

Frequently Asked Questions

1.A. What is the Clean Water Program?

The Clean Water Program is a comprehensive plan to upgrade San Mateo's wastewater collection system and the San Mateo Wastewater Treatment Plant. The wastewater treatment plant is owned by the Cities of San Mateo and Foster City/Estero Municipal Improvement District "EMID". The Wastewater Treatment Plant also treats wastewater for Crystal Springs County Sanitation District, a portion of unincorporated San Mateo County, and the southern portion of the Town of Hillsborough. Those services are paid for by partner agency reimbursements.

1.B. What is a wastewater treatment plant, and how does it work?

A wastewater treatment plant consists of a series of physical and biological processes that treat residential, commercial, and industrial wastewater so that it is suitable for reuse, or safe discharge into the Bay. After treatment, the water discharged from the wastewater treatment plant is often referred to as "effluent".

1.C. What are the goals of the Clean Water Program?

- i. *To replace the aging infrastructure and facilities.* Sewer pipes have an average lifespan of 50-60 years, and most of San Mateo's sewer pipes were constructed between 1900 and 1960. The wastewater treatment plant has many components that are over 75 years old, and nearly half of the system is reaching the end of its useful life. Although it has been upgraded over the years, improvements to accommodate current and future operating requirements are needed.



- ii. *To meet current and future regulatory requirements and build wet weather sewer system capacity assurance.* The regulatory environment that protects our community continues to change. We are responding to the current direction of our regulators (i.e., Regional Water Quality Control Board "RWQCB") requiring specific corrective actions to ensure wet weather capacity, while planning for future regulations related to the quality of our effluent water.



- iii. *To align with long-term sustainability goals.* Improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant and sewer collection system have added environmental benefits, including a cleaner San Francisco Bay, production of new recycled water source to supplement precious water supplies, and alternative fuel sources for City vehicles.

1.D. What happens if we do not comply with regulatory requirements?

Failure to comply with permit requirements by mandated deadlines could result in large fines that will be passed on to ratepayers.

1.E. How are the Clean Water Program projects funded? The Program is funded by sewer use fees paid by all properties that tie into the sewer collection system. The City is seeking grants and low-interest loans to minimize impacts on sewer rates.

1.F. What is the City's strategy to engage and educate the public about this program?

Public outreach and transparency are important components of the Clean Water Program. The City of San Mateo and Foster City/EMID will be looking at a variety of public outreach methods including providing information on the Clean Water Program website (www.CleanWaterProgramSanMateo.org) and the distribution of information through other communication channels.



Questions or More Information?

Contact Clean Water Program staff at (650) 727-6870 or info@cleanwaterprogramsanmateo.org