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The Plant has the capacity to clean 167 million gallons of wastewater per day.

Ten percent of treated wastewater is recycled through South Bay Water Recycling each day.

The Plant treats to tertiary level (98 percent clean) to protect the sensitive ecosystem of the southern Bay, where treated wastewater is discharged. The Plant is unlike many other U.S. wastewater treatment facilities, which treat wastewater to secondary level (95 percent clean).

All three South Bay plants treat to a tertiary level.

The Environmental Protection Agency named the Plant National Plant of the Year in 2000 based on its operations and maintenance excellence.

The Plant’s annual budget is approximately $75 million.

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The San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant (Plant) cleans our wastewater before it flows into the South San Francisco Bay. Wastewater is the water that goes down drains inside our homes and businesses from washing dishes and clothes, showering, flushing toilets, and industrial processes.

Built in 1956, the Plant is a round-the-clock operation that cleans an average of 110 million gallons of wastewater per day, and has the capacity to clean up to 167 million gallons per day.

The Plant serves eight cities with 1.4 million residents and a business sector with more than 17,000 main sewer connections. Our Plant is the largest advanced wastewater treatment facility in the western United States.

Our wastewater undergoes a sophisticated 10-hour treatment process that simulates the way nature cleans water. The Plant removes 99 percent of the impurities before the cleaned water is discharged into the South San Francisco Bay or recycled for other uses such as irrigation, industrial processes, cooling towers, and flushing toilets. Our Plant includes an advanced (tertiary) level of treatment that is necessary to meet our region’s strict regulations for the shallow waters and sensitive ecosystem of the southern Bay.

Our Plant is located on 2,600 acres at the South Bay shoreline, covering more area than twice the size of San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park. The site includes a 175-acre wastewater processing area, a 750-acre sludge-drying area, and an 810-acre former salt production pond. The remaining acreage is open land that buffers adjacent communities from odors and hazardous operations.
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Aeration tanks pump air into the wastewater to nurture the growth of naturally occurring aerobic bacteria that remove organic pollutants in the water.

Wastewater then flows to grit chambers that remove heavier objects like sand and gravel. Debris and objects removed at this stage are taken to a landfill.

The wastewater is then piped into clarifiers, where the aerobic bacteria settle. Mechanical arms scrape away the settled material to transfer to the digester tanks or reuse again in the aeration tanks.

Upon arrival, wastewater passes through headworks, where large screens remove debris such as sticks, rocks, trash, and rags including baby wipes.

Biological Stage (6 hrs)
The water flows through serpentine tanks where chlorine is used to kill any remaining viruses or bacteria. The chlorine is then neutralized to protect aquatic life.

Wastewater flows through filter beds composed of gravel, sand, and anthracite coal to remove small suspended solids.

Outgoing clean water is 99% cleaner.

About 90 percent of the treated water is piped to the outfall channel. This flows to Coyote Creek and into the South San Francisco Bay. The remaining 10 percent flows to the South Bay Water Recycling system for further treatment and use for irrigation, industrial processes, building cooling, and toilets and urinals.
Our history

1800

Clean water

The solids removed from the wastewater treatment process is known as biosolids. These are high-quality Class B biosolids. Commercially, we can sell the biosolids as an organic fertilizer for gardens and lawns. We also sell biosolids as a model production facility. We use it as a clean material for the production of rubber-like materials and for the production of paper and paper products. We also use it as a raw material for producing rubber-like materials and for the production of paper and paper products.

1900

The Clean Water Act

2008

The Plant Master Plan

In 2008, the Plant launched a three-year strategic planning project, engaging key stakeholders and the community in an effort to align aging infrastructure, improve operational and economic performance, and protect the Bay. A team of firms, including world-renowned firms, was appointed to the planning team to design, plan, and manage the project.

2006

The San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant

Today, the Plant serves a diverse range of customers, including local, state, and national governments, businesses, and individuals. The Plant provides high-quality treated water to more than 2.5 million residents and businesses in the greater San Jose area. It also provides high-quality treated water to more than 2.5 million residents and businesses in the greater Santa Clara area.

1940

The City of San Jose

In 1940, the City of San Jose annexed land at the Plant site. The City purchased bufferland for the Plant site. The City of San Jose also purchased bufferland for the Plant site.

1960

The South Bay Water Pollution Control Plant

In 1960, the South Bay Water Pollution Control Plant was constructed. The Plant was designed to treat the wastewater of the South Bay area. The Plant was constructed with a capacity of 25 million gallons per day.

1970

The City of Cupertino Sanitary Sewerage District

In 1970, the City of Cupertino Sanitary Sewerage District was formed. The District was formed to provide sewer service to the City of Cupertino and the surrounding area.

1980

The City of Milpitas

In 1980, the City of Milpitas was incorporated. The City was incorporated to provide municipal services to the City of Milpitas and the surrounding area.

1990

The City of Sunnyvale

In 1990, the City of Sunnyvale was incorporated. The City was incorporated to provide municipal services to the City of Sunnyvale and the surrounding area.

2000

The Plant Master Plan

In 2000, the Plant Master Plan was launched. The Master Plan is a comprehensive plan that provides a roadmap for the Plant to meet the needs of the community for the next 30 years. The Master Plan includes a comprehensive plan for the Plant to meet the needs of the community for the next 30 years.

2006

The San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant

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2008: The Plant launches a three-year continuous performance improvement project, engaging stakeholders and the community on how best to continue its critical functions of protecting our health, Bay, and economy.

2009: The Plant begins to test neighborhood-scale green infrastructure solutions, such as permeable pavement and bioswales.

2010: The Plant lands. The master plan is exciting opportunity to consider new uses for the Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

2011: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

2012: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

2013: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

2014: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

2015: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

2016: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

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2018: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

2019: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

2020: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

2021: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

2022: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

2023: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

2024: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

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2040: The Plant lands. The master plan will guide decisions to best reshape our shoreline to provide benefits for the entire South Bay region.

The Plant Master Plan

A comprehensive facility planning and facilities improvement program, including the construction of the new treatment facilities, will make this Plan’s treatment system more efficient and reliable. This Plan offers the following benefits:

1. An estimated value of $400 million in capital improvements over a 25-year period.

2. An estimated value of $400 million in capital improvements over a 25-year period.

3. An estimated value of $400 million in capital improvements over a 25-year period.

4. An estimated value of $400 million in capital improvements over a 25-year period.

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our history
1940
1950
1960
1970
1880s
The City of San José constructs the first wastewater treatment plant, which serves the City’s downtown area.
1890s
The City of San José constructs a second wastewater treatment plant, serving the downtown area and the southern Bay region.
1900
San José’s population exceeds 50,000, and the City annexes land at the Milpitas area.
1910
San José constructs the San Juan Bautista Plant, serving the southern Bay.
1920
San José’s population is 66,000.
1930
San José’s population is 80,000.
1940
San José constructs the Milpitas plant.
1950
San José constructs the South Bay Water Pollution Control Plant.
1960
San José constructs the West Valley Sanitation District’s treatment facilities.
1970
San José constructs the South Bay Waste Water Pollution Control Plant.
1980s
San José’s population is 250,000.
1990
San José’s population is 350,000.
2000
San José’s population is 400,000.
2010
San José’s population is 450,000.
2020
San José’s population is 480,000.

our future
The Plant Master Plan
Aging equipment and facilities, a growing population, and evolving state and federal wastewater and air regulations and economic, environmental, and social benefits for the entire South Bay region.

Clean energy
The Plant’s energy production is an important source of revenue, enhancing the Plant’s self-sufficiency.

Our green business
The Plant seeks out partnerships with local businesses to implement sustainable programs.

Booster facilities
The Plant seeks to treat all wastewater from businesses in the City of San Jose.

Water Act
The Clean Water Act is enacted.

The South Bay Water Pollution Control Plant
The South Bay Water Pollution Control Plant is constructed.

Clean water
Our history

Lab
The San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant

Our green business

Components

Laboratory

Network

Computer Network

All of the Plant’s measurement equipment is continually monitored using a state-of-the-art control system. As part of the operation of the Plant, operations and maintenance personnel can observe the treatment process as needed.
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www.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/cp_manual/CPM_0_15.pdf

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The Plant has the capacity to clean 167 million gallons of wastewater per day.

Ten percent of treated wastewater is recycled through South Bay Water Recycling each day.

The Plant treats to tertiary level (90 percent clean) to protect the sensitive ecosystem of the southern Bay, where treated wastewater is discharged. The Plant is the only water reclamation facility in the southern Bay area.

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The Plant's annual budget is approximately $75 million.

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