



the Scoop...ON PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES

The Race Against An Aging Water Infrastructure

Often taken for granted, access to safe and reliable clean water is one of the greatest resources available to us. Our City operates and maintains 14 groundwater wells, 9 pumping facilities, 8 water storage reservoirs, and 182 miles of pipelines which help provide clean water to approximately 66,000 people a year in Watsonville, Corralitos, Freedom, and Pajaro Dunes. For us to continue providing current and future customers with the same level of service, we need to make updates and improvements to our water systems.



**FREEDOM RESERVOIR HOLDS
6 MILLION GALLONS
OF WATER AS MUCH AS 8,253
STANDARD BATHTUBS**

Freedom Reservoir (now 89 years old) is nearing its useful end of life and will need to be replaced by 2030.

An outside engineering firm has developed a *Water System Master Plan* that identifies and prioritizes key projects so we can maintain and update our water-related facilities over the next 20 years. This plan also accounts for previously identified water projects our *Capital Improvement Plan*. The Water System Master Plan was developed by:

- Assessing the condition of the majority of our water infrastructure and its vulnerability to natural disasters.
- Evaluating future water demand projections and how they will impact our current infrastructure capacity.
- Developing and prioritizing future project recommendations with cost estimates for our 10-year Capital Improvement Plan.



Fowle pump station pumps 1.5 million gallons of water per day from Freedom reservoir and sends it through our pipes for distribution. It is 50 years old and will need to be replaced in the next 5-10 years.

Hames reservoir is an above-ground steel tank that can hold half a million gallons of water. It is 49 years old and needs a new, anti-corrosion coating to extend its useful life. With proper care, these types of reservoirs can typically last more than 50 years.



Our demand for water 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 water pump.

Anticipating our Future Needs

Improvements to our facilities will allow us to keep providing our community with clean, safe, and reliable water. The projects needed to make upgrades to our facilities fall into three categories: maintenance, updates to aging infrastructure, and new facilities. Some of the key projects proposed for the next 10 years are listed below:

2020-2025 Projects	Price
Add new corrosion-resistant coatings to Airport, Hames, and Amesti Reservoirs' steel tanks	\$1.5M
Build one new well (Zone 1 or Zone 2)	\$3M
Electrical and Instrumentation upgrades	\$1M
Replace old pipelines (2 miles/ year)	\$2M/yr
Add a new, 1,000 gallons per minute pump at Poppy Hill Booster Pump Station	\$500k
Feasibility study & design to add Chromium-6 treatment plants to comply with State requirements	\$1.5M
<i>*Pending regulatory guidance from State Water Resources Control Board</i>	

2026-2030 Projects	Price
Replace two reservoirs (zone1)	\$22M
Add a new, 2 million gallon storage tank	\$10.9M
Replace old pipelines (2 miles/ year)	\$2M/yr
Replace one City well (Zone 1 or Zone 2)	\$5M
Replace Fowle booster pump station	\$4.34M
Replace Pajaro Dunes reservoir	\$3.3M
Construct Chromium-6 treatment plants to comply with *State requirements.	\$21M
<i>*Pending regulatory guidance from State Water Resources Control Board</i>	

Securing our Water Future

In order to pay for the needed updates and improvements, we have hired financial consultants to help us assess our current resources, complete a financial analysis and a rate study. They will be making recommendations to us so we can fairly and sustainably adjust our utility rates to generate the funds that we need for the next 5 years.

We are proud to serve our community and want to be transparent about the costs of the current operational and capital funding needs of our water system. The rate study to meet these challenges will be presented to City Council in April.



◀ *City wells pump water from the ground to refill our reservoirs and storage tank. They are scheduled to turn on at night since the cost of electricity from PG&E is lower at night.*

▶ *More than half of our water pipes are 50 to 80 years old. Our Water Division has been replacing older sections of pipeline each year with new, zinc-coated, ductile iron pipes which are more resistant to the corrosion of our acidic Watsonville soils.*

