=da289b23b6-WHATMATTERS&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_faa7be558d-da289b23b6-151172040&mc_cid=da289b23b6&mc_eid=4181c00a62)  
<sup>21</sup> [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220AB1400](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB1400)  
<sup>22</sup> [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220ACA11](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220ACA11)  
<sup>23</sup> <https://calmatters.org/politics/2022/01/california-budget-newsom/>  
<sup>24</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/14/climate/western-drought-megadrought.html?smid=tw-share>  
<sup>25</sup> [https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-022-01290-z.epdf?sharing\\_token=D6dNWNtqpdbia1My7owoYtRqN0iAjWl9jnR3ZoTv0OkweMbawmVFM1UCLmLxuyBpGkIFJa1\\_BxzJ7UFQSQZ6IMlvOmlNdweksOJ\\_Tb7J-sLpaVxBYZk2m5IVcrrvrKYaetU9hkTYt-0W5PDEilG\\_94ATdcRPQe4Qw91j-DZdsGdSi7kiTwx9r7pHLKfhlCJCr\\_s8B1ATddffWvAonMHk6sFldyqkLytZ9jObiuTyQ%3D&tracking\\_referrer=www.latimes.com](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-022-01290-z.epdf?sharing_token=D6dNWNtqpdbia1My7owoYtRqN0iAjWl9jnR3ZoTv0OkweMbawmVFM1UCLmLxuyBpGkIFJa1_BxzJ7UFQSQZ6IMlvOmlNdweksOJ_Tb7J-sLpaVxBYZk2m5IVcrrvrKYaetU9hkTYt-0W5PDEilG_94ATdcRPQe4Qw91j-DZdsGdSi7kiTwx9r7pHLKfhlCJCr_s8B1ATddffWvAonMHk6sFldyqkLytZ9jObiuTyQ%3D&tracking_referrer=www.latimes.com)

human industry introduced pollutants that contributed to climate change, water availability ebbed and flowed naturally throughout the geological record. That variability, however, has been intensified by climate change. According to findings in the study, soil moisture deficits doubled in the last 22 years compared with levels in the 1900s, and [human activity](#)<sup>26</sup> reportedly accounted for a 42 percent increase in severity.

The climate crisis has become so significant that even the U.S. military is developing climate plans. Last October, the [Pentagon released a report](#)<sup>27</sup> about the challenges climate change poses to the U.S. military, stating it was “reshaping the geostrategic, operational, and tactical environments with significant implications for U.S. national security and defense.” The US military is often represented as a major environmental polluter. A [2019 report](#)<sup>28</sup> found that U.S. military forces consume “more liquid fuels and [emit] more CO<sub>2</sub>e (carbon-dioxide equivalent) than most countries,” and that if the U.S. military were a nation-state, it would be the 47th largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world.

The U.S. Army also released its [First-Ever Climate Strategy and Plans](#),<sup>29</sup> a comprehensive climate strategy that aims to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect soldiers from worsening effects of climate change and extreme weather events, including floods and heatwaves.

Prompted by the Biden-Harris Administration, the U.S. Army announced a plan earlier this month, setting out a roadmap to help reach the military branch’s goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The plan includes halving emissions (against 2005 levels) by 2032 and transitioning towards a fully electric non-tactical vehicle fleet by 2035 and a tactical fleet by 2050. Additionally, the plan calls for the implementation of a micro-grid at all Army installations to improve energy efficiency, improve logistics and supply systems to be more climate-resilient, and train soldiers to operate in a climate-altered world.

Researchers for the University of California study have built on conclusions from a previous study that ranked the period between 2000 and 2018 as the second driest in 12 centuries. The last two incredibly dry years – which were marked by record-setting heatwaves, receding reservoirs, and a rise in dangerously erratic blazes that burned both uncontrollably and unseasonably – were enough to push 2000 to 2021 into first.

Using moisture levels in soils as their control measure, researchers focused on landscapes from Montana to northern Mexico and from the Pacific Ocean to the Rocky Mountains. Researchers also analyzed data collected from tree ring patterns (rings that appear closer together represented periods of stunted growth, which occurs during dry spells) that offered clues to soil moisture levels throughout the centuries.

Researchers warn that the west is experiencing a point on an upward trajectory, and their conclusions are supported by [several studies showing the connection between human-](#)

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/feb/15/us-west-megadrought-worst-1200-years-study>

<sup>27</sup> <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Oct/21/2002877353/-1/-1/0/DOD-CLIMATE-RISK-ANALYSIS-FINAL.PDF>

<sup>28</sup> <https://electrek.co/2022/02/09/the-us-army-is-going-electric-and-wants-to-be-net-zero-by-2050/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://earth.org/us-army-releases-first-ever-climate-strategy-and-plans-to-go-net-zero-by-2050/>



[caused warming and drought and how these climate catastrophes compound](#).<sup>30</sup> This large body of research demonstrates how heat waves will get more extreme and occur more frequently.

The study also shows the rapidity by which the changes are developing and affecting the west. For example:

- In the summer of 2021, both Lake Mead and Lake Powell – the largest reservoirs in North America – reached record-low levels.
- According to the U.S. drought monitor, nearly [65 percent of the American West is experiencing severe drought](#)<sup>31</sup>, even after record rainfall hit some areas late last year.
- For the first time, federal officials curbed allocations from the Colorado River Basin, which supplies water and power for more than 40 million people.
- In the last two years, wildfires have left behind more blackened earth than ever before.

Conditions in 2022 have not helped to turn the situation around. January 2022 in California was one of the driest on record, even though December experienced record rains and snowfall in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

The pattern continued into February when a heatwave broke state records. By the start of February, the state's December snowpack dwindled to below average, melting rapidly after reaching 160 percent of average at the start of 2022. Forecasts now show [there is little short-term relief in sight for California](#).<sup>32</sup>

Rains that fell around Valentine's Day brought just under 2 inches of new snow in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. That snowfall was the first measurable snowfall in the area in 37 days — a dry spell that was the longest ever recorded in 51 years of monitoring Sierra winters, surpassing 31 days without snow in 1990. Rain and snowfall this week had not yet been evaluated.

The record snowfall in December raised hopes that the drought was easing, contributing to a decision by state officials to release more water from the State Water Project to its member cities and farm-irrigation districts. However, the dry spell has changed the dynamics, making it increasingly likely that California is heading into a third straight year of drought.

Climate experts say a high-pressure system parked over the Pacific has pushed wet weather northward and away from California. In the meantime, the snowpack has begun melting and evaporating. State officials say the only good news is that the water has disappeared at a less alarming rate. According to the Department of Water Resources, the Sierra snowpack has lost an estimated 5 percent of its water content since peaking five weeks ago. The snowpack is a significant part of California's elaborate water system, acting as a second set of reservoirs to store supplies for summer and fall usage. Last year, an early-spring heatwave robbed the

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/aug/10/heat-drought-and-fire-how-climate-dangers-combine-for-a-catastrophic-perfect-storm>

<sup>31</sup> <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?West>

<sup>32</sup> <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

system of an estimated 800,000 acre-feet of water (nearly enough to fill Folsom Lake, a major reservoir in Northern California), primarily because of snowpack evaporation.

To address growing drought concerns, scientists are calling for a reassessment of resources. California, for example, may need to consider reducing its agricultural footprint. Steps should also be taken to implement best management practices, update operation rules, and introduce measures that will reverse human-caused climate change. Meanwhile, Californians are reminded to [be water-wise](#)<sup>33</sup> and follow simple water-saving rules.

- **Monte Vista Water District Tap Water Fill Station**

Monte Vista Water District (MVWD) has unveiled its first tap water fill station unit at Monte Vista Elementary School. The new, improved drinking fountain allows students to fill reusable water bottles with high-quality tap water while reducing plastic bottle use and demonstrating proper environmental stewardship.

During the presentation, MVWD staff educated students about the value and importance of water, including the need to conserve and protect this precious resource. Student ambassadors representing the student body were charged with sharing the message with their friends and classmates.

Students also learned that a reusable water bottle can be filled 23 times for less than a penny — a clear demonstration of the value of quality tap water versus purchased bottled water.

Students were also provided free, reusable water bottles, and teachers were provided with classroom activities and resources to help engage students in lessons on water origination sources, the various uses for water, benefits related to drinking tap water, and environmental stewardship.

A second tap water fill station unit will be unveiled at Howard Elementary School in early March.

Montclair schools within MVWD's service area are eligible to apply for the District's "Water You Drinking" Tap Water Fill Station Program. The fill stations are designed to replace existing drinking fountains.

- **At-Home Tests Kits for COVID-19**

American households can receive up to four free at-home COVID-19 tests. The Biden-Harris Administration is promoting the test kits to continue slowing the spread of the COVID-19 Omicron variant. Tests can be requested at [www.covidtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov),<sup>34</sup> and orders will ship in 7 to 12 days.

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.bewaterwise.com/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.covidtests.gov/>

## ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

### • **Current Job Opportunities**

The City is looking for qualified individuals to fill the following positions:

- Firefighter (Paramedic) (Entry-Level) - application period is continuous
- Learning Leader - application period is continuous
- Police Cadet - application period is continuous
- Police Dispatcher (Entry-Level) - application period is continuous
- Police Dispatcher (Lateral) - application period is continuous
- Police Officer (Entry-Level) - application period is continuous
- Police Officer (Lateral) - application period is continuous
- Reserve Police Officer Level III and II - application period is continuous
- Senior Learning Leader - application period is continuous
- Substitute Learning Leader - application period is continuous

For an up-to-date listing of all job opportunities available at the City of Montclair, or to apply for a job, please visit the Employment Opportunities page on the City's website: <https://www.cityofmontclair.org/employment-opportunities/>.

### • **New Hires**

The City is excited to announce the hiring of the following employees:

- Alejandro Santamaria, Police Officer Trainee, Department of Public Safety (1/3/2022)
- Joseph Puckett, Maintenance Worker Part-Time, Public Works Department (1/3/2022)

### • **Thank You**

The City would like to thank the following individuals whose service to the people of the City of Montclair recently ended:

- Robert Boyens, Police Officer, Department of Public Safety (12/9/2021)
- Steven Griffin, Police Sergeant, Department of Public Safety (1/6/2022)

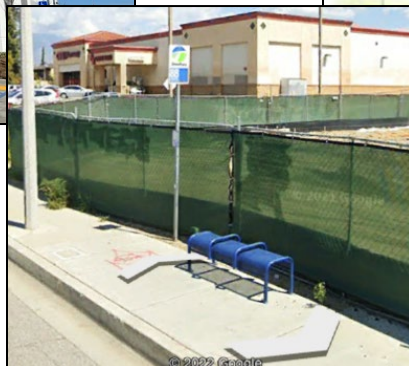
## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### • **Ramona Avenue and Brooks Street**

Development of two adjoining parcels (3.97-acres) at the northeast corner of Ramona Avenue and Brooks Street and the 4500 block of Holt Boulevard is nearing completion. The project

includes a single-story commercial five-unit office building (combined total area of 11,383 s.f.) and two new industrial buildings with associated site improvements designed to appear as an interconnected project.

Building No. 2 contains 26,883 s.f., and Building No. 3 encompasses 29,422 s.f. In addition to providing a campus-like setting with modern buildings that will serve as the base for business startups, the project will redevelop these vacant parcels plagued with illegal dumping and homeless encampments. It will also include the addition of a covered bus shelter for riders boarding northbound on Ramona Avenue to enjoy. The expected completion date for this project is April 2022.



Current Bus Stop

Example of a Bus Stop Shelter



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

- **Launch of the Monthly Business Newsletter**

The Economic Development Department is pleased to share a monthly business newsletter promoting current and future Montclair businesses and entrepreneurs with resources for growth and expansion. From its strategic location, Montclair is at the core of Southern California's economic revival and boasts diverse business sectors, quality housing, and ample recreational amenities that offer residents and businesses alike a high quality of life.

The E-Newsletter shares business resources and free training offered through our resource partners.



To sign up for the monthly E-Newsletter go to <https://www.cityofmontclair.org/newsletter/>

To view previous E-Newsletters, click on the following link:

<https://www.cityofmontclair.org/economicdevelopmentnewsletter/>

- **Innovating Commerce Serving Communities 2021 Conference**

In late July 2021, ICSC, previously known as the International Council of Shopping Centers, rebranded as the Innovating Commerce Serving Communities to reflect its role in promoting and elevating the marketplaces and spaces where consumers shop, dine, work, play, and gather as foundational and vital ingredients of communities and economies. Known for hosting successful conferences, ICSC routinely attracts thousands of industry-related attendees and exhibitors from around the globe to connect and make deals.

In December 2021, Mayor John Dutrey, Mayor Pro Tem Bill Ruh, Director of Community Development Mike Diaz, Director of Economic Development/Housing Mikey Fuentes, Economic Services and Housing Manager Thailin Martin, and Economic Promotion Coordinator Amber Cruz attended the *ICSC Here, We Go 2021* conference inside the Las Vegas Convention Center, from December 5-7, 2021.

ICSC reported more than 9,000 attendees, ranging from real estate professionals, retailers, developers, investors, and data analytics companies.

The City's booth, located in the newly expanded West Hall allowed staff to meet with several tenant representatives for retailers and restaurants to acquaint them with site opportunities in Montclair. City staff met with top mapping, data collecting, and site-selection companies to gain additional information on the latest customized demographic report offerings; newer mapping techniques; and specialized site reports, all designed to provide better-customized reports to retailers.

The City's booth was equipped with the 2021 edition of the *Economic and Community Development Available Property* booklet, which was handed out to attendees at the event. The booklet highlights Montclair's updated trade-area demographics, new or upcoming commercial and housing developments within the City's North Montclair Downtown Specific Plan, and a listing of retail and industrial buildings and spaces for sale or lease. It also includes sites located in high-traffic and high-demographic areas that potentially meet the site criteria of popular retailers and restaurants.

The City's presence at ICSC conferences continues to enhance Montclair's image as a business-friendly City, as staff seeks developers and retailers for new development or leasing opportunities. City staff explains to interested parties what is planned or proposed, or what sites are available in the City for retailers to consider for future development or leasing. Several recent, prominent commercial developments have occurred in the City because of the City's promotional efforts at ICSC.

The following photo shows the City's ICSC team (from left to right: Economic Promotion Coordinator Amber Cruz, Director of Community Development Mike Diaz, Economic Services and Housing Manager Thailin Martin, and Director of Economic Development/Housing Mikey Fuentes) and Mayor Pro Tem Bill Ruh at the City of Montclair booth.





- **Inland Fair Housing and Mediation Board Workshop via Zoom**

Economic Services and Housing Manager Thailin Martin, along with two Montclair Housing Corporation contracted On-site Property Managers, recently attended a virtual Housing Rights and Responsibilities workshop hosted by Inland Fair Housing and Mediation Board (IFHMB) via Zoom. The workshop discussed rights regarding evictions, repairs, security deposits, and federal and state housing discrimination laws. More than 25 attendees ranging from renters, homeowners, property managers, and local government housing staff participated in the workshop.

IFHMB is a non-profit, public benefit corporation that serves San Bernardino County and parts of Riverside and Imperial Counties in Southern California since 1980. Their main office is located in the City of Ontario. IFHMB's satellite offices are located in San Bernardino, Victorville, Barstow, Indio, and El Centro. All offices combined assist thousands of individuals each year through its numerous programs at a none-to-very minimal charge to the consumer.

The non-profit organization can offer many free resources and services to renters, homeowners, property management companies, and cities through the various grants and monetary awards they receive. IFHMB serves as an intermediary to assist individuals in resolving issues related to housing discrimination, homeownership sustainability, rental complaints, and disputes in court through the provision of resource recommendations, education, and mediation.

For more information on IFHMB services, workshops, and resources, visit the IFHMB website at <http://www.ifhmb.com> or stop by City Hall to pick up IFHMB informational booklets.

**“WILL THE APARTMENT  
STILL BE AVAILABLE  
WHEN THEY  
MEET ME  
IN PERSON?”**

**“I MADE ARRANGEMENTS  
TO LOOK AT AN APARTMENT,  
BUT WHEN THE LANDLORD  
SAW MY SON AND ME, HE  
WALKED AWAY. WHEN WE  
CAUGHT UP WITH HIM,  
HE SAID THE APARTMENT  
WAS ALREADY RENTED.”**



Discrimination because of race or familial status is prohibited under the law. If you believe you may be a victim of housing discrimination, contact HUD or your local Fair Housing Center:

Visit **[www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing)** or call the HUD Hotline  
**1-800-669-9777 (voice) 1-800-927-9275 (TTY)**

Visit **[www.IFHMB.com](http://www.IFHMB.com)** or call **1-800-321-0911**

***Your Choice. Your Right. Your Home.***



A public service message from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in partnership with the National Fair Housing Alliance. The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status or disability. For more information, visit [www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing).

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

- **Warm Welcome to Police Officers**

The Police Department's Police Trainees, Daniel Melling, Travis Mondrala, Dailynn Santoro, Allison Stevens, and Jaime Yoteco, graduated December 16, 2021, from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department's 224th Session of the Basic Law Enforcement Academy. The graduation ceremony was held at the Abundant Living Family Church in Rancho Cucamonga. Fun fact: Officer Santoro's sister is Officer Danielle Rodriguez. Officer Rodriguez is proud of her sister's accomplishments and excited to have her join the Department.

Officers Mondrala, Santoro, Stevens, and Yoteco will undergo several months of field training before they can qualify to go solo. Please give them a warm welcome when you meet them!



Pictured left to right: Chaplain Josh Matlock, Officer Dave Taylor, Lieutenant Jim Michel, Detective Brian Blyther, Officer Daniel Melling, Officer Dailynn Santoro, Lieutenant Brandon Kumanski, Chief Robert Avels, Officer Travis Mondrala, Officer Allison Stevens, Sergeant Mike Zerr, Captain Jason Reed, Officer Jaime Yoteco, Detective Joshua Garabedian, Detective Angelo St. John, and Officer Danielle Rodriguez

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

- **Fire Incident Report**

On January 23rd, the Montclair Fire Department responded to a reported structure fire in the 9900 block of Ramona Avenue. When Firefighters arrived on the scene, they found a large volume of smoke and fire in the rear of the property.

Upon investigation, the fire involved a large shed in the back of the property with multiple buildings threatened. Due to the heat and the proximity of the burning shed to neighboring structures, the fire had spread to the house and a large tree in the backyard. A second residence (with a shed) behind the property had also started to catch fire when crews arrived.



Firefighters aggressively attacked the fire while requesting a second-alarm fire response, increasing the total response to ten fire engines, three fire trucks, and five overhead personnel. The full response included over 44 fire personnel with assistance from neighboring departments.

On-scene crews were able to ensure the residents of all properties were successfully evacuated while taking action on the fire. Crews that remained on-scene continued to fight the fire and successfully confined it to the original involved structures. Firefighters were able to save the house adjacent to the main residence and the residence and shed behind the property. The main residence of the original involved property was unfortunately heavily damaged due to the extent of fire involvement when firefighters arrived. An estimated \$1 million worth of property was saved by firefighters protecting the nearby homes that were exposed to the fire. There were no injuries or deaths during the incident; however, one resident was transported to a nearby hospital for an unrelated medical problem. The cause of the fire is currently under investigation.



The Montclair Fire Department would like to thank all assisting agencies including the Montclair Police Department, San Bernardino County Fire, Los Angeles County Fire, Ontario Fire Department, Chino Valley Fire Department, American Red Cross, and AMR.

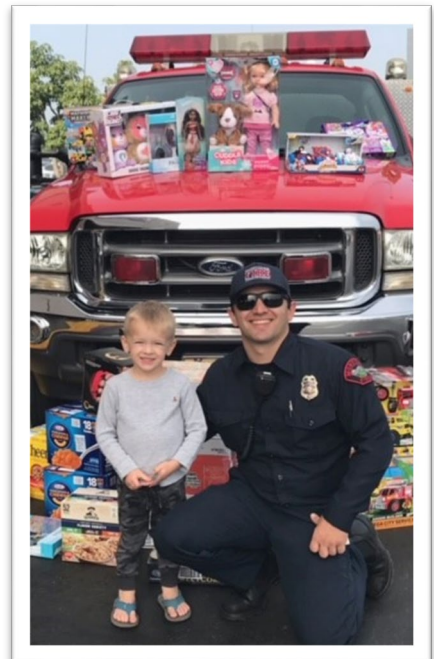
- **Congratulations Firefighter/Paramedic Jacob Chapman!**

The Fire Department would like to congratulate Firefighter/ Paramedic Jacob Chapman for passing his probationary test. Firefighter/Paramedic Chapman endured an intense year of probation that included written and manipulative skills.



Above:  
Firefighter/Paramedic Chapman and Fire Engineer Vidal assisting with training new firefighter/paramedics in vehicle extrication.

Right: Firefighter/Paramedic Chapman interacting with the community.



## HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

- **Montclair Medical Clinic Closure Announcement**

The Montclair Medical Clinic, housed in the Recreation Center for over 30 years and then moved in 2017 to a new location inside the Montclair Community Health Center at 5050 San Bernardino Street, is retiring its evening services.

The Montclair Medical Clinic, in partnership with Health Services Alliance (HSA), provided evening health care services to low-income, uninsured residents of western San Bernardino County and eastern Los Angeles County since 1978.

Over the years, the Clinic has been the health care home for thousands of patients and provided a range of services, including patient treatment for acute and chronic illnesses, child immunizations, a lice clinic, health screenings, health education, and nutrition classes through the *Por La Vida* program, and more.

The success of the evening clinic was powered by volunteer supervising physicians, medical students from Western University of Health Sciences, and volunteer receptionists and was funded through sources including the City of Montclair, patient sliding scale fees, grants, and donations. The evening clinic has been staffed and supervised by Dr. Loveless, who began volunteering at the Clinic in 1998 as a student intern, served as a resident physician, and continued as a licensed physician. Dr. Loveless continued to supervise Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine students for the next 20 years, providing care for those who attended the Clinic and was honored in the City's Volunteer of the Year Program in 2005 and 2009. His services to the Montclair Community are remarkable, invaluable, and greatly appreciated.

The Montclair Community Health Center, which housed the Montclair Evening Clinic, is directed by Dr. James M. Lally and will continue its regular hours of operation and services.

James Lally, D.O. is the founder and chief operating officer of HSA, a nonprofit corporation whose goal is to help find solutions for low-income residents in our community who are medically underserved. Dr. Lally began his association with the Montclair Medical Clinic as a student in 1990. He graduated from the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific in 1991 and completed his postdoctoral training and resident internship training through Doctors' Hospital of Montclair. He is very familiar with the Montclair community and its needs. Dr. Lally was honored in 1993 with the City's Volunteer of the Year Award and has been the volunteer Medical Director for the Montclair Medical Clinic since 1994.

Dr. Lally's goal is to provide affordable and accessible care to all members of our community, including newborn, pediatric, adult, and geriatric patients. In addition to taking a variety of private insurance plans, Dr. Lally will still provide services to the uninsured by continuing the sliding-scale services, like those offered through the Montclair Medical Clinic. Free immunization services and the sharps disposal program are also available at the Clinic's location. Furthermore, Dr. Lally plans to participate in programs that will serve the veterans in our area so they can receive medical care and behavioral health services in a comfortable,

non-threatening environment. Dr. Lally also is commended for his over 30 years of dedication and services to the City of Montclair and surrounding communities.



Dr. Loveless (left) and Dr. Lally (right) at the COVID Award Presentation held on October 18, 2021

The Montclair evening clinic has proudly served thousands of patients since its inception. Due to the Affordable Care Act and the emergence of new local community health centers, Montclair evening clinic patients have been able to find affordable health care elsewhere.

Montclair Community Health Center's regular business hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. In the future, they plan to extend business hours to include weekends. For additional information or to schedule an appointment, please call (909) 281-5800.

- **Senior Lunch Drive-Thru Celebration of January Birthdays**

On Wednesday, January 26th, the Montclair Senior Center held its monthly birthday party during the Drive-Thru Senior Lunch.

Congresswoman Norma Torres distributed antigen test kits to over 120 seniors. Mayor Dutrey, Mayor Pro Tem Bill Ruh, and City Council Member Tenice Johnson distributed lunches and monthly newsletters.

The celebration theme was "New Beginnings" and included an adorned canopy with balloons, decorations from the movie UP, and music. Senior lunch participants with January birthdays received special certificates of recognition from Congresswoman Norma Torres and Fourth District Supervisor Curt Hagman, a 2022 pocket calendar, and a mug with treats.

A collage of photos is shared on Page 23.



- **California Per Capita Funding to Improve Sunset Park**

The California Per Capita Grant Program originates from Proposition 68, was placed on the ballot via Senate Bill 5, and approved by voters on June 5, 2018. Funds were available for park rehabilitation and improvement for local governments on a per-capita basis. The City Council authorized the adoption of Resolution No. 21-3304 on September 20, 2021, authorizing the application for Per Capita Grant Funds to be utilized for the rehabilitation of various recreation elements at Sunset Park. In December 2021, the City of Montclair was awarded our Per Capita allocation of \$201,552 to transform the north end of Sunset Park. Through this grant, Sunset Park will receive new play equipment and minor recreation elements, including landscaping and irrigation, benches, lighting, and signage. This project will be completed by June 30, 2024.

- **Easter Eggstravaganza and Pancake Breakfast**

The City's Easter Eggstravaganza and Pancake Breakfast event is scheduled to take place on Saturday, April 16th, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Alma Hofman Park.

The Eggstravaganza will include games, activities, Easter eggs, and candy for children twelve years old and younger. Children are invited to bring their baskets from home to win candy-filled eggs as game prizes.

The Easter Bunny will arrive and pose for socially distanced photos (\$3 per photo, or \$1 to take your photo). The to-go pancake breakfast, offered for \$3 per plate, will include two pancakes, two sausages, and an orange juice (while supplies last).

The event is sponsored by the City of Montclair, Ontario-Montclair Kiwanis Club, Women's Club of Montclair, Montclair Police Officers Association, and Montclair Firefighters Association.

For additional information, call the Recreation Desk at (909) 625-9479.

- **Memorial Day Program (Save the Date)**

Join us on Monday, May 30th, at 6:00 p.m. for the Community Activities Commission's 22nd Annual Memorial Day Program. The program will be held in the Memorial Garden, adjacent to City Hall, and will include the dedication of new plaques to our Veterans' Memorial Wall. The Memorial Wall pays tribute to deceased Montclair residents from all branches of service. More event details will be announced soon.

- **Country Fair Jamboree (Save the Date)**

The 8th Annual Country Fair Jamboree is scheduled for Saturday, June 4th, from noon to 6:00 p.m. at Alma Hofman Park. More event details will be announced soon.

Employees who are interested in volunteering at the Jamboree should contact Senior Recreation Specialist Emily Gomez-Medina at Extension 482.

*ECS:scg*

# FEBRUARY 2022

<i>Day</i>	<i>Event &amp; Location</i>	<i>Time</i>
Mon. <b>28</b>	<b>Planning Commission Meeting — CANCELLED</b>	7:00 p.m

# MARCH 2022

<i>Day</i>	<i>Event &amp; Location</i>	<i>Time</i>
Wed. <b>2</b>	<b>Community Activities Commission Meeting</b> City Council Chambers	7:00 p.m.
Mon. <b>7</b>	<b>City Council Meeting</b> City Council Chambers	7:00 p.m
Mon. <b>14</b>	<b>Planning Commission Meeting</b> City Council Chambers	7:00 p.m
Thurs. <b>17</b>	<b>Monthly Food Distribution Event</b> Civic Center (City Hall) Parking Lot	8:30 a.m – 9:30 a.m.
	<b>Public Works Committee</b> Zoom Webinar / Teleconference	4:00 p.m
Mon. <b>21</b>	<b>Real Estate Committee</b> Zoom Webinar / Teleconference	6:00 p.m
	<b>Code Enforcement/Public Safety Committee</b> Zoom Webinar / Teleconference	6:30 p.m
	<b>City Council Meeting</b> City Council Chambers	7:00 p.m
Mon. <b>28</b>	<b>Planning Commission Meeting</b> City Council Chambers	7:00 p.m

Agendas that include instructions for all participation options can be viewed on the City’s website at least 72 hours before each (regular) meeting at [www.cityofmontclair.org/agendas/](http://www.cityofmontclair.org/agendas/).

More event details can be found on the City’s website at [www.cityofmontclair.org/events/](http://www.cityofmontclair.org/events/) and [www.cityofmontclair.org/news/](http://www.cityofmontclair.org/news/)

# Senior Drive-Thru Birthday Party January 2022 “New Beginnings”

