



Paso Robles Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade

In order to provide effective wastewater treatment, the City of Paso Robles has begun the process of upgrading its aging wastewater treatment plant. The following is some basic information about the project. If you have further questions, please contact Matt Thompson at 227-7200 ext. 7716 or mthompson@prcity.com.

Where is the City's wastewater treatment plant and where does the treated wastewater go?

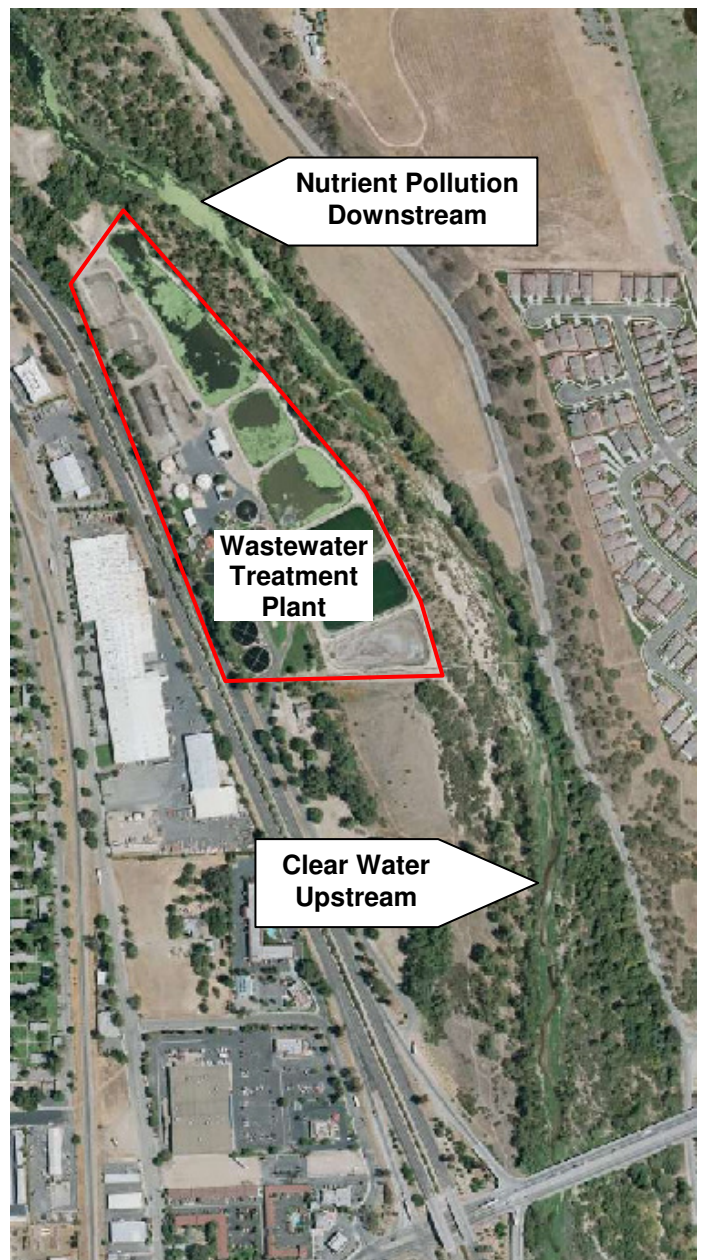
The City has 140 miles of sewers and 14 pump stations to collect three million gallons of wastewater per day from all of Paso Robles and part of Templeton. Wastewater flows to a treatment plant at the north end of town, between U.S. 101 and the Salinas River. Wastewater is treated by a physical and biological process, and then disinfected with chlorine, before flowing into the Salinas River.

Why upgrade the wastewater treatment plant?

Most of the existing wastewater treatment plant is over 50 years old and its treatment performance is declining. Despite the best efforts of City staff, equipment has degraded and the plant has become expensive to maintain. Water quality regulations have become very stringent. In order to protect the Salinas River, the Regional Water Quality Control Board requires the City to reduce its discharge of pollutants such as ammonia and nitrate. The Water Board regularly fines the City for violations of its wastewater discharge permit. If the City does not upgrade the treatment plant, the Water Board could increase fines up to \$10,000 per day.

What is the City doing to address these problems?

The City has hired the engineering firm Black & Veatch to design the treatment plant upgrade. The City plans to upgrade to an advanced treatment process by 2015 to meet current water quality regulations, and then add a filtration process in approximately 2025 to produce recycled water. The City intends to eventually recycle most of its wastewater for landscape irrigation and other uses. This will reduce the City's dependence on water pumped from the Salinas River and Paso Robles Groundwater Basin.



After evaluating the cost and performance of many alternatives, the City has chosen a biological nutrient removal process. This process will produce very good quality water in a cost-effective manner. The upgrade will include energy-efficient features, such as a system to capture and burn gas generated by digestion of sewage sludge to power much of the facility. Installation of some equipment will be phased in as Paso's population increases. This will minimize the up-front cost of the upgrade.

Why upgrade the treatment plant now?

First, the compliance problems and fines described above have become a major liability for the City and must be addressed. Second, the current favorable construction bid market will result in the best possible price on the upgrade. Lastly, the upgrade is a big step towards water recycling, which will improve the reliability of Paso's water supply and provide for long-lasting economic health.

How much is the upgrade going to cost?

The wastewater treatment plant upgrade will cost approximately \$49.6 million in 2014 dollars. The City intends to finance the upgrade with a low interest loan from the State's Clean Water Revolving Fund Loan program. In order to pay the loan debt, the City must increase monthly sewer bills and sewer connection fees. A study is underway to determine what the City's new sewer rates and connection fees must be. The City is planning to introduce sewer rate and fee increases in September 2011.

Will new development and Templeton be required to pay its fair share of the treatment plant upgrade?

Yes, the City will require new development to pay its fair share of upgrade costs through sewer connection fees. Templeton has rights to 9% of the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant, therefore must pay 9% of the upgrade cost.

How can I learn more about the wastewater treatment plant and upgrade project?

If you have any questions or would like to tour the existing wastewater treatment plant, please call Matt Thompson at 227-7200 ext. 7716, or stop by City Hall at 1000 Spring Street. You can also learn more at www.PasoWastewater.com.

