

**MINUTES OF THE  
SAN JOSÉ/SANTA CLARA  
TREATMENT PLANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

San José City Hall  
Thursday, March 13, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL**

The Treatment Plant Advisory Committee Meeting convened at 4:01 p.m. Roll call was taken with the following members in attendance.

**Committee Members:** Karen Hardy, David Cohen, Domingo Candelas, Kip Harkness, Patrick Kwok, Carmen Montano, Michael Mulcahy, Dan Furtado, Albert Gonzalez.

**Committee Member David Cohen entered the meeting at 4:01pm and was not present for roll call.**

**Ayes – 7** (Cohen, Candelas, Hardy, Kwok, Montano, Furtado, Gonzalez)

**Nays - 0**

**Abstain – 0**

**Absent – 2** (Harkness, Mulcahy)

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A.** February 13, 2025

**Action: On a motion made by Committee Member Carmen Montano and a second by Committee Member Patrick Kwok, TPAC recommended approval of the Minutes:**

**Ayes - 7** (Cohen, Candelas, Hardy, Kwok, Montano, Furtado, Gonzalez)

**Nays - 0**

**Abstain – 0**

**Absent – 2** (Harkness, Mulcahy)

**3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS/REQUEST FOR DEFERRALS**

There was no unfinished business.

**4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**A.** Director's Report (verbal)

Regional Wastewater Facility General Manager Mariana Chavez-Vasquez noted that they would not discuss the CIP Quarterly Status Report at this time, as they would be discussing it later under action items.

Mariana Chavez-Vasquez also mentioned that Kip Harkness is retiring from the City at the end of the month, therefore San José will need to designate a new TPAC Member.

5. **AGREEMENTS/ACTION ITEMS**

A. **San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility Capital Improvement Program Annual Status Report**

**Staff Recommendation:** Accept the annual status report on the San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility (RWF) Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the period of January through December 2024.

Committee Member Kwok raised a question regarding energy use at the RWF, and whether there was a possibility or a goal for the RWF to become self sufficient due to its energy production. Mariana Chavez-Vasquez responded that while the RWF has the goal to be as self sufficient as possible, but that full self sufficiency is not possible at this time. Mariana Chavez-Vasquez mentioned that they are planning to use FOG (Fat, Oil, and Gas) programs in the future to increase gas production. This would entail restaurants sending their leftover used oil to the RWF to be used.

Committee Member Kwok raised a question about the frequency of the hauling of the biosolids, and the effects that may have on traffic and noise in the community. Mariana Chavez-Vasquez informed him that the hauling is planned to be 7 days a week, which helps keeps the rates down. Chavez-Vasquez also noted that the hauling will be early in the morning, and that we are not expecting complaints regarding noise or traffic due to the hauling of the biosolids.

Committee Member Montano raised a question regarding storm drains, and who is responsible for the maintenance of the storm drains under Highway 880. Mariana Chavez-Vasquez clarified that the storm drain system improvements mentioned in the CIP Annual Status Report are the drains located at the RWF itself. Mariana Chavez-Vasquez said that San José is not responsible for the storm drains under Highway 880, but she can check on who is responsible.

Committee Member Montano raised a question about what happens to surplus funds after a project is completed. ESD Principal Accountant Laura Burke answered that after a project is complete, any unexpended funds are liquidated and returned to each agency that participated in the project. Committee Member Montano asked how this is confirmed, and Laura Burke responded that the tributary agencies will generally receive a letter in December, and a check in January.

Committee Member Montano raised a question about if the digester replaces the ponds. Mariana Chavez-Vasquez responded that no, the digester and the ponds are both in use. Kapil Verma clarified that the dewatering facility is replacing the drying beds.

Chair Hardy raised a question about the timeline and details of the FOG program. Kapil Verma responded that there is not yet a robust program in the south Bay Area. Kapil Verma clarified that they plan to take this project to council to award design builders at the end of 2025, and then they would begin the design and building process. Mariana Chavez-Vasquez also talked about possibly amending the municipal code to ensure that San José can collect its residents' FOG waste to be used at the RWF. Chair Hardy asked about cost for individuals dropping off the FOG materials, and Mariana Chavez-Vasquez clarified that they would employ haulers for those materials.

Committee Member Montano raised a question regarding Microsoft moving in near the RWF, and if that would impact the RWF. Mariana Chavez-Vasquez responded that no, they will not be impacted by Microsoft, and that RWF staff is sharing the access roads as needed.

Committee Member Montano raised a question regarding new housing, and if the RWF has enough capacity to accommodate for more residents moving in. Mariana Chavez-Vasquez responded that while capacity is managed by each agency, they do not believe capacity will be an issue with new residents. Mariana Chavez-Vasquez shared that the plant is currently using 105 MGD, and the capacity is at 167 MGD.

Chair Hardy raised a question regarding if other facilities around us are doing similar upgrades. Kapil Verma responded that yes, other local wastewater management facilities have their own capital improvement programs, albeit on smaller scales. Mariana Chavez-Vasquez also noted that other local facilities are not as advanced as the RWF in the treatment they provide. Chair Hardy noted that the RWF is doing a better job at denitrification than other local agencies, but that we may still want to push for more financial assistance with denitrification. Mariana Chavez-Vasquez noted that the RWF plans to discuss with San Francisco and Oakland about getting funding for these projects, to avoid increasing costs for the rate payers.

Committee Member Kwok raised a question asking if the agencies receive interest on their returned funds. Laura Burke confirmed that yes, they receive the same interest rate that San José gets on their funds, and it is included in the refund check.

**Action: On a motion made by Committee Member David Cohen and a second by Committee Member Domingo Candelas, TPAC recommended approval of the item:**

**Ayes – 7 (Candelas, Cohen, Furtado, Gonzalez, Hardy, Kwok, Montano)**

**Nays - 0**

**Abstain – 0**

**Absent – 2 (Harkness, Mulcahy)**

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS/CORRESPONDENCE**

### **Item 6. A. Plant Capacity Report and Plant Capacity Report Revised Letter**

There were no comments from the Committee or public on this item.

**7. STATUS OF ITEMS PREVIOUSLY RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY TPAC**

There were no items previously recommended for approval by TPAC.

**8. REPORTS**

**A. Open Purchase Orders Greater Than \$100,000 (including Service Orders)**

Monthly Procurement and Contract Activity Reports summarize the purchase and contracting between \$100,000 and \$1.68 Million for Goods and \$100,000 and \$320,000 for Services.

**8. A. Purchase Order Report 1/1/25-2/28/2025**

Chair Hardy raised a concern regarding the budget increase for the project management services for the dewatering facility. Mariana Chavez-Vasquez clarified that the amount listed is to fund the project manager for the entire length of the project.

Committee Member Kwok asked a clarifying question about this cost and what it covers, and Mariana Chavez-Vasquez confirmed that we have already budgeted for the documents related to construction, and any leftover funds would be returned to the agencies.

Chair Hardy commented that she may like to plan a TPAC meeting to take place at the RWF this fall to coincide with the opening of the dewatering facility.

**9. MISCELLANEOUS**

The next regular TPAC Meeting is scheduled in person on **April 10 at 4 p.m.** at City Hall, Room T1734.

**10. OPEN FORUM**

There were no comments from the committee or the public.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

The Treatment Plant Advisory Committee meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.