District 3 Townhall – February 2026 Summary

Thank you to everyone who attended the first District 3 Townhall of 2026. Below is a recap of the topics discussed, including Councilmember Kristina Duggan's updates and Public Works project presentations.

Councilmember Duggan

Winter Olympics Milano Cortina 2026:

District 3 will host five Olympic and two Paralympic events in 2028. Councilmember Duggan recently traveled to Milan to observe Olympic planning efforts firsthand and study what worked well and what did not. While Milan is hosting the Winter Games, her focus was on evaluating accessibility, signage, volunteer coordination, transportation flow, security planning, and overall visitor and local experience.

She noted that in some areas there was limited signage and not enough volunteers to help visitors navigate, which made getting around difficult. Those observations are helping inform Long Beach's preparations. The focus is on planning ahead to ensure clear wayfinding, strong volunteer engagement, proactive neighborhood communication, and minimizing unintended impacts on residents.

While many details are still being finalized, Councilmember Duggan is raising residents' questions early in the planning process. The goal is for Long Beach to host successful events while maximizing long term benefits and protecting quality of life in District 3 neighborhoods.

Public Safety:

Public safety remains a top priority for Councilmember Duggan. She highlighted the City's efforts to improve recruitment and retention within the Long Beach Police Department. Councilmember Duggan strongly supported increasing recruitment incentives, which has helped the City graduate four police academies since 2023. The department currently has 98 recruits in training, the largest academy class in Long Beach history. While this progress is encouraging, it is important to remember that it takes 18 to 24 months for a recruit to complete academy and field training before serving independently on patrol.

Public Safety (Continued):

Councilmember Duggan also emphasized the need to strengthen the City's response to individuals experiencing severe mental health or substance use crises. She identified two key gaps in the current system. Many response teams operate primarily during business hours, even though crises often occur at night and on weekends. In addition, most teams rely on voluntary participation. If a person refuses services and does not meet the threshold for immediate danger, teams may disengage, leaving residents and families uncertain about what happens next.

She stressed that if a situation is too unsafe for trained professionals to manage, it is too unsafe for the community to handle alone. Councilmember Duggan is committed to continuing to work in this policy area including how the city can use new tools like CARE Court, Senate Bill 43, which broadens the definition of gravely disabled to include substance use disorder, and Proposition 36. The goal is to use these tools appropriately to allow for meaningful intervention when necessary, balancing compassion for individuals in crisis with accountability and safety for the broader community.

Belmont Shore Late Night Safety Plan:

Councilmember Duggan provided an update on the Belmont Shore Late Night Safety Plan. The community survey was extended through February 27, and resident input will help guide proposed regulations for alcohol serving businesses operating after midnight. Staff are proposing to implement these regulations through the business license process rather than the conditional use permit process previously considered. This approach has not been used outside of downtown before.

She noted that the goal is a long term solution that works alongside increased police presence and enforcement of problematic behavior, including public drinking, DUIs, and other disruptive activity.

Homelessness:

Councilmember Duggan also addressed homelessness, recognizing that it is not a one size fits all issue. Circumstances vary widely, from families sleeping in vehicles to individuals struggling with addiction, mental health challenges, or ongoing criminal behavior. She emphasized that the City must balance compassion for those who need assistance with accountability for behavior that negatively impacts neighborhoods.

Homelessness (Continued):

She also noted that people do not simply disappear when moved from one location to another, which is why the City must continue expanding safe and appropriate alternatives to sidewalks, parks, and beaches.

Over the past three years, District 3 has approved more than eighteen hundred housing units, including over one hundred affordable units. Councilmember Duggan also worked with private partners to establish recuperative care beds at Community Hospital for individuals who need medical stabilization after treatment.

At the same time, she has advocated for restoring accountability by supporting citations for problematic encampments and pushing to update the City's sleeping in vehicles ordinance, which was deemed unenforceable. That update is currently under review with the City Attorney's Office to ensure the City has effective tools to address vehicle encampments that negatively impact neighborhoods.

City Budget Update:

The City's budget outlook was also discussed, as it directly affects the services residents rely on every day. The General Fund ended Fiscal Year 2025 with a forty million dollar deficit, and projections show a potential sixty to eighty million dollar deficit by Fiscal Year 2027 if no changes are made. Revenue growth has slowed, including property tax, sales tax, and utility tax revenue. The loss of federal funding has also added pressure to the budget, particularly affecting the Health Department.

During this period of deficit spending, protecting core services remains a priority. Essential services such as maintenance, tree trimming, sidewalk repairs, traffic safety improvements, and emergency response should not be reduced while the City faces budget challenges. While new programs launched in recent years may be well intentioned, everyday operations must come first.

Tidelands Fund and Oil Revenue:
In addition to the General Fund, the City relies on the Tidelands Fund to support coastal and shoreline infrastructure. Many projects in District 3, including Marine Stadium and shoreline improvements, are funded through the Tidelands Fund rather than the General Fund. The Tidelands Fund is supported primarily by oil revenue and Port revenue.

Currently, Long Beach receives eight and a half percent of tidelands oil revenue, while a significant portion goes to the State and the operator. As oil production declines statewide, projected coastal maintenance, restoration, and decommissioning obligations are expected to outpace future revenue. Councilmember Duggan expressed concern about the long term financial risk this creates for the City.

She believes it is time to revisit how oil revenue is allocated so more funding can remain local while it is still available. These decisions will directly affect the City's ability to maintain coastal infrastructure and protect the shoreline without shifting long term costs to future taxpayers.

Public Works

2nd Street Bridge Repairs:

Public Works provided an update on the Second Street Bridge, originally built in 1956. The bridge deck has reached the end of its service life and requires replacement. Staff clarified that the federal designation of “structurally deficient” does not mean the bridge is unsafe. It simply indicates that a major component, in this case the deck, needs repair or replacement.

The project will replace the deck, upgrade lighting, and install crash rated safety barriers that meet modern standards. Improvements will also enhance pedestrian and bicycle access while bringing the bridge up to current safety requirements.

A major concern raised by residents was whether vehicle lanes would be removed. Public Works confirmed that the project will maintain the existing number of travel lanes. Staff also confirmed that traffic flow will remain accessible in both directions during construction. There were additional concerns about whether the new concrete safety barriers could limit access for emergency vehicles. Staff addressed those concerns, and Councilmember Duggan assured residents that Fire Chief Buchanan has been involved in the planning and review of the bridge design to ensure emergency access is maintained and Public Works will continue to work closely with the Fire Department.

The start date is currently to be determined as final design updates are being completed and funding timelines are reviewed, particularly in coordination with upcoming regional events.

Public Works

Bay Shore Sinkhole Repairs:

The Bay Shore sinkhole repair was an emergency storm drain project that required immediate action to address underground infrastructure failure. Crews excavated the affected area, replaced the damaged storm drain pipe, and installed new catch basins to improve drainage and long term reliability.

Sidewalk restoration is nearly complete, and final paving is anticipated soon. Staff noted that the project is now in its final stages and thanked residents for their patience during the emergency repair and construction impacts.

Public Works

Studebaker Road and Loynes Corridor Improvements:

The Studebaker Road project spans approximately five miles and will be constructed in phases to reduce impacts to the community. Construction will begin in the northern section near I-405 and progress south. The District 3 portion, from Spring Street to SR-22 and down toward Second Street, is expected to begin in Spring 2026 and be completed in early 2027.

The primary Studebaker improvements include full roadway reconstruction, upgraded traffic signals, ADA improvements, landscaped medians, new native trees, and enhanced pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. A protected bi directional bike lane will be added along portions of the corridor, including a separated facility near Second Street. Protected intersections and bus boarding improvements are also part of the design.

In the southernmost portion near Second Street, crews will remove and replace up to two feet of roadway to address long standing pavement settlement and improve long term durability. Staff noted that this deeper reconstruction is one of the most significant components of the project and is being scheduled early to ensure completion well ahead of 2028.

The Loynes Corridor improvements are more targeted and focus primarily on restriping, intersection safety enhancements, and bicycle connectivity near SR-22. Unlike the larger Studebaker reconstruction, the Loynes work does not involve full roadway excavation. Improvements include upgraded traffic signals, improved lane striping, and enhanced bicycle facilities to close gaps in the existing network by using and repainting the existing K-Rails.

Residents raised concerns about congestion and the potential overlap of multiple major projects in the area. Public Works acknowledged those concerns and explained that construction is being phased intentionally to manage impacts and maintain traffic flow. Staff confirmed that travel lanes will remain open in both directions during construction, with temporary adjustments as needed.

Public Works

Colorado Lagoon Open Channel Project:

Public Works provided an update on the fourth and final phase of the Colorado Lagoon Open Channel Project. This phase focuses on improving tidal circulation and water quality, along with major underground utility upgrades and roadway reconstruction.

The most complex portion of the work has involved installation of a deep sewer line beneath existing infrastructure. During excavation, crews encountered numerous unforeseen utility conflicts, including additional lines that were not previously identified, as well as materials that required specialized handling and permitting. These challenges extended the construction timeline.

The new sewer line is expected to be completed in March 2026. Once activated, temporary bypass systems serving the neighborhood can be removed, allowing final storm drain connections and roadway reconstruction to move forward. Following completion of utility work, crews will install final asphalt, complete grading, and begin landscaping and tree planting once soil conditions meet environmental testing requirements.

Roadway reopening is currently targeted for Summer 2026, with both Colorado Street and Elliott Street reopening at the same time. Staff acknowledged the length of the project and thanked residents for their patience as this final phase moves toward completion.