

The Scoop... On Public Works & Utilities



Our City operates and maintains 14 groundwater wells, 9 pumping facilities, 8 water storage reservoirs, and 182 miles of pipelines. Some of these structures are between 50-90 years old and approaching the end of their useful life.

Water You Pay For

Here in Watsonville we are fortunate to have a local source of water and to have it be managed by our own municipality. We, the City of Watsonville's Public Works & Utilities team, pride ourselves in managing this essential service that supplies over 65,000 customers with clean, reliable, potable water. Our small, but efficient Water Division team, works day and night to ensure the water we deliver meets all Federal and State regulations for drinking water.

Our goal is to provide this service at the least cost possible while helping to achieve long-term sustainability goals for our community. Water is a scarce resource in our area due to heavy use and unpredictable droughts; it is imperative that we plan for conservation, storage, and the proper upkeep of essential infrastructure that supplies you this precious resource.

Catastrophic Water Supply Interruption

Our Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), completed last year, identifies and prioritizes actions to reduce risks and service disruptions to our water infrastructure from the natural disasters that our city is most prone to. We have made a number of preparations to provide water during emergencies.

Historically, the most common emergencies include: regional power outages due to excessive heat; flooding; and earthquakes. Our water system is designed as a network so water can be supplied from another area of the city if one source is damaged; and is equipped with emergency back-up generators and fuel tanks that will keep our system operational during emergencies for at least one to three days depending on the site.

Many of our facilities are reaching or have reached the end of their useful life and need to be replaced or upgraded to continue to ensure that we can meet demand during normal times and when emergencies arise.



The Future Of Our Water

In 2020 we developed a Water Master Plan to help us better understand the conditions of our water infrastructure and its vulnerability to natural disasters, as well as to get a better sense of future water demands as the community grows. This Master Plan has helped us cost out and prioritize key projects so we can maintain and update our water facilities over the next 20 years.

Future water demand is estimated to increase from 6 million gallons per day (gpd) to 7.3 million gpd by 2040. To keep up with these projected demands we will need to install new storage tanks and a new well.



Key Projects Identified in the Water Master Plan

2020-2025 Significant Projects*	Cost
New coatings to Airport, Hames, and Amesti Reservoir steel tanks to protect against corrosion	\$1.5M
Build one new well (Zone 2)	\$3M
Add a new water storage tank (Zone 2) with 2+ million gallon capacity	\$12M
Electrical and instrumentation upgrades	\$1M
Replacement of old water pipelines throughout the City (2 miles per year)	\$2M/yr
Upgrades to booster water pump station (at Poppy Hill)	\$500k
Feasibility study & design to add Chromium-6 treatment facilities to comply with *State requirements *Pending regulatory guidance from State Water Resources Control Board	\$2M
Total cost of significant projects	\$22M

2026-2030 Significant Projects*	Cost
Replacement of two water reservoirs (Zone 1)	\$22M
Replacement of old water pipelines throughout the city (2 miles per year)	\$2M/yr
Replacement of one City well	\$5M
Replacement of booster pump station (at Fowle)	\$4.3M
Replacement of Pajaro Dunes reservoir	\$3.3M
Construction of Chromium-6 treatment plants to comply with *State requirements <small>*Pending regulatory guidance from State Water Resources Control Board</small>	\$21M
Total cost of significant projects	\$57.6M

**Visit the City's website for a full list of the remaining 10-Year Capital Improvement Projects and costs.*

A New Rate Study

While it is one of the most important things that we pay for every day, most people take safe drinking water from our tap for granted. We are proud to serve our community and want to be transparent about the costs.

Our City's water system maintenance is paid for by a combination of grants, loans, and your water service bill. A new financial analysis and rate study is being prepared based on the cost estimates identified in the Water Master Plan. This new rate study will be presented to the City Council in Spring 2021 and will include recommendations to adjust our utility rates fairly over the next 5 years.

Recognizing the hardships associated with the pandemic, we postponed bringing a utility rate study to Council to pay for the needed water improvements and maintenance costs last year. However, we must secure funding to continue providing a reliable service for the next 20 years. We will keep you informed as to what these recommendations will be prior to taking it to Council.

We are committed to keeping rates low while addressing new State water mandates and critical infrastructure needs.

Public Works & Utilities - Customer Service

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