



2023 Legislative
Workshop

MONTEREY COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
JANUARY 20, 2023

Monterey County Board of Supervisors Legislative Workshop January 20, 2023

Fact Sheets

Legislative Proposal

Monterey County Veterans Home



Establish a new Veterans Home in Monterey County to serve the areas' aged and disabled veterans' community and honor their service to our Nation.

Monterey County seeks to sponsor State legislation that permits the construction of a Veterans Home in Monterey County – preferably on or near the former Fort Ord. Establishing a Veterans Home in Monterey County will address the needs of our nation's heroes living in California by significantly reducing wait times, providing close proximity to veteran health care and several other veteran services, and reducing the risk of veterans' homelessness. The scope of the project, location and cost are to be determined in coordination with the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The Proposal seeks to authorize legislation similar to SB 1234 (Johannessen) in 2002 that would authorize the State Public Works Board to issue lease-revenue bonds to finance acquisition, design, and construction of an additional Veterans Home in Monterey County, and to allow the State Department of General Services, on behalf of the State Department of Veterans Affairs to construct an additional Veterans Home. The legislation should also seek a continuous appropriation for its operation.

Federal legislative efforts are also needed to secure two-thirds of the costs for the acquisition, design and construction and a continuous appropriation for its operation through the VA.



- CalVet has eight (8) Veterans Homes that offer affordable long-term care to Veterans who are age 55+, eligible spouses and domestic partners are eligible to apply for admission.
- The age requirement is waived for disabled or homeless veterans needing long-term care.
- Services range from independent living programs with minimal support to 24/7 skilled nursing and dementia care for veterans with significant clinical needs.
- Four (4) of the Veterans Homes offer skilled nursing and dementia care, all of which 2 to 5+ year waiting lists.
- All the Veterans Homes are at a considerable distance from Monterey County with the closest in Fresno and Yountville (both 2.5 hours away) and Ventura (4 hours away).

California's Veteran Population

California has the largest Veteran population in the United States – with over 1.6 million Veterans. Monterey County and its surrounding area is home to thousands of these veterans plus thousands more active and reserve military members. The Veterans population in the local area is 108,000:

- 21,000 in Monterey County
- 57,000 in Santa Clara County
- 10,000 in Santa Cruz County
- 17,800 in San Luis Obispo County
- 2,500 in San Benito County

Economic Impact

California's Veterans are accessing their earned benefits, Compensation and Pension (C&P) Benefits, at greater levels than ever before. In 2011, 15.8% of Veterans accessed these benefits, which increased to 27.8% by 2019. Overall, these benefits total over \$8 billion annually and represent a tremendous positive economic impact on California's economy. California is losing veterans at an alarming rate – much faster than the next 2 largest veteran population states (Texas and Florida). We owe all we have to the veterans of this Nation, and it is our joint obligation to do all we can to care for those who have selflessly served for the freedoms we have today.

Benefits to Locating a Veterans Home in Monterey County

Locating a Veterans Home in Monterey County will provide an attractive geographical location with a rich Military History and current Military presence. Residents of the Veterans Home would have easy access to the Major General William H. Gourley VA-DoD Outpatient Clinic, Commissary's, Post Exchanges, Military Gyms and other Military / Veteran accessible facilities. There are a large variety of beaches, walking / bike trails and County / State / National parks that will promote outdoor activity.

Contact

Jack Murphy, Interim Military & Veterans Affairs Officer
Monterey County Military and Veterans Affairs Office

1200 Aguajito Road, Suite 3 | Monterey, CA 93940

(831) 647-7613 | MurphyJ1@co.monterey.ca.us



Homeless Funding Formulas



State and Federal partners need to identify a different means to assess community needs when allocating funds to address homelessness.

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a federally mandated “snapshot” of people experiencing homelessness conducted by local Continuums of Care (CoC). CoCs are required to do sheltered counts annually and unsheltered counts at least biennially. These numbers are used to inform policies, drive strategic plans, assess system performance, and determine funding allocations on a state and federal level. However, there are many issues with utilizing the PIT in homeless funding formulas.

Homeless funding formulas inadvertently penalize communities for reducing homelessness.

The 2017 PIT revealed that on any given night 2,837 individuals were experiencing homelessness in Monterey County, the **highest** count in our history. In response, stakeholders moved swiftly to overhaul the homelessness response system – bringing in funding from Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), the Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP), updating the regional plan to end homelessness, and opening several new navigation centers, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing programs.

In 2022, Monterey County experienced a significant decrease in the PIT, having counted 2,047 individuals on the night of the count, the **lowest** count in our history. While we celebrate the accomplishment of working towards our overarching goal, this 28% decrease is expected to have severe impacts on upcoming State funding (i.e., Round 4 - Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP), and others).

Point-in-Time counts are both far too low and too unreliable to be used as a sole basis for understanding a region’s homelessness service needs.

- It is widely understood that PIT counts don’t exhibit the true need to properly address homelessness. In Monterey County, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) shows more than double the PIT are accessing services throughout the year – a prime example of the pressure providers face in assisting more people with half the resources and manpower, causing burnout, lower salaries, and high turnaround.
- Inconsistent methodologies, access to volunteers, and the unique characteristics of communities can also lead to irregularities in funding allocations.
- Under section 578.7 of the CoC program interim rule, “CoCs must plan and conduct, at least biennially, a PIT count of persons experiencing homelessness within the geographic area.” However, PIT counts are designed to only capture information on people visibly experiencing homelessness as described in Category 1 of HUD’s definition of homelessness. People experiencing homelessness in Categories 2-4 aren’t included in the count, however access services throughout the year.

While there is no simple way to decide how funding should be determined, at minimum other factors should be considered in determining allocations like cost of living, housing stock, area median income, fair market rate, and long-term stabilization of programs in communities that are successfully reducing homelessness.

Contact

Roxanne V. Wilson, Homeless Services Director
168 W. Alisal Street | Salinas, CA 93901
(831) 755-5445 | WilsonR@co.monterey.ca.us



Nacimiento and San Antonio Dam Safety/ High Priority Capital Asset Management



A set of subprojects for Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoir and Dam facilities to fulfill Federal and State regulatory requirements and provide flood protection and a sustainable water supply. Cost estimate \$160 million.



Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs supply water to Monterey County's fertile Salinas Valley for all the valley's beneficial uses. The reservoirs, built in 1957 and 1967 respectively, were put in place by the people of the Salinas Valley to provide flood control; store and release water for aquifer recharge; and combat seawater intrusion in the valley. The facilities provide water to the Salinas Valley agricultural economy, as well as valley residents; a large number who work in the agricultural industry or in the tourism-related businesses on the Monterey Peninsula. Without these reservoirs, life and the economies of Monterey County would suffer greatly.

The water released from these reservoirs utilizes the natural Salinas River channel for approximately 100 miles of conveyance through the Salinas Valley. The releases percolate into the ground for groundwater aquifer recharge and are seasonally diverted about 90 miles downstream to augment recycled water for irrigating crops in northern Monterey County.



Failing infrastructure is becoming a national phenomenon. The problems in California and other states indicate that there is a need to protect, maintain, enhance, and renew existing infrastructure. At Nacimiento, the condition of the spillway and plunge pool erosion limits the volume of releases from the high-level outlets. San Antonio is currently under self-imposed risk reduction measures that limit the amount of water that can be stored due to the California Department of Safety of Dams mandated replacement of the spillway.



This is a multi-benefit Project. It provides flood control, drought resiliency, groundwater recharge to drinking water supply aquifers for over 200,000 residents including disadvantaged communities and 418,000 acres that support an \$11.7 billion agricultural industry. Having both facilities fully operational is crucial to implementation of several Groundwater Sustainability Plans. Monterey County does not receive any imported water from State or Federal water projects. Monterey County Water

Resources Agency (Agency) is the lead agency for the project. The Agency received just over \$6 million in the 2022-23 State Budget, and while appreciative of this investment, a large financial obligation remains to successfully complete these projects.

Contact

Lew C. Bauman, Interim General Manager
Monterey County Water Resources Agency
1441 Schilling Place | Salinas, CA 93901
(831) 755-4860 / BaumanL@co.monterey.ca.us



Interlake Tunnel and San Antonio Spillway Modification Project



A tunnel to connect existing facilities at Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs on the Central Coast of California will increase water storage capacity and achieve environmental and water conservation release efficiencies. Cost estimate \$180 million.



The proposed Interlake Tunnel and San Antonio Spillway Modification Project (Project) will connect Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs to effectively increase the use of existing storage capacity in the system to increase water quantity for drought protection, and seawater intrusion abatement, as well as stabilize releases, providing additional flood control for the surrounding farming communities.

The Nacimiento reservoir, located in Northern San Luis Obispo County, is in a watershed that can receive significantly more rainfall than the adjoining San Antonio reservoir watershed in southern Monterey County. The water spilled from the Nacimiento reservoir in wetter years can cause flooding

within the Nacimiento and Salinas rivers.

The Project will utilize existing storage infrastructure by designing and constructing an 12,000-foot underground tunnel between the Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs to transfer water and thereby increase the opportunity to store additional water when available. The water from these two reservoirs would then be used downstream for groundwater recharge, sea water intrusion abatement, and the promotion of fish habitats - increasing the total available supply and quality of water benefits the surrounding communities and ecosystems.

This Project provides a workable solution for agricultural production and resource management challenges, as it helps increase water quantity and improves water quality for all users of the Salinas Valley system. The Project builds drought resiliency and allows for a more stable, consistent release of water through the Nacimiento, San Antonio and Salinas rivers that will help the health of the ecosystem and improve flood control. In addition, the Project will help reduce the need to pump groundwater, especially in northern Monterey County – allowing the groundwater basin to recharge, which helps reduce seawater intrusion, and improves water quality.

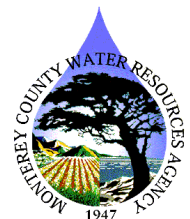
Monterey County does not receive any water from a State or Federal water project, making it crucial that existing infrastructure be utilized to the maximum to address water storage needs to offset the impacts of climate change. The Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs recharge drinking water supply aquifers for over 200,000 residents including disadvantaged communities and more than 418,000 acres that support an \$11.7 billion agricultural industry.

Request

The Agency is seeking federal and state funding for the Project, which is expected to cost \$180 million to complete. The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) is the lead agency for the project.

Contact

Lew C. Bauman, Interim General Manager
Monterey County Water Resources Agency
1441 Schilling Place | Salinas, CA 93901
(831) 755-4860 | BaumanL@co.monterey.ca.us



San Lucas Clean Drinking Water Project Monterey County



Clean drinking water pipeline for the severely disadvantaged community of San Lucas

San Lucas is a small, severely disadvantaged farming community located in unincorporated Monterey County approximately eight miles south of King City – consisting of predominantly Hispanic farm worker families. The community water system (approximately 100 connections) is owned and operated by the San Lucas County Water District (District).



1 Nic Coury/courtesy Monterey County Weekly

The San Lucas Clean Drinking Water Project would address persistent water quality problems which have occurred since 1966. In 1966, a “do not drink” order was issued, and despite establishing an alternative well to serve the community, a second “do not drink” order was issued in 1986. The lack of safe, affordable drinking water for the community has also caused a nearly 20-year delay of a severely needed affordable housing project in San Lucas.

San Lucas is a designated Rural Center in the County’s General Plan, and with the potential for improved infrastructure to support future development, San Lucas will be able to help meet the growing needs of this disadvantaged community as well as the County’s critical housing needs. Unfortunately, the Project cost for this needed long-term water supply solution far exceeds limits established for existing State funding programs. The County, working on behalf of the District, is seeking alternative funding from the State for this critical water project for the community that has been on bottled water orders 8 of the past 10 years.



2 Nick Rahaim/courtesy Monterey County Weekly

The Project would construct a new pipeline to tie into the Cal Water system on the east side of King City and deliver water directly to the community’s water distribution tank. The pipeline is anticipated to be approximately 7.8 miles long and run along the eastern side of Highway 101 and the railroad line.

Request

Funding in the amount of \$15 million is sought for design, environmental assessment, engineering, and construction work to provide a clean, long-term, reliable source of drinking water to meet the community’s current and future needs.

Contact

Randy Ishii, MS, PE, TE, PTOE
Director, Monterey County Department of Public Works, Facilities and Parks
1441 Schilling Place | Salinas, CA 93901
(831) 755-4800 | IshiiR@co.monterey.ca.us



Old Monterey County Jail



Adaptive reuse project for the Old Monterey County Jail, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004 for its significance in the national farm labor movement. Estimated project cost \$17.25 million.

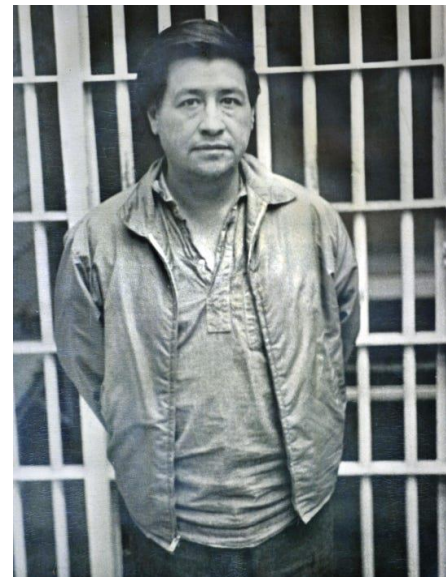
Old Monterey County Jail

The Old Monterey County Jail (Old Jail) located at 158 West Alisal Street, Salinas, California, was built in 1931 in the Gothic Revival architectural style during the Art Deco period. The facility originally consisted of a multi-level administrative building with access onto Alisal Street, with the jail located behind the building connected by a stairwell. Additions were made circa 1950 around the original building. It served as the County's primary jail until a new jail was completed in 1977.



In 2004, the Old Monterey County Jail was listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places reflecting its architectural significance and for areas where César Chávez was imprisoned. It is the only historic landmark of the farmworker rights movement on the Central Coast.

In December 1970, César Chávez, co-founder of the United Farm Workers, was held in the Old Monterey County Jail for 20 days for refusing to call off a lettuce boycott, thereby raising national and international attention to farmworkers. His incarceration brought national figures such as Ethel Kennedy and Coretta Scott King to the jail to visit and advocate for his release. This event is considered pivotal in the struggle for farm labor rights.

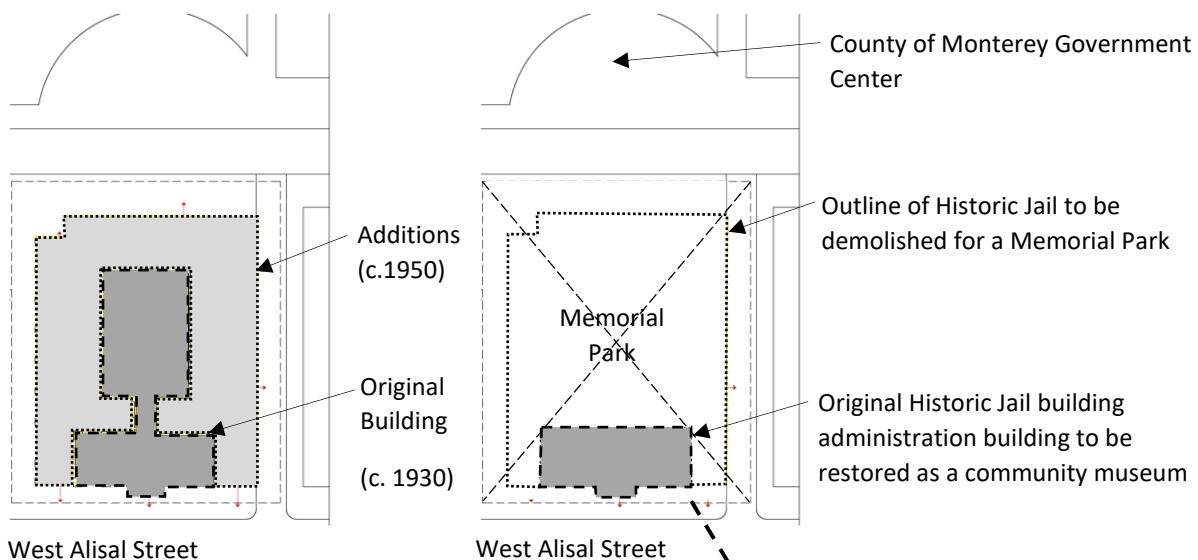


In 1998, the County began planning for redevelopment of the County Government Center which included demolition of the Old Monterey County Jail. The Jail demolition action was challenged and resulted in the County abandoning the effort. The Jail was inspected finding mold and some structural deterioration, and the County performed work to stabilize and mothball the facility and restrict access.

Around 2014, the County began efforts to assess potential reuse of the facility and site. A feasibility study evaluated nine options ranging from demolition (\$4 million) to full restoration (\$34 million). In 2016, the Board selected to demolish the facility, but in 2017 changed course to explore adaptive reuse of the facility. Requests for Proposals were issued in 2018 and 2019 which generated no responses. Later in 2019, the Board provided direction to seek State Budget funding to restore the Administration Wing and add new building; preserve the Alisal Street Façade and add a park; or preserve the Administration Wing and add a park. If funding is available, the Board would also consider full restoration for reuse.

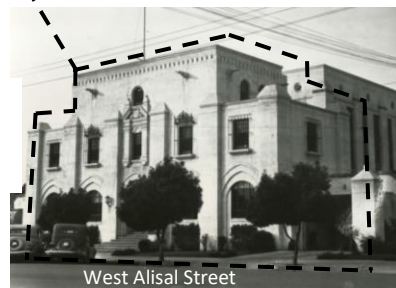
Request

Monterey County seeks \$17.25 million to retain the Administrative Building portion of the Old Monterey County Jail. This would retain a significant piece of the historic resource that fronts Alisal Street, which could be used as a museum of the Labor movement. The area behind the Administrative Building could be a new memorial park dedicated to César Chávez that could be used for civic rallies similar to the Labor movement and is located at the west end of a promenade leading to Historic Downtown Salinas.



Existing Plan

Concept Plan



Contact

Randy Ishii, MS, PE, TE, PTOE

Director, Monterey County Department of Public Works, Facilities and Parks

1441 Schilling Place | Salinas, CA 93901

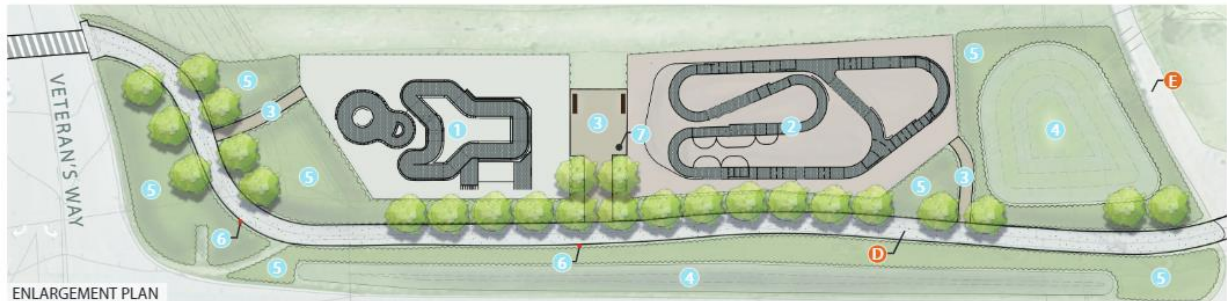
(831) 755-4800 | IshiiR@co.monterey.ca.us



Monterey County Bike and Skate Park



Construct a regional Bike and Skate Park. In partnership with the City of Salinas, the property includes the expansion of the Salinas Regional Soccer Complex, multi-use trails, and the Monterey County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park. Estimated cost: \$3 million



LEGEND

EXISTING

- A** Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- B** Bridge Crossing at Gabilan Creek
- C** Parking Lot
- D** Multi-Use Trail - City Wide
- E** Maintenance Access
- F** Connection to Constitution Soccer Complex

PROPOSED SCOPE

- 1** Skate Park - 10,000 SF
- 2** Bike Park - 12,000 SF
- 3** Accessible Pathways
- 4** Stormwater Retention Area
- 5** Planting & Irrigation
- 6** Directional / Educational Trail Signage
- 7** Security Lighting

MONTEREY COUNTY BIKE & SKATE PARK
 855 E. LAUREL DRIVE, SALINAS
 January 19, 2022



Monterey County does not have a public bike park available to the community. Creating a Bike Park and Skate Park will create a safe, accessible, and unique recreational facility that will enhance the community and draw participants from surrounding regions (Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties).

The proposed site is linked by several multi-use trails connecting the proposed project to some of the most underserved neighborhoods and several elementary schools. The two recreation features together will enhance recreation offerings for Monterey County, creating a regional draw that will complement the adjacent existing recreation features near the proposed project site.

The property is easily accessible from U.S. Interstate 5, nested within the County's most densely populated area and contiguous to the following recreation features: Salinas Regional Soccer Complex, Monterey County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park, Carr Lake, Natividad Creek Park, and the Twin Creeks Golf Course/First Tee Monterey County.

The Bike Park (approximately 12,800 square feet) will include various terrain and riding conditions that will allow riders to progress their skills (beginner to advanced) and safely practice their sport – and will include perimeter fencing, lighting, and accessible pathways.

The Skate Park (approximately 9,470 square feet) will include quarter pipes, half pipes, and bowls along with street skating features including the following: stairs, rails, curbs, ramps, and ledges – and will include perimeter fencing, lighting, and accessible pathways.

The proposed project will include trail crossing and split rail fencing to enhance safety, environmental education interpretive panels and direction signage, native landscaping and irrigation, trash receptacles and stormwater retention.

Important partners for this project include the City of Salinas, the Salinas Regional Soccer Complex, and the Monterey County Blue Zones Project.

Request

Funding in the amount of \$3 million is sought to construct a regional Bike and Skate Park. In partnership with the City of Salinas, the property includes the expansion of the Salinas Regional Soccer Complex, multi-use trails, and the Monterey County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park.

Contact

Randy Ishii, MS, PE, TE, PTOE

Director, Monterey County Department of Public Works, Facilities and Parks

1441 Schilling Place | Salinas, CA 93901

(831) 755-4800 | IshiiR@co.monterey.ca.us



Marina Health Clinic

Construct a 14,000 sq. ft. comprehensive primary care and dental clinic with expanded general family practice, pediatric, obstetrics/gynecology, dental services, and mental health services for Medi-Cal and uninsured residents and dental services for underserved/unserved veteran residents. Estimated cost \$14 million.



The County of Monterey Clinic at Marina (Marina Clinic) is located at 355 De Forest Road, Marina, California. The Marina Clinic is currently staffed by two (2) physicians and seven (7) support staff. The Marina Clinic provides comprehensive primary and preventive care and is the only full-time safety net clinic in Marina.



Need for Clinic Expansion

The Marina Clinic service area is zip code 93933. In this service area, there are 8,906 residents who are low income (below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level [FPL]). Out of these, the Marina Health Clinic serves only 2,617 patients every year due to limited staffing capacity restricted by the lack of clinic space. This translates to a penetration rate of 30% leaving 70% of the low-income population without access to affordable primary and preventive care. The Marina Clinic is also designated as a Medically Underserved Area (MUA), Dental and Mental Health - Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA).

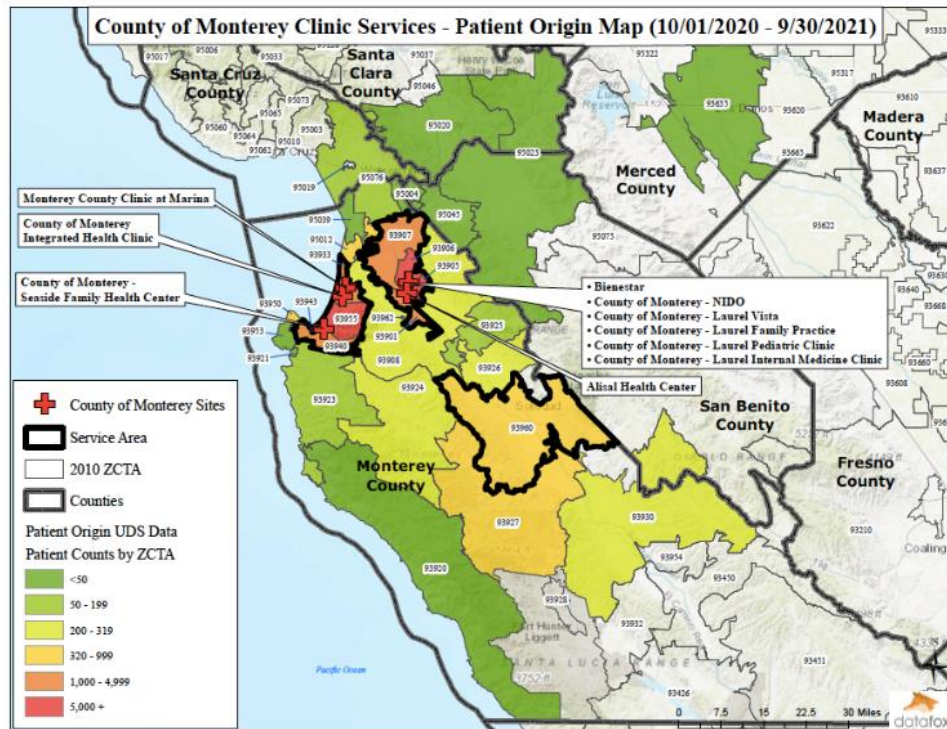
To better meet the needs of the City of Marina residents and surrounding areas, the County of Monterey needs to construct a new 4, square foot medical and dental facility. The facility's medical clinic will consist of 12 exam rooms and office space to deliver expanded general family practice, obstetrics and gynecology, and mental health integration services to better support the Medi-Cal and uninsured population in this community. The facility's dental clinic will consist of 8-12 dental chairs that would meet a critical service need for comprehensive dental services for low-income residents AND Veteran residents (approximately 20,000) with limited or no access to dental services in Monterey County.

If funding were to be secured in the amount of **\$14 million**, there is an opportunity to **construct a new build-to-suit 14,000 sq. ft. health clinic** at a nearby vacant lot which will deliver comprehensive primary care and dental services to approximately 10,000 patients (**75% capacity increase**), serving low-income residents and Veteran residents seeking access to comprehensive dental services.

Background

The County of Monterey Health Department (MCHD) Clinic Services Bureau began as a three-clinic network on the Central Coast of California in the 1990s. In 1994, Clinic Services established itself as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FHC) Look-Alike and in 2019 received its full FQHC designation. Since then, its community clinic network has grown to a total of 10 locations serving 45,450 patients in 2021 and provides primary care, preventive dental, mental health, and enabling services to individuals across the lifespan. MCHD Clinic Services is committed to offering high quality and culturally competent medical services to County residents, regardless of their ability to pay.

MCHD Clinic Services’ service area encompasses the Monterey County neighborhoods of Salinas, Marina, Seaside, and Soledad. Across its ten clinic sites, MCHD Clinic Services provides primary care, gynecology and obstetrics, family planning, mental health, and enabling services to children and adults across the lifespan.



Overall, MCHD Clinic Services seeks to serve the safety-net population and focuses on offering culturally appropriate care to each of its patients at each of its sites. Recognizing that access to care is most critical to maintaining good health, MCHD Clinic Services strives to hire bilingual providers and support staff to ensure care is provided with the utmost of cultural and linguistic competency to their diverse patient population. Importantly, services are provided in patients’ primary languages – Spanish and English.

Population Count

MCHD’s service area population consists of 95,58 individuals. Of the eight zip codes that comprise MCHD’s service area, 939 6 (Salinas) has the most residents with .8 percent of the service area population. The zip code contributing the least number of individuals is 93907 (Salinas) with 7.9 percent of the service area population. Across the service area, 104,612 individuals (or 35.4 percent of the total population) are low-income (below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level [FPL]).

Contact

Elsa Mendoza Jiménez, MPH (She|Her|Ella)

Director of Health Services/Public Administrator/Public Guardian

1270 Natividad Road, Salinas, CA 93906

Main: (831) 755-4500 | Direct: (831) 755-4526 | Fax: (831) 755-4797 | Cell: (831) 287-4307

Email: Jimenezem@co.monterey.ca.us



Immigration Reform / Farm Bill Reauthorization



Support comprehensive immigration reform legislation that addresses the County's labor force needs and provides a path to citizenship for the nation's undocumented immigrant population. Support reauthorization of the Farm Bill. Support the Farm Workforce Modernization Act.

Current immigration policies make it increasingly difficult to meet the workforce needs of the local agricultural industry that is highly dependent on an adequate supply of immigrant labor. The County is becoming increasingly concerned with labor shortages affecting the agricultural industry that threaten the economic vitality of the region. In California alone, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates losses attributed to labor shortages has cost farmers millions of dollars per year as fruit and other crops are left to rot in the field because of a lack of farmworkers to bring in the harvest. The County believes the Farm Workforce Modernization Act strikes the right balance between the needs of workers and employers, as evidenced by the support it has garnered from over 300 agricultural groups, including the United Farm Workers and California Farm Bureau Federation.

The Farm Bill is a package of legislation passed roughly once every five years that has a tremendous impact on farming livelihoods, how food is grown, and what kinds of foods are grown. Covering programs ranging from crop insurance for farmers to healthy food access for low-income families, from beginning farmer training to support for sustainable farming practices, the farm bill sets the stage for our food and farm systems. The current Farm Bill expires in September 2023. The County supports reauthorization of the Farm Bill to support the local agricultural industry, consumers, and for the natural environment. Taken together, these two policy proposals are critically important to the economic health of the Monterey County.

Key Objectives:

Support comprehensive immigration reform legislation that addresses the County's labor force needs and provides a path to citizenship for the nation's undocumented immigrant population. Support reauthorization of the Farm Bill, including agricultural reforms that will improve health and protect the environment of all County residents through significantly strengthening federal nutrition programs, improving access to healthy food, promoting environmental stewardship and conservation, protecting our food supply, and robustly funding rural development initiatives based on best practices in coordination with local officials.

Support the Farm Workforce Modernization Act, which would establish a program for agricultural workers in the United States to earn legal status through continued agricultural employment and contribution to the U.S. agricultural economy; reform the H-2A program to provide more flexibility for employers, while ensuring critical protections for workers; and establish a nationwide E-Verify system through which agricultural employers would electronically verify the employment eligibility of their workers.

Contact

Nicholas E. Chiulos, Assistant County Administrative Officer
168 West Alisal St. Salinas, CA 93901
(831) 755-5145 | ChiulosN@co.monterey.ca.us



FEMA Disaster Assistance Cost Recovery



Improve the FEMA Public Assistance Program and expedite the grant award process to ensure the County is reimbursed for eligible costs as quickly as possible. Streamline disaster debris removal programs to ensure equity and applicability to the needs of disaster victims.

The County of Monterey Office of Emergency Services continues to work with the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to recover costs related to emergency work for the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, 2020 Wildfires, and 2021 and 2023 Winter Storms. Monterey County has experienced several major disaster events and is concerned that FEMA may reduce disaster related reimbursement funding and/or change the way disaster events qualify for reimbursement.

The County has submitted millions of dollars in FEMA Public Assistance grant requests to recover costs related to the declared COVID-19 emergency as well as the declared wildfires of 2020. The amount of time for these grant applications to be reviewed by FEMA has been considerable. In some cases, the County has waited two years to recover approved and expended costs for its disaster response and recovery efforts.

With the County recovering from multiple significant events over the past two years, OES is working to increase staff capacity to meet the time consuming, complex, and cumbersome process of ensuring documentation and projects are submitted to CalOES and FEMA in an efficient and effective manner so as to recover as many costs as possible.

The County participated in the Government Sponsored Private Property Debris Removal Program managed by CalOES and CalRecycle after the 2020 Wildfires. Debris removal was completed in August 2021. The County has not received a Memorandum of Understanding from CalOES outlining the responsibilities of the County to collect insurance monies from participating property owners; nor has the County received invoices or receipts per parcel. Until such time, the County cannot move forward with ensuring there have not been a duplication of benefits per 44 C.F.R. §§ 206.252(c) and 253(a).

Monterey County OES recommends CalOES and FEMA evaluate policies in the FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide to address Private Property Debris Removal Program eligibility for structures with multiple standing walls, communities with gates, and communities with home owner associations to make them more equitable, efficient, and streamlined.

After the 2020 Wildfires, the River Fire Burn Scar has created regular debris, mud, and flood flows for residents downslope. The most notable event was the 2021 Winter Storms, in which 25 residential properties were damaged or destroyed. Due to the scale of the damage, residents have been unable to access any disaster relief services. Most notably is the complex challenges surrounding mud and flood flows from County, State, and Federal wildland into residential areas, impacting private roads. Some of these private residential roads impacted are not owned by any one person or group of individuals and therefore the cost and responsibility of mud and debris removal on these roads is unknown.

Key Objectives:

Support efforts to improve the FEMA Public Assistance Program and expedite the grant award process to ensure the County is reimbursed for eligible costs as quickly as possible. Support streamlining disaster debris removal programs to ensure equity and applicability to the needs of disaster victims.

Contact

Tracy Molfino, Interim Emergency Services Manager
(831) 796-1993 | MolfinoTL@co.monterey.ca.us

