Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant Facility Improvements Project

Fall 2026

The **Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant (GHWTP)** was constructed in 1960 and began serving our community the same year. The plant has provided high-quality potable water to the City of Santa Cruz for 65+ years. Over that time, modifications have helped the water treatment plant adapt to challenges such as changing source water conditions, new regulatory treatment standards, and shifting permit requirements. Modifications have also helped the plant increase overall reliability of our water system. A changing climate presents a new set of challenges that, when combined with the GHWTP's aging infrastructure, requires greater improvements to modernize and improve the facility.

The **GHWTP Facility Improvements Project (Project)** will replace and substantially upgrade the majority of the existing water treatment processes and associated infrastructure at GHWTP with modern facilities.

Goals

- Deliver a climate resilient water treatment plant that meets our community's climate change-driven challenges and ensures reliable, safe drinking water is always available to our community
- Upgrade aging infrastructure to meet current and anticipated seismic standards and protect against wildfires
- Include new water treatment facilities that will operate with state-of-the-art technology, increased efficiency and greater performance, in order to meet future water quality conditions expected to be impacted by climate change
- Ensure the City of Santa Cruz is prepared to meet future regulations related to water treatment, including for contaminants of emerging concern, and increase system reliability and efficiency



Schedule

Pre-2021
PLANNING
Developed plan for improving GHWTP's aging facilities to continue meeting current and future water treatment needs

2021 – 2026
DESIGN
Developed and finalized plans for the layout and configuration of the facility improvements

2022 – 2024
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
Completed the environmental review and received project approvals

2027 – 2031
CONSTRUCTION
The Project is now advancing into construction

Key Project Improvements

The Project will modernize water treatment infrastructure, improve treatment reliability, facilitate water supply augmentation, and ensure compliance with current seismic, building, electrical, and fire code requirements through the following key components:

- **New and upgraded water treatment and related processes to efficiently meet current and future water quality regulations:** The Project includes upgraded pretreatment, upgraded filtration, new disinfection (intermediate ozonation), additional recycle stream treatment, and new bulk chemical storage and feed systems.
- **New and upgraded buildings to meet modern seismic code requirements:** The Project design provides new buildings for maintenance, ozone, and chemical storage and feed. The Project will also replace the existing operations and filter buildings with a new operations/administration/ filter building.
- **Other infrastructure and site improvements:** The Project will make other infrastructure and site improvements such as sewer, stormwater, and other underground utilities, as well as vehicular access improvements; site security and fencing upgrades; communications and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) improvements; new heating, ventilation, and cooling, electrical, and lighting.

Location

The primary project improvements will be located at the existing GHWTP. Ancillary improvements will occur within a portion of the Graham Hill Road right-of-way near the GHWTP entrance. The project will utilize staging areas at:

1. Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant
2. Ocean Street Extension (Santa Cruz Memorial Cemetery)



Project Cost and Funding

The Project will be funded through a combination of federal and state low-interest loans and local rate-revenue financing. The City of Santa Cruz has pursued multiple funding opportunities, including the award of a $25 million state grant, to help reduce the overall cost to ratepayers.

Construction	$151 million
Other Costs*	$81 million
Total Project Cost	$232 million

* *Includes planning, design and engineering, construction management, environmental compliance, permitting, program administration, city-provided insurance, contingencies, and other project-support costs.*

CITY OF SANTA CRUZ

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