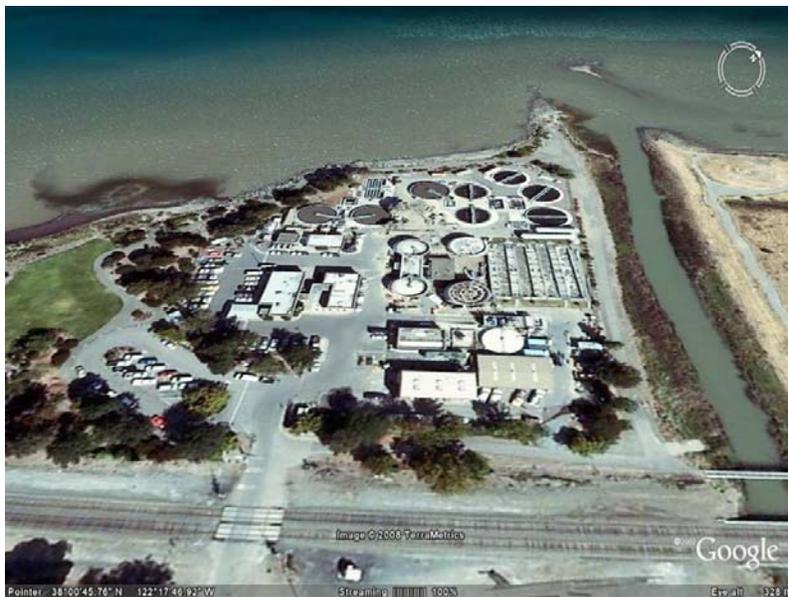




Frequently Asked Questions about the Pinole/Hercules Water Pollution Control Plant



CITY OF PINOLE

July 2010

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There seems to be a lot of discussion lately regarding the treatment plant, what is the reason?

Water Pollution Control Plants throughout the State of California are regulated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. When the Board most recently issued a permit in, June 2007, the Board identified deficiencies at the plant and a timetable for their correction.

What deficiencies did the Board identify at the plant?

The deficiencies relate to the plant's inability to handle flows during rainy days. This is because during rainy days, rainwater infiltrates into the sewer system of both cities as a result of imperfections in the collection system. The increased amount of flow reaching the plant cannot always be handled by the plant.

Can the problem be solved by improving the collection system, rather than upgrading the treatment plant?

The City of Pinole has been lining manholes and segments of its sewer system since 1995, so far approximately 40,000 lineal feet of the system has been lined in an attempt to reduce rainwater infiltration. The result is that there has been some reduction in rainwater infiltration, however, not enough to significantly reduce flows at the plant.

In 2009, the City of Hercules began a program to line its sewer lines, and implemented a sewer lateral ordinance requiring property owners to inspect and perhaps repair their sewer lateral at the time a home is sold. It is too early to determine if that program has been successful in reducing rainwater infiltration.

How soon do the improvements need to be completed?

The permit requires that the improvements be completed by 2015.

Aren't the upgrades at the plant required only because the City of Hercules is growing? And if so why do the residents of Pinole have to pay?

The primary reason upgrades are needed is not because Hercules is growing but because the plant cannot handle the increased flows when rainwater gets into the sewer systems.

What other things have the cities of Pinole and Hercules done since June 2007?

Since June 2007 the cities of Hercules and Pinole have been investigating various options of plant upgrades to determine the cost effective upgrades. The options studied included upgrades at the Pinole/Hercules plant, and one or both cities going to the West County Wastewater Plant

What was the outcome of those studies?

In June 2009 the two cities submitted a report to the Regional Water Quality Control Board indicating that the most cost effective way to provide wastewater treatment for the cities of Pinole and Hercules is to upgrade the Pinole/Hercules Plant. A copy of that report is available at the City of Pinole's website: http://www.ci.pinole.ca.us/publicworks/treat_plant.html

Didn't the City of Hercules recently announce that it would be sending its wastewater flows to the West County District?

Yes, in May 2010 in a letter from City Manager Nelson Oliva to the City of Pinole he announced that the City of Hercules would be sending their wastewater flows to the West County Wastewater District.

Is the reason that the City of Hercules decided to send their flows to the West County Wastewater District because the Pinole/Hercules plant is too small to handle their expected growth?

The City of Hercules did not indicate why it made its decision; however, when upgrades were being analyzed they were sized to meet the expected growth in Hercules through the year 2030.

What does the Hercules decision mean for the City of Pinole?

The City of Pinole must now decide between two options 1) Joining the City of Hercules in going to the West County Wastewater District or 2) Operating the plant alone.

Has the City of Pinole made a decision yet?

No. The City of Pinole has not made a decision as to which of the two options works best for its ratepayers. The City has information available for its residents and will be sharing that information in workshops.

The Pinole City Council will be discussing the Water Pollution Control Plant at their July 20, 2010 meeting. That meeting will begin at 6:00pm in the City Council Chambers at 2131 Pear Street.

What is the current rate?

The current rate for single family residences is \$47.37 per month. This rate will increase to \$52.77 per month on July 1, 2011. These rates were set based upon Pinole and Hercules staying together at the plant and constructing the improvements needed to comply with the Board's requirements. Even if it were possible for the two cities to stay together there would need to be additional rate increases through FY 2014 – 15. This is because the City of Pinole would have had to issue approximately \$20 Million in debt to pay for our share of the needed improvements.

What will the 2015 rates be under the two options now being considered?

- West County Option: \$86.45 per month
- Pinole Only Option: \$64.43 per month

I am interested in knowing more about this issue. Are any of the reports available to the public?

Yes, the City of Pinole has established a Google Group where engineering reports on this subject are available. Reports are available at the following link: <http://groups.google.com/group/pinole-hercules-treatment-plant-?lnk=srg&hl=en>

I have additional questions. Whom should I contact?

If you have additional questions you should contact Dean Allison at City Hall at (510)-724-9010.