

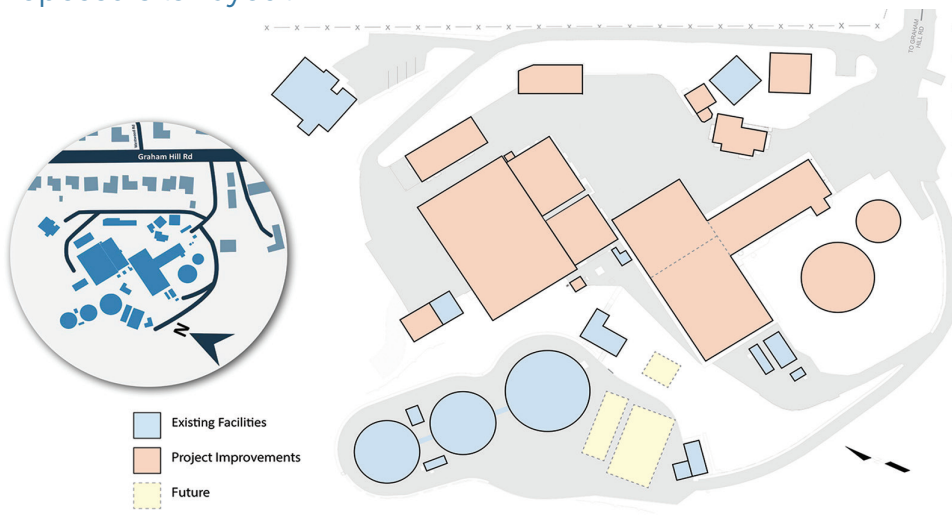
**PROJECT FOCUS: CLIMATE RESILIENT SANTA CRUZ**

## GRAHAM HILL WATER TREATMENT PLANT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



We're modernizing the Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant to meet new seismic standards and become a wildfire-hardened facility, taking proactive steps to ensure our water system is ready for anything.

### Proposed Site Layout



The proposed site layout incorporates cutting-edge technology — so you can expect improved efficiency and top-notch performance to tackle any water quality challenges that come our way.

**WHILE OUR ONLY SURFACE WATER TREATMENT PLANT, BUILT IN THE GROOVY 1960S,** has been keeping up with the times, it's time for a major upgrade. With climate change throwing all kinds of unpredictable weather our way, we're taking proactive steps to ensure our water system is ready for anything.

Next year, we'll begin climate-proofing the facility with the following goals:

**\* CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

We'll build a water treatment plant capable of withstanding climate extremes. Rain or shine, rest assured you'll have safe drinking water.

**\* INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES**

It's out with the old and in with the new! We're modernizing the plant to meet new seismic standards and become a wildfire-hardened facility.

**\* NEW TECHNOLOGY:**

We're incorporating cutting-edge technology so you can expect improved efficiency and top-notch performance to tackle any water quality challenges that come our way.

**\* REGULATORY PREPAREDNESS**

We're staying ahead of the curve by preparing for future regulations. No surprises here — just clean, safe, reliable water!

Stay tuned for more updates! This project will kick off in 2025.

Read more on our website by scanning the QR code.



## WaterSmart: Helping You Find Leaks And Save Cash

### IN SANTA CRUZ, WE'VE MADE WATER

**CONSERVATION** a way of life. Seriously, we've got to make every drop count since we rely on 100% local water sources.

We recently rolled out a brand-new leak outreach program because who wants to waste water and money on a sneaky leak? This new program can identify leaks and give you a heads-up if something seems off. Notifications are sent as soon as 24 hours after a potential leak is detected. Sound good to you? Then sign up for WaterSmart today!

### What's in it for you?

- \* Track your water use down to the hour.
- \* Get automated leak alerts — a new feature!
- \* Diagnose high bills and understand your usage.
- \* Set custom alerts for any unusual water use.

We aren't plumbers, so fixing those leaks will be up to you. However, we can provide resources to help you get started.

The program is already getting rave reviews! Our community's vigilance against water waste has been truly commendable — keep up the good work! However, with climate change



challenging the reliability of our local water supply, we're focused on finding new sources and maximizing the use of our existing resources.

We're exploring water transfers with neighboring agencies, piloting Aquifer Storage and Recovery (a fancy industry term for storing winter water underground for use in the summer) and conducting in-depth studies on recycled water and desalination. These initiatives are all part of our commitment to a secure water future.

**SIGNING UP IS EASY!** All you need is your account number and zip code. Visit [santacruz.watersmart.com](http://santacruz.watersmart.com) to enroll today.

"Thank you for the notice. It is **much easier to conserve** if you know that the people running the show actually care."



"Thank you so very much for the alert. I am traveling, so I asked my daughter to look and she found it. She turned it off. I **would not have found it for another week.**"



"Thank you. We went to investigate and found a leak we **would never have noticed for a long time.**"



### BUENAS NOTICIAS!

## 2023 Water Quality Report Available In Spanish and English



### OUR ANNUAL WATER QUALITY REPORT

highlights that our water meets or beats all state and federal standards. Offering the report in Spanish is part of our ongoing efforts to ensure our diverse community has access to information about their drinking water. Whether you're quenching your thirst, bathing, or filling up the dog's bowl, you're getting the highest-quality water.

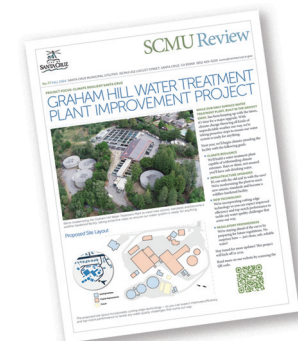
### WHAT'S INSIDE THE REPORT:

- \* Water sources and quality details
- \* Results of water quality tests
- \* Important health info

You can download an electronic copy from our website by scanning the QR code. Need a printed version? No problem! Swing by 212 Locust Street, Suite D, Santa Cruz, to pick one up.

Our Water Quality Laboratory, certified by the California Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program, puts together this report each year. And guess what?

**In 2023, our water continued to meet all state and federal standards. Cheers to clean, safe water!**



## Share Your Thoughts On The SCMU Review

**WE'RE CONSIDERING A NEW FORMAT** for the SCMU Review, and we need your input! Whether you're a loyal reader or have ideas for improvement, take our survey by scanning the QR code and help us make the SCMU Review even better!





## Plastic-Free July Santa Cruz Was A Hit... But Our Mission To Reduce Waste Is Far From Over

**THIS YEAR, WE KICKED THINGS OFF** with the Keep Santa Cruz Clean! poster contest, where young artists blew us away with their creativity. Congratulations to Brayden Willick, a 12-year-old from Branciforte Middle School, whose winning poster celebrates the three Rs — Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. His vibrant, hand-drawn dolphin will be featured on City recycling and refuse trucks throughout the year. Plus, we animated Brayden's artwork into a fun video PSA that's spreading waste reduction messages across our community. Check it out by scanning the QR code!



We also highlighted local businesses that are leading the charge in sustainability.

From **HOME/WORK** in Midtown, where you'll find the coolest reusable products, to **SWELLCYCLE**, which turns plastic waste into surfboards, and **Café DELMARETTE**, which has been reducing plastic for over a decade, these businesses prove that waste reduction isn't just a one-month challenge; it's a way of life.

**MISSED OUT ON THE ACTION?** Don't worry! You can still join the movement by signing up for Resilient Santa Cruz at [resilientsantacruzcounty.org](https://resilientsantacruzcounty.org). Get simple, actionable tips on reducing waste delivered right to your inbox. Let's keep the momentum going by saying no to single-use plastics, and together, we can make a lasting impact on our environment!



*Congratulations to Brayden Willick, whose winning poster celebrates the three Rs — Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!*

## Meet The Certified Experts Running Santa Cruz's Wastewater Facility

**EVER WONDER WHAT IT TAKES** to keep Santa Cruz's wastewater system running smoothly? It's not just about turning on a few pumps and calling it a day — our team is a highly skilled crew of certified professionals who've earned their stripes through rigorous training and certifications.

Before the water even reaches our facility, the **COLLECTIONS TEAM** is hard at work. These unsung heroes maintain the 160 miles of underground pipes that transport wastewater from homes and businesses to the treatment plant. They're the first line of defense, preventing blockages and overflows to ensure that everything flows smoothly to the plant.

Next up are our **WASTEWATER TREATMENT OPERATORS**, certified by the State Water Board. These folks ensure that the 7 million gallons of wastewater we treat daily go through the complete treatment process before being released back into Monterey Bay. But it doesn't stop there — our crew also includes **MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL & INSTRUMENTATION TECHNOLOGISTS** certified by the California Water Environment Association (CWEA). They keep everything humming along, from the massive pumps to the intricate control systems that ensure everything runs like clockwork.

Our **WASTEWATER COMPLIANCE TEAM** plays a critical role in keeping us on track, too. Staffed by CWEA-certified Laboratory Analysts and Environmental Compliance Inspectors, the team analyzes over 8,881 samples each year to ensure we're meeting all state and federal regulations. These experts are the detectives of the operation, meticulously analyzing each step of the treatment process to ensure that what we're putting back into the environment is clean and safe.

Finally, let's not forget our recently expanded **WASTEWATER ADMINISTRATION TEAM** — they're the ones keeping the paperwork in order and coordinating with our Public Works engineers and other City Hall staff.



*It's not just about turning on a few pumps and calling it a day — our team is a highly skilled crew of certified professionals who've earned their stripes through rigorous training and certifications.*

**So, the next time you think about where your water goes, remember the dedicated team of certified experts working behind the scenes. They're safeguarding our environment and community, one flush at a time!**

**WE'RE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR DEDICATED PEOPLE TO JOIN THE TEAM!**

Scan the QR Code to view City job openings.





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## Water Department and Public Works Directors' Messages

**I'M HEIDI LUCKENBACH, AND I'M HONORED** to write to you for the first time as your new Water Director. After 25 years working for the City in the water department, most recently as the Engineering Manager overseeing our capital improvement program and water supply planning, I'm thrilled to lead the team through upcoming opportunities as we implement projects aimed at creating an even more robust and resilient water supply.

Here in Santa Cruz, like elsewhere, we experience "weather whiplash"—extreme weather conditions ranging from wildfires and droughts to record-breaking rainfall. These challenges affect our infrastructure, available water supply, and the quality of our source water. In response, we are embarking on several climate-resilient projects to secure our water future.



We're nearing the completion of the Concrete Tanks Replacement Project at the Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant. This project, which began construction in 2021, involves replacing three aging tanks that have been crucial in providing our community with clean, safe, and reliable drinking water for nearly 60 years. Two of the new tanks are already operational, and we are now constructing the third, which will have a state-of-the-art design and a capacity

of one million gallons. Impressively, all this work has been done without disrupting your water service. Weather permitting, we expect the new tank to be online by early 2025.

**LOOKING AHEAD, WE'RE EXCITED** to launch the Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant (GHWTP) Improvement Project. This initiative will upgrade our water treatment plant by incorporating cutting-edge technology to ensure a resilient water supply for years to come.

Two other projects of note are the Newell Creek Pipeline replacement project, which brings water from Loch Lomond Reservoir to the GHWTP, and a new pipeline to be located in La Madrona, connecting our water system with the Scotts Valley Water District. These pipeline projects are vital to supply reliability for Santa Cruz and our neighboring water agencies.

Thank you for your support and trust as we navigate these projects.

Heidi Luckenbach  
Water Director

**MY NAME IS NATHAN NGUYEN, YOUR PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR.**

While I have had the privilege of serving you in this capacity for the last two years, I have also served in various Santa Cruz Public Works roles since 2007.



One of our largest assets serving the region is our Wastewater Treatment Facility. We recently partnered with the Water Department and Soquel Creek Water District to recycle secondary treated effluent to replenish the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin and prevent seawater intrusion, a project commonly known as "Pure Water Soquel." Ten years in the making, this complex project ensures a sustainable and drought-proof water supply for our community.

**WHILE PARTNERSHIPS LIKE THESE** secure our sustainable future, many parts of the system are reaching the end of service life. Public Works is in the early stages of developing a plan to guide and prioritize facility projects over the next decade. Two priority projects are already underway: a \$20M headworks rehabilitation anticipated to be completed in 2026 and a \$60M electrical upgrade anticipated to be completed by the early 2030s. Both are critical to ensure a resilient and adaptable system for decades to come.

In other news, we hope you have noticed that food scrap bins have been added to your garbage and recycling service. Beginning in 2022, State Senate Bill 1383 took effect and required every jurisdiction to provide organic waste collection to all residents and businesses. The bill's goal is to reduce food waste by up to 50 percent which reduces greenhouse gas emissions and extends the life of our landfills.

Another state mandate is CARB's (California Air Resources Board) Advanced Clean Fleet Regulation. Beginning in 2024, CARB requires businesses and government fleets that are well suited for electrification to purchase new medium- and heavy-duty vehicles with all-electric or plug-in hybrid technology (EV). To move the City in this direction, we purchased our first EV garbage truck in 2022 and now have two operating in our fleet.

Special thanks to you, our customers, as the City team strives for a greener future.

Nathan Nguyen  
Public Works Director