

City of Hollister
Municipal Service Review

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT
JUNE 2026

Prepared for San Benito LAFCO
Submitted by Policy Consulting Associates, LLC

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ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

AAGR:	Average Annual Growth Rate
ALPP:	Agricultural Land Preservation Program
AOP:	Annual Operating Plan
ARPA:	American Rescue Plan Act
BEU:	Department of Forestry & Fire Protection San Benito-Monterey Unit
BMP:	Best Management Practices
CALFIRE:	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CalHFA:	California Housing Finance Agency
CalPERS:	California Public Employees' Retirement System
CAP:	Climate Action Plan
CEQA:	California Environmental Quality Act
CIP:	Capital Improvement Plan or Program
CJSC:	Criminal Justice Statistics Center
CKH:	Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000
CPRA:	California Public Records Act
CPSE:	The Center for Public Safety Excellence
CVP:	Central Valley Project
CWA:	Clean Water Act
DAC:	Disadvantaged Community
DDW:	Division of Drinking Water
DOF:	California Department of Finance
DOJ:	Department of Justice
DUC:	Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities
DWR:	California Department of Water Resources
EIR:	Environmental Impact Report
ECC:	Emergency Command Center
EMS:	Emergency Medical Services
EPA:	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FBI:	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FMMP:	Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program
FPPC:	The State of California Fair Political Practices Commission
FTR:	Annual Financial Transactions Report
FY:	Fiscal year
GC:	Government Code
GIS:	Geographic Information Systems
GP:	General Plan
GPM:	Gallons Per Minute
GSA:	Groundwater Sustainability Agencies
GSP:	Groundwater Sustainability Plans
HCD:	The State Department of Housing and Community Development
HFD:	Hollister Fire Department
HPD:	Hollister Police Department
HUA:	Hollister Urban Area
IIG:	Infill Infrastructure Grant
IRT:	incident response time

ISO:	Insurance Services Office
IWTP:	Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant
JPA:	Joint Powers Authority or Agency
LAFCo:	Local Agency Formation Commission
LCI:	California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
MCL:	Maximum Contaminant Level
MEP:	Maximum Extent Practicable
MG:	Million Gallons
MHI:	Median Household Income
MS4:	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems
MSR:	Municipal Service Review
NFPA:	National Fire Protection Association
NPDES:	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRPA:	National Recreation and Park Association
OSHA:	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PEMHCA:	Public Employees' Medical and Hospital Care Act
POST:	The Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training
PRV:	pressure-reducing valves
psi:	per square inch
PLHA:	Permanent Local Housing Allocation
PSTC:	South Bay Regional Public Safety Training Consortium
RHNA:	Regional Housing Needs Allocation
RWQCB:	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB:	Senate Bill
SBC PAL:	San Benito County Police Activities League
SBCOG:	the San Benito Council of Governments
SBCWD:	San Benito County Water District
SCO:	State Controller's Office
SCR9-11:	Santa Cruz Regional 9-11
SDWA:	Safe Drinking Water Act
SEFA:	Schedule of expenditures of federal awards
SGMA:	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SJB:	San Juan Bautista
SOL:	Sphere of Influence
SR:	State Route
SRA:	State Responsibility Areas
SSCWD:	Sunnyslope County Water District
SWMP:	Storm Water Management Plan
SWRCB:	State Water Resources Control Board
TMDL:	Total Maximum Daily Load
UCR:	Uniform Crime Reporting
USBR:	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
UWMP:	Hollister Urban Water Management Plan
VIP:	Hollister Police Volunteers in Policing Program
WSCP:	Water Shortage Contingency Plans
WTP:	Water Treatment Plant

PREFACE

Prepared for the San Benito Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), this report is a Municipal Services Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) Update covering the City of Hollister. An MSR is a state-required comprehensive study of services within a designated geographic area. This MSR focuses on one city in San Benito County that provides fire, law enforcement, water, parks and recreation, and stormwater.

CONTEXT

San Benito LAFCO is required to prepare this MSR by the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code §56000, et seq.), which took effect on January 1, 2001. The MSR examines services provided by the City of Hollister, whose boundaries and governance are subject to LAFCO.

CREDITS

The authors extend their appreciation to the individuals at the City of Hollister who provided the information and documents for this report and took the time for interviews and document review to ensure its accuracy.

Policy Consulting Associates conducted this MSR with the direction of San Benito LAFCO Executive Officer, Jennifer Stephenson. Melat Assefa was the primary author and analyst.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is a municipal service review (MSR) covering the City of Hollister, prepared for the San Benito Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). An MSR is a State-required comprehensive study of services that special districts or cities provide. The MSR requirement is codified in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code §56000 et seq.). The City of Hollister was last included in the countywide MSR conducted in 2007.

OVERVIEW

Incorporated in 1872, the City of Hollister is the county seat of San Benito County and lies about 25 miles from Monterey Bay and 50 miles from San Jose. Its proximity to major highways makes it a commuter hub, with about 65 percent of its 13,000 working residents traveling outside the City for work. The City is a historically agricultural community, known for its apricots, olive oil, vineyards, walnuts, and cattle, while also supporting various industries, including healthcare, manufacturing, distribution, and retail.

The City provides a full range of municipal services, including law enforcement, fire protection, street construction and maintenance, code enforcement, building inspections, water and wastewater services, and general government administration.

This MSR focuses on fire, law enforcement, water, parks and recreation, and stormwater services provided by the City.

FINANCIAL ABILITY TO PROVIDE SERVICES

The City of Hollister funds its operations through taxes, intergovernmental revenues, and user fees. Governmental activities include general government, public protection, public works, and recreation, while business-type activities cover airport, water, wastewater, street sweeping, and Briggs Building operations.

The City's FY 20–21 financial audit identified several fiscal control weaknesses, including ineffective financial close processes, untimely grant reimbursements, inadequate monitoring of notes receivable, incomplete cash and bank reconciliations, and errors in the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards (SEFA). Delays in audit completion were largely attributed to

staff turnover and poor reconciliation practices. These challenges raise risks to fiscal transparency, grant eligibility, and the City's ability to issue municipal debt for capital projects. Maintaining timely audits is critical, as outdated audits may disqualify the City from receiving state and federal grants, such as the Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA), which supports affordable housing and community development.

The City also failed to file the Annual Financial Transactions Report (FTR) in FY 21-22 with the State Controller's Office (SCO) as required by California Government Code Sections 53891-53897. Failure to submit required financial reports to the SCO can result in state fines, loss of grant eligibility, and impact the City's fiscal transparency and public trust.

According to the SCO's website, in FY 22-23, the City reported \$81.98 million in revenues and \$89.77 million in expenditures, reflecting a 9 percent budget deficit. General Government and Public Safety accounted for 40 percent of spending, while over 55 percent of revenues came from taxes and service charges. Persistent operating deficits have resulted in a decline in reserves, reducing the General Fund reserve to 12 percent of expenditures, which is below the City's policy target of 20 percent.

Additional fiscal challenges include outdated user fees, stagnant sales tax growth, and the loss of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, which previously supported several City programs. Without new or restructured revenue sources, the City faces ongoing fiscal pressure and reduced financial flexibility.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OPTIONS

The City of Hollister collaborates with neighboring agencies through shared facilities, joint-use agreements, and interagency coordination to deliver various services. While no alternative governance options are recommended at this time, governance structures may need to be reviewed following the adoption of the City's proposed Sphere of Influence (SOI) by LAFCO to ensure alignment with long term growth strategies and potential service needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are the various recommendations for the City of Hollister's consideration to address challenges, improve service delivery, and enhance transparency:

- It is recommended that the City make all up-to-date Ethics Certificates of Completion and Form 700s available on its website.

- To enhance transparency, it is recommended that the City add Annual Compensation Reports and State Controller’s Office Financial Transaction Reports to its website.
- It is recommended that the City submit all Annual Financial Transactions Reports (FTRs) to the State Controller’s Office (SCO) in a timely manner, as required by California Government Code Sections 53891–53897. Failure to do so can result in state fines, loss of grant eligibility, and diminished fiscal transparency and public trust.
- It is recommended that the City ensure the timely completion of financial audits to promote fiscal transparency, maintain public accountability, and demonstrate sound financial management. Delays in completing audits may result in ineligibility for critical funding opportunities, including state grants administered by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA), which require up-to-date audits.
- To enhance efficiency and service delivery for fire services, it is recommended that the City develop a department-level strategic plan in coordination with broader citywide initiatives to identify and address operational challenges specific to fire service operations and community needs.
- As the City grows, more parkland will need to be dedicated to meet the General Plan standard of four acres per 1,000 residents. It is recommended that the City continue to collaborate with San Benito County, as advised in the General Plan, to ensure sufficient parkland and recreation facilities for residents.
- It is recommended that the City use the National Recreation and Park Association’s (NRPA) Park Metrics tool to assess current service levels and compare them with similar agencies nationwide. This data-driven tool considers population, budget, and community characteristics, offering a more comprehensive comparison than relying solely on the parkland-per-resident benchmark.

2. BACKGROUND

LAFCO OVERVIEW

LAFCO regulates boundary changes proposed by public agencies or individuals through approval, denial, conditions, and modification. It also regulates the extension of public services by cities and special districts outside their boundaries. LAFCO is empowered to initiate updates to the SOIs and proposals involving the dissolution or consolidation of special districts, mergers, the establishment of subsidiary districts, and any reorganization, including such actions. Otherwise, LAFCO actions must originate as petitions or resolutions from affected voters, landowners, cities, or districts.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES REVIEW LEGISLATION

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 requires LAFCO to review and update SOIs every five years, or as necessary, and to review municipal services before updating SOIs. The requirement for service reviews arises from the identified need for a more coordinated and efficient public service structure to support California's anticipated growth. The service review provides LAFCO with a tool to study existing and future public service conditions comprehensively and to evaluate organizational options for accommodating growth, preventing urban sprawl, and ensuring that critical services are provided efficiently. Government Code §56430 requires LAFCO to conduct a review of municipal services provided in the county by region, sub-region, or other designated geographic area, or by type of service, as appropriate, and to prepare a written statement of determination with respect to each of the following seven topics:

- Growth and population projections for the affected area,
- The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) within or contiguous to the SOI,
- Present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, including infrastructure needs or deficiencies (including needs or deficiencies related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, and structural fire protection in any DUCs within or contiguous to the sphere of influence),
- Financial ability of agencies to provide services,
- Status of and opportunities for shared facilities,

- Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies, and
- Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery, as required by commission policy.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES REVIEW PROCESS

The MSR process does not require LAFCO to initiate changes in an organization based on service review findings, only that LAFCO identifies potential government structure options. However, LAFCO, other local agencies, and the public may subsequently use the determinations to analyze prospective changes in organization or reorganization or to establish or amend SOIs. Within its legal authorization, LAFCO may act with respect to a recommended change of organization or reorganization on its initiative (e.g., certain types of consolidations) or in response to a proposal (i.e., initiated by resolution or petition by landowners or registered voters). MSRs are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to §15306 (information collection) of the CEQA Guidelines. LAFCO's actions to adopt MSR determinations are not considered "projects" subject to CEQA.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATES

The Commission is charged with developing and updating the SOI for each city and special district within the county. As stated earlier, SOIs must be updated every five years or as necessary. In determining the SOI, LAFCO is required to complete an MSR and adopt the seven determinations previously discussed.

An SOI is a LAFCO-approved plan that designates an agency's probable future boundary and service area. Spheres are planning tools used to provide guidance for individual boundary change proposals and are intended to encourage the efficient provision of organized community services and prevent duplication of service delivery. Territory cannot be annexed by LAFCO to a city or a district unless it is within that agency's sphere.

The purposes of the SOI include the following: ensuring the efficient provision of services, discouraging urban sprawl and the premature conversion of agricultural and open space lands, and preventing overlapping jurisdictions and duplication of services.

LAFCO cannot regulate land use, dictate internal operations or administration of any local agency, or set rates. It is, however, empowered to enact policies that indirectly affect land use decisions. On a regional level, LAFCO promotes the logical and orderly development of communities as it considers and decides individual proposals.

The commission has a role in reconciling differences between agency plans so that the most efficient urban service arrangements are created for the benefit of current and future area residents and property owners. LAFCO is also authorized to adopt, update, and amend the SOI, and can do so with or without an application. Any interested person is allowed to submit an application proposing an SOI amendment.

Additionally, LAFCO may recommend government reorganizations to particular agencies in the county, using the SOIs as the basis for those recommendations.

Moreover, when adopting or amending an SOI, LAFCO must make the following determinations:

- Present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands,
- Present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area,
- Present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public service that the agency provides or is authorized to provide,
- Existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines these are relevant to the agency, and
- Present and probable need for water, wastewater, and structural fire protection facilities and services of any DUCs within the existing sphere of influence.

By statute, LAFCO must notify affected agencies 21 days before holding the public hearing to consider the SOI and may not update the SOI until after that hearing. The LAFCO Executive Officer must issue a report including recommendations on the SOI amendments and updates under consideration at least five days before the public hearing.

DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

LAFCO is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) as part of this service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities.

Senate Bill (SB) 244 (Wolk, 2011) was signed on October 7, 2011, to begin to address the complex legal, financial, and political barriers that contribute to regional inequity and

infrastructure deficits within DUCs. Identifying and including these communities in the long-range planning of a city or a special district is required by SB 244.

CKH requires LAFCO to make determinations regarding DUCs when considering a change of organization, reorganization, sphere of influence expansion, and when conducting municipal service reviews. For any updates to an SOI of a local agency (city or special district) that provides public facilities or services related to sewer, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection, LAFCO shall consider and prepare written determinations regarding the present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services. LAFCO must also assess infrastructure needs or deficiencies for any DUC within or contiguous to the SOI of a city or special district.

CKH prohibits LAFCO from approving an annexation to a city of any territory greater than 10 acres if a DUC is contiguous to the proposed annexation, unless an application to annex the DUC has been filed with LAFCO. An application to annex a contiguous DUC shall not be required if a prior application for annexation of the same DUC has been made in the preceding five years or if the Commission finds, based upon written evidence, that a majority of the registered voters within the affected territory are opposed to annexation.

Government Code §56033.5 defines a DUC as 1) all or a portion of a "disadvantaged community" as defined by §79505.5 of the Water Code, and as 2) "inhabited territory" (12 or more registered voters), as defined by §56046, or as determined by commission policy.

3. CITY OF HOLLISTER

AGENCY OVERVIEW

The City of Hollister was incorporated in 1872 by the San Justo Homestead Association of Farmers and serves as the seat of San Benito County. The City is located approximately 25 miles inland from Monterey Bay, 40 miles northeast of the City of Monterey, and 50 miles southeast of the City of San Jose.

Hollister is the County seat of San Benito County, covering an area of approximately 7 square miles. The City's location provides access to Highway 101 and Interstate 5, making it a significant commuter hub. Approximately 65 percent of the City's working population, which is over 13,000 individuals, commute outside the city limits for work.

Initially established as an agricultural center, the City is now predominantly developed with major industries, including hospitals, manufacturers, distribution centers, and commercial stores, located within or near the City.

The City provides a full range of services, including law enforcement, fire protection, street construction and maintenance, code enforcement, building inspections, water and wastewater services, and general government administration.

The City of Hollister was last included in a San Benito LAFCO Countywide Municipal Services Review in 2007.

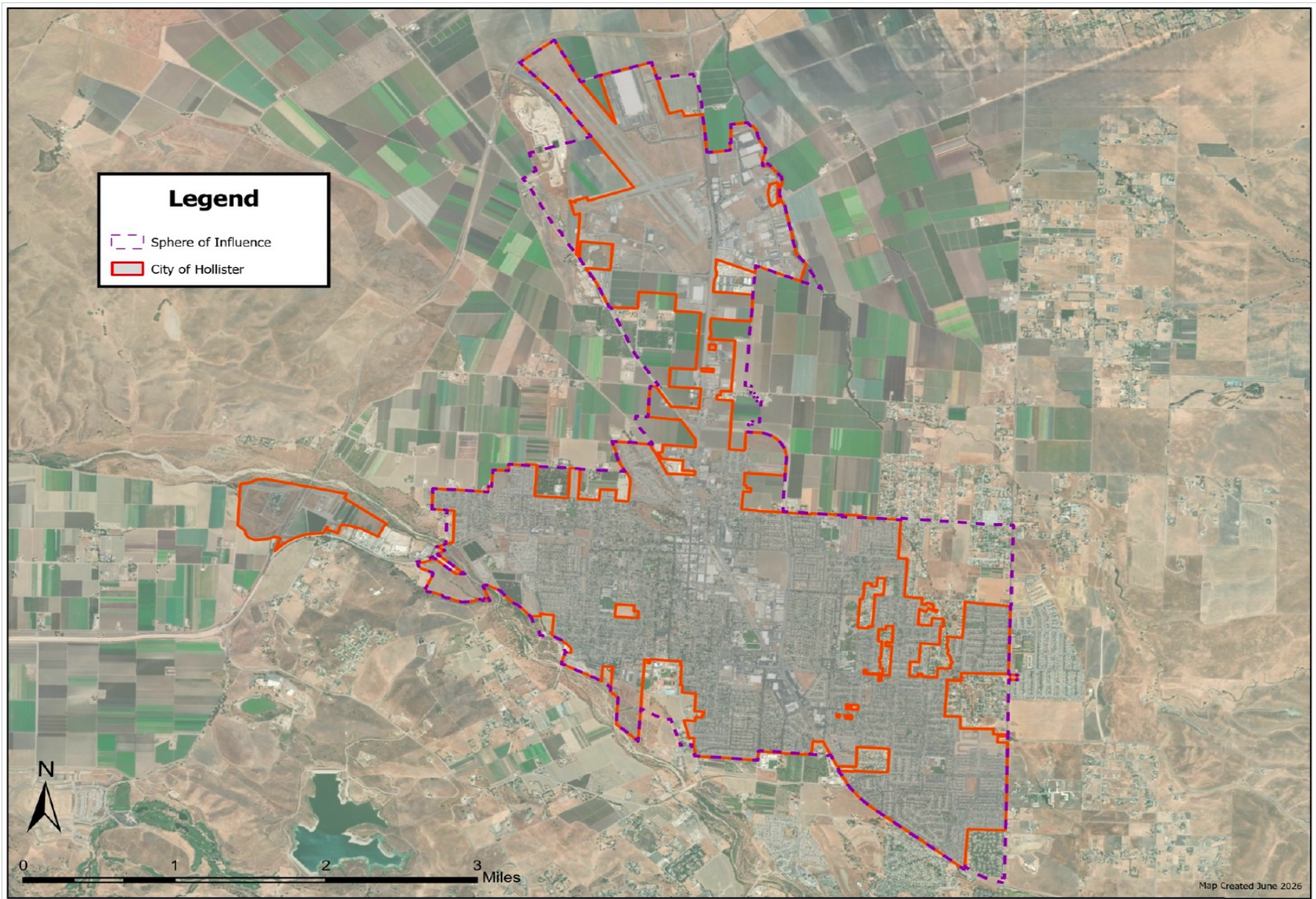
SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

The Sphere of Influence (SOI) encompasses the City's ultimate service area and extends beyond city limits. As part of the City's adopted 2040 General Plan, an amendment is proposed to expand the City's existing SOI extending towards the San Benito River and San Benito Street and Southside Street, and to Enterprise Road between Southside Road and Highway 25. After the proposed amendment, the City's total SOI would encompass approximately 1,645 acres.¹

Figure 3-1 illustrates the City's existing SOI boundaries and city limits.

¹ The City of Hollister, 2040 General Plan, Adopted April 2026,

Figure 3-1: City of Hollister Existing Boundaries



4. ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

GOVERNANCE

The City of Hollister is a general law city operating under the Council-Manager form of government. The City Council consists of four members, each elected by district voters, serving staggered four-year terms. Every year, at the first meeting in January, the Council elects one of its members to serve as Vice Mayor. The Mayor is elected at large for a two-year term. Elections are held in November of even-numbered years.

The Council, as the legislative body, represents the citizens of Hollister and is empowered by the Municipal Code to formulate citywide policy, enact local legislation, adopt budgets, and appoint the City Manager and City Attorney. Current council member names, positions, and term expiration dates are shown in Figure 4-2.

Meeting agendas are posted on the City's website, in compliance with the Brown Act² (Government Code §§ 54954.2 and 54956), as amended by California AB 2257, which requires agencies to make agendas available on their websites and in a publicly accessible physical location, at least 72 hours prior to regular meetings and at least 24 hours prior to special meetings.

The City also maintains an archive of Council meeting agenda packets, minutes, and meeting recordings on the City of Hollister Meeting Portal. Agendas are posted on the bulletin board in the west alleyway outside City Hall and are also available for review at the City Clerk's Office.

In addition to public meetings, the City of Hollister engages residents through its informative website and active social media pages, including Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Nextdoor.

The City offers various methods for residents to file complaints and service requests. In accordance with the California Public Records Act (CPRA), the City provides an online public records portal that enables residents to submit requests, correspond with City staff, and track the status of their requests. The portal also allows users to search for published public records requests and documents.

² California Government Code, Section 54950, commonly known as the "Brown Act" or "Open Meeting Law," establishes requirements and restrictions for meetings of local legislative bodies. The law ensures public access to these meetings, facilitating public participation and promoting transparency in local government decision-making.

The City also has a contact form on its website that is easily accessible for the public to submit comments and report complaints on various topics.

Figure 4-1: City of Hollister Governing Body

GOVERNING BODY					
Manner of Selection			Mayor at large. City council elected by district.		
Length of Term			4 years for Council; 2 years for Mayor		
Meetings			On the first and third Mondays of each month at 6:30 p.m. City Hall Council Chambers 375 Fifth Street Hollister, CA 95023		
Agenda Distribution			Posted online, City Clerk's office and on the bulletin board outside west alleyway at City Hall		
Minutes Distribution			Posted online and available for review at City Clerk's office		
COUNCIL MEMBERS					
Member Name	District	Position	Term Expiration	Manner of Selection	Length of Term
Roxanne Stephens	At large	Mayor	2026	Elected	2 Years
Rudy Picha	1	Councilmember	2028	Elected	4 Years
Rolan Resendiz	2	Councilmember	2026	Elected	4 Years
Dolores Morales	3	Councilmember	2026	Elected	4 Years
Priscilla De Anda	4	Councilmember	2028	Elected	4 Years
CONTACT					
Contact			Ana Cortez, City Manager		
Mailing Address			375 Fifth Street, Hollister, CA 95023		
Phone			(831) 673-3365		
Email/Website			ana.cortez@hollister.ca.gov		

ACCOUNTABILITY

Ethics training is required once every two years, beginning with an odd-numbered year (AB 1234, Chapter 700, Statutes of 2005). Training is available online through the State of California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC). It is recommended that the City's councilmembers and other officials who make or influence governmental decisions, such as the City Manager, complete up-to-date ethics training as required. Additionally, it is recommended that the City make all certificates of completion available on the City's website.

Additionally, a Statement of Economic Interest (Form 700) must be submitted annually to demonstrate transparency regarding economic interests, as required by the Political Reform Act of 1974 (California Government Code Sections 81000-81003).

According to the FPPC website, Mayor Stephens has an up-to-date 2025 Form 700 filing, while councilmembers Roland Resendiz and Dolores Morales have 2024 filings. It is recommended that all Councilmembers complete timely Form 700 filings to ensure compliance. Additionally, it is recommended that the City make all current Form 700s available on its website to enhance transparency.

Through the City, a conflict-of-interest code and bylaws also exist, outlined in the municipal code, as required by law, and to which Hollister must abide.

Figure 4-2 illustrates efforts to meet state laws aimed at ensuring transparency and accountability. Overall, the City of Hollister meets the requirements outlined in state laws regarding the Brown Act, website materials, and best practices to ensure easy access to significant planning documents and financial reports. To enhance transparency, it is recommended that the City add Annual Compensation Reports and the State Controller's Office Financial Transaction Reports to the City's website.

However, the City failed to file the Annual Financial Transactions Report (FTR) for FY 21–22 with the State Controller's Office (SCO), as required by California Government Code Sections 53891–53897. It is recommended that the City submit future FTRs in a timely manner, as failure to do so can result in state fines, loss of grant eligibility, and diminished fiscal transparency and public trust.

The City of Hollister demonstrated accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with the LAFCO questionnaires and other requests for information.

Figure 4-2: Transparency and Accountability Indicators

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	HOLLISTER
Agency website (GC §53087.8)	Yes
Contact information available on website (GC §53087.8 (a)(3))	Yes
Annual Compensation Report (GC §53891 and 53908)	No
Adopted budget available on website	Yes
State Controller’s Office Financial Transactions Report available on website (GC §53891 and 53893)	No
Notice of public meetings provided	Yes
Agendas posted on website (GC §54954.2)	Yes
Public meetings are live streamed	Yes
Minutes and/or recordings of public meetings available on website	Yes
Strategic Plan available on website	N/A
Enterprise System Catalogue available on website (GC §6270.5 (a))	Yes
Compliance with financial document compilation, adoption, and reporting requirements	Yes
Adherence to open meeting requirements	Yes

Determination 4-1. The City of Hollister engages residents through public meetings, its website, and various social media platforms. Additionally, the City offers multiple channels for filing complaints and in accordance with the California Public Records Act (CPRA) offers a public records portal that enables residents to submit requests, correspond with City staff, and track the status of their requests.

Determination 4-2. The City of Hollister largely complies with the requirements outlined in State laws related to the Brown Act, website materials, and best practices to ensure easy access to significant planning documents and annual budgets.

Determination 4-3. It is recommended that the City make up-to-date ethics training certificates of completion and completed Form 700s available on the Hollister website to ensure transparency and accountability.

Determination 4-4. The City of Hollister demonstrated accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with the LAFCO questionnaires and other requests for information.

5. PLANNING

The General Plan (GP) is the City of Hollister’s long-term planning document, outlining the City’s fundamental values and shared vision for future development to guide and coordinate planning decisions. The GP addresses major policy areas through the mandated elements required for all jurisdictions under Government Code § 65302, along with several optional elements voluntarily included to reflect local priorities.

Hollister’s previous General Plan was adopted in 2005, with a horizon year of 2023. The California Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI)³ provides state guidance for updating GP for all California cities and counties. While there is no set requirement for how often the general plan must be updated, the planning period has traditionally been 15-20 years.⁴

In 2021, the City of Hollister initiated a multi-year GP update process to ensure that current conditions, community profiles, and emerging challenges were reflected in the City’s primary planning document. The updated GP expanded the 2005 GP’s framework by establishing a planning horizon through 2040, incorporating updated policies related to land use, circulation, and conservation. The updated GP also included additional sections addressing new policy areas that reflect evolving State priorities, such as the Climate Action Plan (CAP), which outlines a comprehensive roadmap for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and the Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP), which requires that the conversion of agricultural land to urban use include funding for agricultural conservation easements⁵

Following years of extensive stakeholder engagement, public hearings, and revisions to the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to incorporate the proposed land use changes and adjustments to the SOI boundary, the final 2040 GP draft was adopted in December 2024.

However, there was significant public opposition to several aspects of the Plan, particularly the proposed SOI expansion of approximately 3,000 acres, much of which is agricultural land. There were also public concerns regarding agricultural land protection policies, affordable housing allocation, and development standards outlined in the Plan, particularly regarding potential uncontrolled growth and insufficient safeguards.⁶

³ Formerly the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

⁴ Formerly the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR).
n (LCI). General Plan Guidelines, 2017 Update- FAQ.

⁵ Hollister 2040 General Plan, Climate Action Plan, and Agricultural Lands Preservation Program Revised Draft EIR. July 2024.

⁶ Hollister Guardians Action. Citizen’s Referendum.

In early 2025, a resident referendum petition gathered enough signatures to challenge and repeal the plan. In March 2025, the City Council considered whether to place the matter on the ballot or to rescind the plan. Ultimately, the Council voted to repeal the plan by adopting the referendum, citing demonstrated public concerns and the high cost of a special election.⁷

Following the statutory waiting period under California Elections Code § 9241, which prohibits the City from re-adopting a substantially similar General Plan within one year of repeal, the City reverted to operating under the 2005 General Plan during this interim period. Upon completion of the waiting period, the City adopted a new General Plan in April 2026. The adopted General Plan re-establishes a comprehensive planning framework through 2040 and includes revisions to various policy areas, including a substantially reduced SOI expansion area.

A key component of the GP is the Housing Element, which must be completed and updated at least once every eight years, in alignment with the regional planning cycle established by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) under Government Code § 65588. Since the City's Housing Element for the 2023–2031 cycle was included in the repealed GP, it was not adopted at that time, resulting in a period of noncompliance with the State Housing Element Law.

The Housing Element is essential for adequate planning to meet existing and projected housing needs for all income levels. At the beginning of each eight-year planning cycle, the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) allocates a share of the region's housing need to each jurisdiction, including the City, based on current and anticipated growth. The Housing Element establishes the City's official housing policies and objectives and identifies candidate housing sites to accommodate the RHNA goals, as determined by the San Benito Council of Governments (SBCOG).⁸

SBCOG's Final 6th Cycle RHNA, covering the planning period from December 31, 2023, to December 31, 2031, was approved by the HCD on November 4, 2022. For the 6th Cycle, the City of Hollister has been allocated 4,163 housing units across specific affordability levels to accommodate the City's RHNA.

In conjunction with the adoption of the 2040 GP in April 2026, the City's Housing Element was adopted and submitted to HCD for review and certification. The City's Housing Element is currently under review by HCD pending determination of compliance with Housing Element Law.

⁷ City of Hollister. Regular Meeting, City Council Agenda. March 3, 2025.

⁸ City of Hollister, 6th Cycle Housing Element. 2023-2031. p.1-2.

Determination 5-1. The City of Hollister’s previous General Plan was adopted in 2005 with a planning horizon through 2023. In 2021, the City initiated an update to reflect current conditions, community priorities, and evolving State policy requirements.

Determination 5-2. The updated General Plan with a planning horizon of 2040 was adopted in December 2024. However, it faced substantial public opposition, particularly regarding the proposed SOI expansion, agricultural land conversion, housing policies, and growth standards.

Determination 5-3. The plan was subsequently repealed in March 2025, following a successful resident referendum. Following the statutory waiting period under California Election Code §9241, the City adopted a new General Plan in April 2026..

Determination 5-4. The City’s Housing Element for the 2023–2031 cycle was included in the repealed plan; therefore, the City entered a period of noncompliance with State Housing Element Law.

Determination 5-5. In April 2026, the City adopted a new 2040 General Plan incorporating revisions to address SOI expansion and other policy areas.

Determination 5-6: The City’s Housing Element was also adopted and has been submitted to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and is currently under review for compliance with Housing Element Law.

6. GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS

This section aims to evaluate growth and population projections in relation to the City of Hollister’s boundaries and SOI to anticipate the City’s future service needs. Additionally, the City’s anticipated growth patterns are evaluated to determine the impact and compatibility of that growth with land use plans and the local government structure.

According to the City’s 2040 GP, growth in Hollister is guided by several planning boundaries, including the planning area, sphere of influence (SOI), and city limits. The planning boundaries encompass land both inside and outside the city limits.

The Hollister city limits encompass the incorporated territory that the City serves and regulates. Land use within the city limits is controlled through the City’s General Plan, zoning code, land subdivision process, and other related regulations.⁹

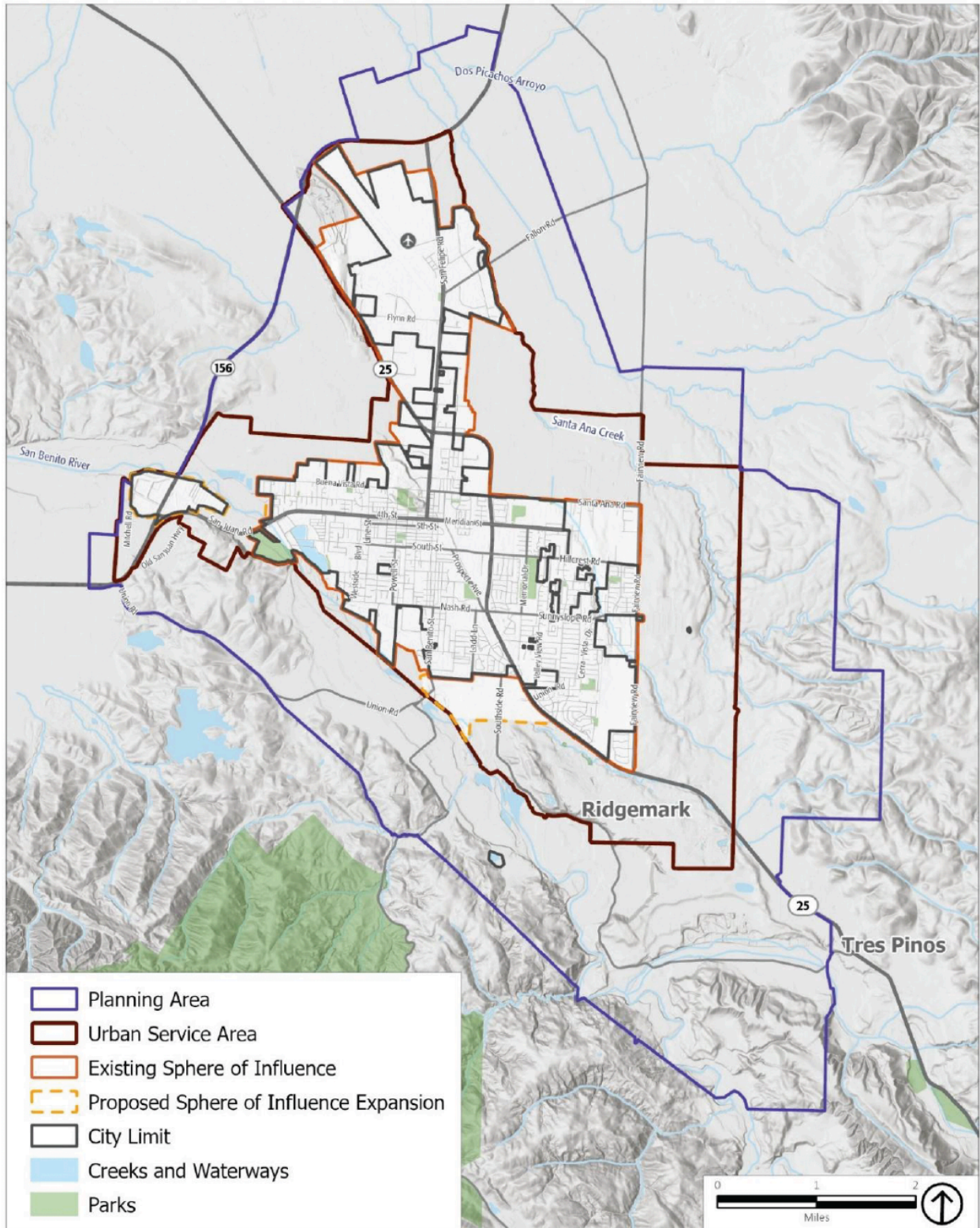
The City’s planning area boundary encompasses incorporated and unincorporated territory related to the City’s planning. State law refers to the planning area as “any land outside [the city] boundaries which in the [City’s] judgment bears relation to its planning.”¹⁰ While a useful planning tool, the planning area is not a LAFCO-defined or approved jurisdictional boundary. The planning area does not grant the City any regulatory power; however, it signals to the County and other nearby local and regional authorities that the City recognizes that development within this area impacts Hollister.

Figure 6-1 illustrates the City’s three planning areas—city limits, SOI, and planning area—according to the current 2040 GP.

⁹ The City of Hollister, 2040 General Plan, Adopted April 2026, p. LU-5.

¹⁰ The City of Hollister, 2040 General Plan, Adopted April 2026, p. LU-2.

Figure 6-1: City of Hollister 2040 General Plan Map



Hollister Urban Service Area

Hollister’s Urban Service Area (USA) was created to coordinate municipal services with residential growth; however, it was eliminated by LAFCO in 2003 through Resolution No. 2003-02, following a determination that the USA was too large and ineffective at ensuring orderly growth and the adequate provision of services.

To ensure consistency with LAFCO, it is recommended that the City retire utilizing the USA as a planning boundary.

LAND USE

Roughly 75 percent of the City is developed, while the remaining 25 percent consists of open space and agricultural lands. Within the City’s urbanized area, residential uses represent the largest land use category, followed by industrial, commercial, public, and airport-related uses. Agricultural and open space designations are primarily located within the City’s Planning Area and SOI.¹¹

¹¹ City of Hollister, General Plan Update. Land Use and Planning. November 2020. p.12-7.

Figure 6-2: City of Hollister Land Use Designations

LAND USE DESIGNATION	CITY LIMITS ACRES	SOI ACRES	PLANNING AREA ACRES
Residential Estate	0	55	1,960
Low Density Residential	1,365	395	1,380
Medium Density Residential	445	150	0
High Density Residential	250	165	0
Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential	105	55	0
Downtown Commercial and Mixed-Use	55	0	0
Home Office	15	0	0
West Gateway Commercial and Mixed-Use	75	0	0
North Gateway Commercial	95	95	45
General Commercial	120	55	95
Industrial	579	362	618
Airport Support	206	98	82
Airport	375	0	0
Public	495	85	295
Open Space	195	10	345
Agriculture	10	120	15,990
Total	4,385	1,645	20,810

Source: City of Hollister; 2040 General Plan

Special Planning Areas

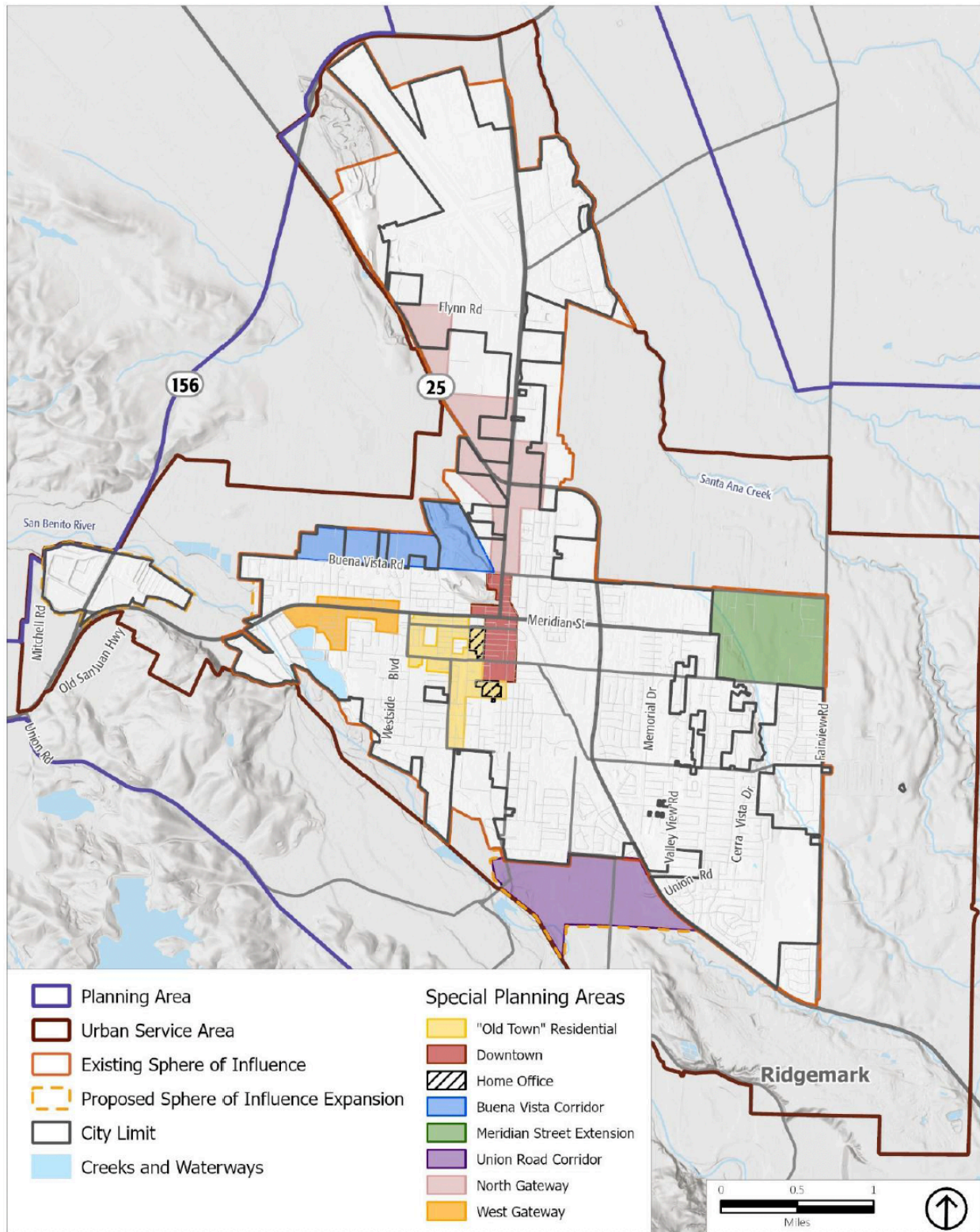
The GP also identifies eight Special Planning Areas: North Gateway, West Gateway, Buena Vista Road, Downtown, "Old Town" Residential, Home Office, Meridian Street Extension, and Union Road. By designating these areas, the GP provides additional policy direction for development, redevelopment, and property improvements. Each Special Planning Area has a series of development policies, while some areas, such as the North and West Gateway, also have their own specific land use designations.

The Special Planning Areas are identified for the following reasons:¹²

- Highly Visible Locations— These areas are in prominent locations that define the character of Hollister, such as city gateways or the historic downtown.
- Economic Development Opportunities— These areas offer potential for economic development if developed appropriately.
- Unified Design Potential— These areas would benefit from a unified design approach that enhances the City's unique elements.

¹² The City of Hollister, 2040 General Plan, Adopted April 2026, p.LU-14.

Figure 6-3: City of Hollister Special Planning Areas, 2040 General Plan



Agricultural Lands

The City has an agricultural land use designation that encompasses lands with ongoing commercial agriculture potential. This designation aims to retain primary agricultural use to the extent feasible, with permitted uses in the area including orchards, row crops, nurseries, grazing lands, open space, farm services, and parks. Furthermore, these areas must remain free of urban development and annexation.

According to the Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), which supports agriculture throughout California by developing maps and statistical data for analyzing land use impacts to farmland, San Benito County's important farmland is categorized by agricultural production potential into the following classifications:

- **Prime Farmland:** has the best combination of physical and chemical features, able to sustain long-term agricultural production. Prime Farmland has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agriculture production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance:** is similar to Prime Farmland, but with minor shortcomings, such as steeper slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- **Unique Farmland:** consists of lesser quality soils used for the production of the State's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated; however, it may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been farmed at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date;
- **Farmland of Local Importance:** includes land which is not irrigated but is cultivated or has the potential for cultivation.
- **Grazing Land:** is the land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock.

As previously discussed, there is limited agricultural land within Hollister's city, with only 10 acres (less than 1 percent) designated for agricultural use. While within the City's SOI, 120 acres, or approximately 7 percent, are designated for agricultural uses. The majority of agricultural land, approximately 15,990 acres, is within the City's Planning Area, primarily in the unincorporated county areas.

Williamson Act Land

Under the Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act), farmers can enter into land conservation agreements with the County, allowing them to benefit from lower property taxes in exchange for maintaining their land in agricultural use. A Williamson Act Contract is binding for ten years and is automatically renewed yearly unless the farmer files a Notice of Non-Renewal. Following such notice, the land may not be converted to other uses for ten years, during which time property taxes are gradually increased to reflect the land's full market value. Ten years after filing a Notice of Non-Renewal, the land is free of contractual land use restrictions, and the farmer is ineligible for any further property tax benefits associated with the former Williamson Act contract.

As illustrated in Figure 6-4, only a few parcels within the existing SOI along Buena Vista Road are designated as Williamson Act lands, while the majority of Williamson Act-designated farmlands are located within the City's broader planning area.

Agricultural Policies

The City has adopted multiple policies and goals related to agricultural land uses in the 2040 GP, as outlined in the Open Space and Agriculture element, including Goal OS-2—Preserve viable agricultural activities and lands. Other policies related to this goal are:

- Policy OS-2.1: Require that all new developments converting agricultural land to urban uses provide for the preservation of an equal amount of agricultural land in perpetuity.
- Policy OS-2.2: Require developers of new projects adjoining agricultural land to provide a 200-foot buffer and pay a fee to maintain this buffer
- Policy OS-2.3: San Benito County Future Development Areas. Encourage the County to focus future development in areas identified for development in the City’s General Plan to help protect agricultural lands and preserve open space elsewhere in the Planning Area.
- Policy OS-2.4: Coordinate with the County to maintain prime, unique, and statewide significant farmlands in active agricultural use and support the continued economic viability of agriculture in the Planning Area.
- Policy OS-2.5: Require developers to inform potential homebuyers near agricultural areas about possible hazards and nuisances from agricultural practices and inform them of the County’s Right-to-Farm Ordinance when applicable.

Vacant Land Inventory

Vacant land is defined as land with no structure or building improvement and not used for active agricultural production. Conversely, underutilized land is defined as land that can accommodate additional density.

In 2020, a Market Demand Analysis¹³ was completed for a part of the proposed GP update to evaluate economic conditions in the broader San Benito County area. The Analysis examines the amount of vacant and underutilized land, pipeline projects, and projected growth to assess whether sufficient land exists within the SOI to meet future demand.

As of 2020, approximately 472 acres of vacant land and 367 acres of underutilized land (i.e., parcels with less than 10 percent building coverage) were identified within the city limits. Beyond the city limits, the existing SOI includes approximately 257 acres of vacant land. Within the city limits and SOI, vacant and underutilized land designated for industrial uses,

¹³ The analysis is based on data depicting pre-COVID-19 conditions, which were the only data available at the time.

including airport and airport support, represents 59 percent of the total inventory, while commercial and mixed-use designations each represent 12 percent and residential designations represent 16 percent.¹⁴ Additionally, as previously discussed, the proposed SOI expansion includes vacant land designated for residential and mixed-use development.

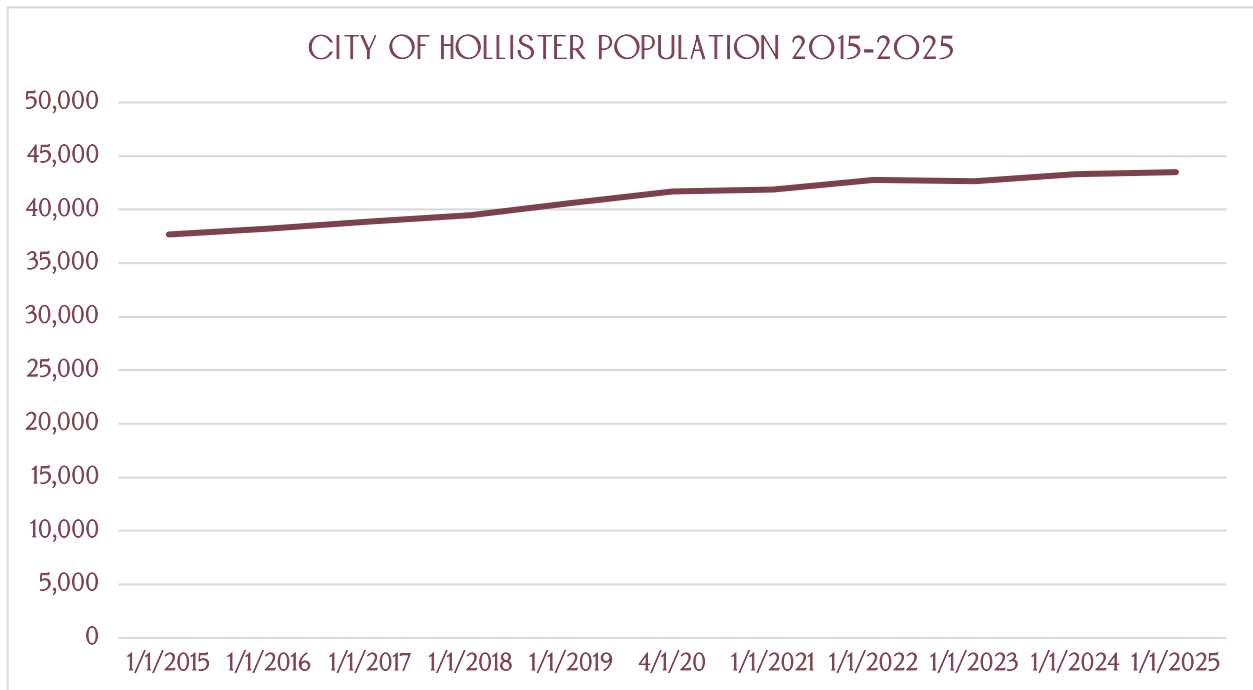
There is also a large amount of vacant and underutilized land outside the city limits and SOI, within the unincorporated County. Since these areas may overlap with the City's planning area while remaining under the County's General Plan land use authority, proper coordination between the City and County is necessary to ensure an orderly and consistent growth pattern.

¹⁴ The City of Hollister. Market Demand Analysis. November 12, 2020. p.50.

CURRENT POPULATION

According to the California Department of Finance (DOF), Hollister’s estimated population is 43,492. This indicates a roughly 15 percent increase and a 1.4 percent Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR) since 2015, when the population was 37,671. The City’s population trend over the last 10 years is shown in Figure 6-6.

Figure 6-6: City of Hollister Population Growth, 2015-2025



PROJECTED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

According to the Department of Finance (DOF), countywide growth projections for San Benito County indicate an average annual growth rate (AAGR) of approximately 0.47 percent from 2020 (64,432) through 2060 (77,666). Utilizing the County’s AAGR and Hollister’s 2025 population estimates, the population within the City is anticipated to increase to approximately 51,248 by 2060.

DEVELOPMENT

As illustrated in Figure 6-7, the City of Hollister has various proposed and planned developments, including residential, industrial, public, commercial, and mixed-use projects.

As of 2026, there are currently eight proposed development projects under review, totaling 158 residential units, including 17 below-market-rate units. Other projects under review include three commercial conversion proposals involving a church, a preschool/daycare, and a K–12 school.

Furthermore, a 2020 project proposed by the Hollister Research Campus, a 230-acre site at the northern gateway to the City of Hollister near the Hollister Municipal Airport at the intersection of State Route (SR) 156 and San Felipe Road, is under review. The project proposes amendments to the City’s planning area and SOI boundaries, as well as changes to the City’s GP land use designations, to allow annexation of the property into the City of Hollister. Future development of the site would include traveler-oriented commercial uses near SR 156, such as restaurants, a gas station/convenience market, a truck stop, and hotels. The majority of the area north of SR 156 is proposed for the development of two hotels, a public event center, a technical school, and a research campus.¹⁵ The project also includes annexation of the Lico property (Area 4 of the development), which is proposed to be zoned for light industrial uses.¹⁶

Recently approved projects included 145 residential units across multifamily and mixed-use developments, including 50 below-market-rate units. Additionally, the City has approved two commercial developments spanning 5,950 square feet (SF), a 54,541 SF industrial project by California Modulars, and a conversion of an existing public institution.

The proposed residential and mixed-use projects may result in incremental population growth within the City as units are built and occupied. Commercial and institutional projects may also contribute to employment-driven growth.

¹⁵ Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting for the Hollister Research Campus. September 23, 2021.

¹⁶ City of Hollister, Request for Information. April 2026.

Figure 6-7: Planned or Proposed Development in City of Hollister, 2024-2025

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS				
NAME OF DEVELOPMENT	PROJECT TYPE	# OF DWELLING UNITS	SQUARE FOOTAGE	STATUS
California Modulares	Industrial		54,541 SF	Approved
375 4th St	Below Market Rate	50 + 1 Managerial Unit		Approved
San Juan Hollister Multifamily	Multifamily Residential	44		Approved
Los Pinar's Apartments	Multifamily Residential	50		Approved
Navigator Schools	Commercial Conversion		94,279 SF	Under Review
San Benito County Polytechnic	Public		9,083 SF	Approved
The Pentecostal Church	Commercial Conversion		6,000 SF	Under Review
Bird House Preschool & Daycare	Commercial Conversion		8,958 SF	Under Review
Hollister Research Campus	Industrial			Under Review
Hollister Senior Apartments	Multifamily Residential	79		Under Review
4th St Apartments	Below Market Rate	17		Under Review
Kapoor's New Laundry	Commercial		2,790 SF	Approved
851 Sunnyslope Rd	Residential	62		Under Review
Ganado Feed	Commercial		3,160 SF	Approved
TOTAL		303+	178,811+	

GROWTH STRATEGIES

The City's Land Use and Community Design Element in the GP is the primary tool for establishing regulatory and policy land use guidance to guide growth trends in the City. As Hollister continues to grow, development pressure on the edges of the City is expected to increase. To promote orderly and balanced growth, the 2040 GP encourages infill development and redevelopment within existing developed areas before outward expansion occurs. To support infill development, the City may offer incentives, including the reduction or elimination of development fees associated with construction projects in infill areas. The City also supports the annexation and development of county islands and properties located within the SOI prior to considering development in surrounding areas.

As part of the City's growth management strategy to promote orderly and balanced growth within the broader Planning Area, the following policies were identified to encourage development within existing urbanized areas and limit outward expansion from the City's core:¹⁷

- LU-1.1: Infill Development— Ensure an orderly pattern of development in the city that prioritizes infill development over the annexation of properties.
- LU-1.2: City Services— Future growth shall not exceed the City's ability to provide services, including sewage treatment, treated domestic water, public parks and recreation, and public safety services.
- LU-1.3: Development Capacity— The City will limit new growth to a maximum of 10,530 dwelling units, 1.1 million square feet of commercial/office, and 2.8 million square feet of industrial space by 2040, as analyzed in the General Plan EIR. Additional development beyond these limits requires a new environmental review.
- LU-1.4: Balance of Uses— The City shall strive to achieve a balance between residential, commercial, and industrial development to increase the city's jobs-to-employed resident ratio and ensure availability of local employment and housing.
- LU-1.5: Development Projects Outside of the City— The City shall not accept an application for any projects (subdivision, grading, development, etc.) for any land that has not been annexed into the City Limits.
- LU-1.6: Coordinated Annexation Requests— Encourage coordinated annexation of contiguous properties.

¹⁷ The City of Hollister, 2040 General Plan, Adopted April 2026. p. LU-18 to LU-20.

- LU-1.7: Revenue Neutral— Require annexations to be revenue neutral and cover all costs related to public infrastructure, public facilities, and public services.
- LU-1.8: Contiguous Annexations— Prohibit any annexations of land that are not contiguous to City Limits. Annexation of land that would result in the formation of a County "island" or irregular city boundary shall not be permitted.
- LU-1.9: Nonconforming Uses— Encourage the replacement of nonconforming land uses with uses that conform to the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.
- LU-1.10: Intergovernmental Coordination— Coordinate regional planning efforts with San Benito County, Caltrans, and other agencies.
- LU-1.11: Application Review of County Projects— Actively participate in development review for projects outside the City Limits but in Hollister's Planning Area for consistency with land use policies outlined in this General Plan.
- LU-1.12: Compliance with New Law— With new development or expansion and improvement of existing development uses, incorporate measures to comply with current federal, State, and local standards.

- Determination 6-1. According to the California Department of Finance (DOF), Hollister’s estimated population is 43,492. This indicates a roughly 15 percent increase and a 1.4 percent Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR) since 2015, when the population was 37,671.
- Determination 6-2. Growth projections for San Benito County indicate an average annual growth rate (AAGR) of approximately 0.47 percent from 2020 (64,432) through 2060 (77,666). Applying the County’s AAGR to Hollister’s 2025 population estimate suggests the City’s population could increase to approximately 51,248 by 2060.
- Determination 6-3. The City of Hollister has a range of proposed, under review, and recently approved development projects, including residential, commercial, industrial, public, and mixed-use uses. As of 2026, there are eight projects under review totaling approximately 158 residential units (including 17 below-market-rate units). While recently approved projects include approximately 145 residential units (including 50 below-market-rate units), approximately 54,541 square feet of industrial development, and approximately 178,811 square feet of commercial and institutional uses. These developments may result in incremental population growth and employment-driven growth within the City as they are built and occupied.
- Determination 6-4. The City’s 2040 General Plan outlines a growth management framework within the Land Use and Community Design Element that prioritizes orderly and balanced development. Key strategies include encouraging infill development before outward expansion, aligning future growth with the City’s ability to provide infrastructure and public services, requiring annexations to be contiguous and revenue neutral, coordinating annexation and development review with San Benito County and other agencies, and ensuring that development remains within the capacity analyzed in the General Plan.

7. DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

LAFCo is required to evaluate disadvantaged unincorporated communities as part of this service review, including the location and characteristics of any such communities. The intent and history of this requirement are outlined in the Background section of this report.

A disadvantaged unincorporated community is defined as any area with 12 or more registered voters, or as determined by commission policy, where the median household income is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median.

According to Census Bureau data, the statewide MHI for 2019-2023 is \$96,334, and hence, the calculated threshold of \$67,277 defines whether a community is disadvantaged. Therefore, with a median income of \$101,979 in 2023, the City of Hollister is not considered to be a disadvantaged community.

Additionally, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has created a mapping tool using US Census data (American Community Survey Five-Year Data, 2016-2020) to identify disadvantaged communities based on median household income. The tool overlays Census Place, Census Tract, and Census Block Group data, highlighting areas where the median household income is below 80 percent of the statewide median household income, as defined by the Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Definition. Unlike LAFCO, DWR does not use voter registration thresholds to define communities.

The DWR mapping tool identifies several areas within and near the Hollister city limits as disadvantaged communities, including:

- A small section southeast within city limits, bordered by Union Road, Highway 25, Tres Pinos Road, Clearview Drive, and Valley View Road,
- An area in the west bounded by San Juan Road, Line Street, South Street, and the San Benito River,
- Additional sections bordered by Marsh Road, Line Street, Prosper Avenue, and South Street,
- The southeast area along Highway 25 between Union Road, Valley View Road, Clearview Road, and Sunnyslope Road,

- Within the current Sphere of Influence, the area around the Baler Aquatic Center, bordered by San Benito Street, and
- Much of the southern portion of the SOI that extends beyond city limits.

Determination 7-1. The statewide Median Household Income (MHI) for 2017-2021, according to Census Bureau data, is estimated at \$84,097; hence, the calculated threshold of \$67,277 defines whether a community is identified as disadvantaged. Therefore, with a median income of \$87,761, the City of Hollister is not considered a disadvantaged community.

Determination 7-2. In contrast the DWR mapping tool identifies disadvantaged communities (DACs) in several areas within and near the city limits, including sections southeast and west of the City, the area around the Baler Aquatic Center within the Sphere of Influence (SOI), and much of the southern SOI extending beyond city boundaries.

8. FINANCIAL ABILITY TO PROVIDE SERVICES

The City of Hollister's functions are funded by taxes and intergovernmental revenues (governmental activities) and by user fees and charges (business-type activities). The City's governmental activities include general government, public protection, public works, and recreation. While business-type activities include the airport, water, wastewater, street sweeping, and Briggs Building funds.

The City's last financial audit was completed in FY 20-21 and highlighted several fiscal issues/weaknesses:¹⁸

- Financial close— During the audit, it was observed that the processes for closing and financial reporting were ineffective. The City lacks adequate controls to ensure accurate closure of accounting records, resulting in financial statements with misstatements that require adjustments.
- Grants— The City's grant revenues, expenditures, and receivables are not properly reconciled for financial reporting purposes at year end. Claims for reimbursement of eligible expenditures are not submitted in a timely manner, prompting the use of the general fund to cover these payments upfront. Additionally, some reimbursement grant receivables were not recorded.
- Notes receivable— The City lacks adequate controls over notes receivable, resulting in several deficiencies, including inconsistent recording practices and failures to monitor the accuracy of receivable balances.
- Cash and bank reconciliation— Due to personnel turnover, the overall process for cash and investment reconciliations was not being completed properly. Bank reconciliations were not being prepared or reviewed in a timely manner, increasing the risk that errors could go undetected. The cash and investment balances as presented were not reflective of their actual balances.
- Schedule of expenditures of federal awards (SEFA)— The initial SEFA provided to the auditors contained numerous errors. The City was not properly reconciling grant receivables, revenues, and expenditures. In addition, amounts initially reported on the

¹⁸ City of Hollister, Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. Schedule of Prior Year Findings. June 30, 2021.

SEFA were derived from general ledger details, which do not necessarily equate to allowable costs to be claimed and reported on the SEFA. Several journal entries and adjustments were made to ensure the amounts reported on the SEFA were accurate.

- Financial reporting timeliness— Various accounting issues, such as personnel turnover and accounting schedules that did not properly reconcile with the general ledger, caused delays in completing the 2021 annual audit.
- Financial close— During the FY 20-21 audit, it was noted that the processes used to close and report financial activity for the fiscal year were ineffective. Approximately 25 journal entries were proposed and posted subsequent to providing the trial balance for the audit.
- Reimbursements— The City experienced delays in submitting claims for reimbursement of eligible expenditures to the relevant agencies. These delays resulted in future revenues being unavailable during the expenditure period, necessitating the use of the City's general fund to cover the upfront costs.
- Loans— During the FY 20-21 audit, the City identified failures to accrue interest on certain loans, a lack of review of the allowance for uncollectible loans, and a loan recorded as a promissory note that was not recorded in the City's general ledger.

It is recommended that the City ensure the timely completion of financial audits to promote fiscal transparency, maintain public accountability, and demonstrate sound financial management. Delays in completing audits may lead to ineligibility for critical funding opportunities, such as State grants administered by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and the California Housing Finance Agency (CalHFA), which often require up-to-date audits. These grants support vital programs, including affordable housing, homelessness prevention, and community development. Notably, the City received annual funding from 2019 to 2022 through the Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA), a program administered by HCD that provides cities and counties with a permanent source of funding to address unmet affordable housing needs and increase the supply of affordable housing units.

Additionally, the absence of up-to-date audits may affect the City's ability to issue municipal debt to finance essential infrastructure projects. Municipal debt enables local governments to acquire or build capital assets immediately by borrowing from banks or investors, spreading the cost over time through long-term repayment. Historically, the City has relied on this financing tool to fund infrastructure improvements, purchase equipment, and build reserves.

BALANCED BUDGET

According to the most recent data from the SCO, the City's total revenue for FY 22-23 was \$81.98 million, while expenditures totaled \$89.77 million, indicating a deficit of nine percent. Expenditures for General Government and Public Safety accounted for 40 percent of the total spending. While operating revenues, such as service charges for utilities and taxes, made up over 55 percent of total City revenues.

Recurring operating deficits are a warning sign of fiscal distress. In the short term, reserves can help backfill deficits and maintain services; however, ongoing deficits will eventually deplete the reserves. The City's continued reliance on reserves to balance the budget was highlighted in the City's FY 24-25 budget, resulting in a reduction of the restricted General Fund reserve to 12 percent of expenditures, which falls below the City's 20 percent target, as established by its Fiscal and Budget Policy.¹⁹

As mentioned previously, the City's inability to qualify for certain grants due to the lack of timely financial audits has reduced grant revenue. Additional revenue shortfalls identified in the FY 24-25 budget include outdated user fees and enterprise funds that no longer cover current service costs, as well as stagnant sales tax growth. Furthermore, the City faces ongoing costs as the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which provided short-term pandemic-related financial relief, is phased out. New programs and obligations previously supported by AARP funds must now be covered by the City's regular operating budget without a dedicated long-term funding source.²⁰

¹⁹ City of Hollister, FY 24-25 Adopted Budget. p.15-18.

²⁰ City of Hollister, FY 24-25 Adopted Budget. p.15-18.

Figure 8-1: The City of Hollister SCO Financial Reporting Data, 2023

THE CITY OF HOLLISTER (FY 22-23)	
Revenues	
Operating Revenues	\$26,979,790
Taxes	\$18,966,861
Taxes - Other	\$13,052,423
Functional Revenues	\$9,184,232
General Revenues	\$5,223,137
Intergovernmental - County	\$4,098,453
Intergovernmental - State	\$2,084,245
State Grants - Other	\$1,253,265
Intergovernmental - Federal	\$580,387
Revenue from Use of Money and Property	\$286,568
Fines, Forfeitures, and Penalties	\$171,351
Nonoperating Revenues	\$97,676
Total Revenue	\$81,978,388
Expenditure	
General Government and Public Safety	\$36,641,166
Transportation and Community Development	\$17,127,270
Sewer Enterprise Fund	\$14,211,969
Water Enterprise Fund	\$8,819,006
Debt Service and Capital Outlay	\$7,618,112
Health and Culture and Leisure	\$2,491,315
Other Enterprise Fund	\$1,552,921
Airport Enterprise Fund	\$1,304,306
Total Expenditure	\$89,766,065
Income (Loss)	\$(7,787,677)

PENSIONS AND OPEB

All qualified permanent and probationary employees can participate in the Public Agency Cost-Sharing Multiple-Employer Defined Benefit Pension Plan, administered by the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). The Plan includes individual rate plans within a safety risk pool (for police and fire personnel) and a miscellaneous risk pool (for all other employees). The City sponsors nine plans: three miscellaneous and six safety risk pools. Benefit provisions are set by state statute and City resolution, with details available on the CalPERS website.

The City also administers a single-employer health care plan through CalPERS under the Public Employees' Medical and Hospital Care Act (PEMHCA). Based on the PEMHCA statutory minimum, monthly health insurance contributions for active employees are adjusted annually for medical inflation. Any excess contributions are allocated to a Cafeteria Plan, allowing employees to direct some funds towards their healthcare benefits.

LONG-TERM DEBT

The City's long-term obligations consist of bonds and other liabilities, which are payable from the general, capital projects, and enterprise funds. As of FY 20-21, the City had the following long-term obligations: ²¹

- California Energy Commission Loan— In February 2012, the City entered into a loan agreement with the California Energy Commission for its energy conservation project. The loan has an interest rate of one percent with principal payments due twice a year, beginning on December 22, 2012.
- John Deere Equipment Lease— The City entered into three 60-month lease agreements starting in late 2018: (1) a four-wheel drive loader with \$3,510 monthly payments at 3.75 percent interest totaling \$192,371; (2) a compact track loader with \$1,375 monthly payments at 4.75 percent interest totaling \$73,572; and (3) a scrap grapple with \$1,375 monthly payments at 3.75 percent interest totaling \$107,778.
- Fire Trucks Capital Lease— In April 2017, the City entered into a capital lease agreement for four fire trucks. The lease has an interest rate of 2.848 percent, with monthly principal and interest payments due beginning July 1, 2017. The assets acquired through the capital lease were put into service in 2019 and have been recorded with a

²¹ City of Hollister, Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. For the year ended June 30, 2021. p. 54-59.

net book value of \$856,549 as of June 30, 2021, with depreciation expense of \$244,728 for the FY 20-21.

- 2016 Wastewater Revenue Refunding Bonds— In March 2016, the Hollister Joint Powers Financing Authority issued \$67,975,000 in bonds to refinance existing debt and establish reserves, funded by a lien on the City’s wastewater system revenues. Interest payments on the bonds are due semi-annually, beginning December 1, 2016, with interest rates ranging from 2 to 5 percent.

EQUIPMENT AND LEASES

The City approved a 50-year cell tower lease agreement with Crown Castle USA Inc. on June 30, 2019. As part of the agreement, the City received an up-front payment of \$1,400,000. After deducting professional services expenses, the City initially received \$1,316,000 in net revenue.

From 2022 to 2071, the City is projected to receive \$1,263,360 in revenue. This revenue is amortized as periodic payments over the remaining term of the lease agreement.

Determination 8-1. The City’s last completed audit in FY 20-21 highlighted several financial management issues, including ineffective financial closing and reporting processes, improper reconciliation of grant revenues and expenditures, and inadequate controls over notes receivable and cash reconciliations.

Determination 8-2. Delayed financial audits have limited the City’s eligibility for state and federal grants. Additionally, the City continues to experience operating deficits, driven by slow revenue growth, outdated user fees that no longer cover rising service costs, and stagnant sales tax revenues. These factors further threaten the City’s long-term fiscal stability as temporary American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds expire and the City increasingly relies on reserves to balance the budget.

Determination 8-3. It is recommended that the City conduct timely annual audits to ensure regulatory compliance, promote fiscal transparency, identify and address any ineffective financial practices, and facilitate informed decision-making.

9. FIRE SERVICES

SERVICES OVERVIEW

The Hollister Fire Department (HFD) provides a range of services, including fire prevention, arson investigation, hazardous material releases, public events, medical aid requests, vehicle accidents, and specialized rescue.

HFD conducts various public outreach and fire prevention education programs across Hollister, San Juan Bautista, and San Benito County, including department-led classes to teach community members the basics of first aid and CPR.

EXTRA-TERRITORIAL SERVICES

Since 2013, HFD has provided fire response and rescue services to the City of San Juan Bautista and the majority of San Benito County, with the exception of the Aromas Tri-Counties Fire Protection District area.

OVERLAPPING SERVICE PROVIDERS

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection San Benito-Monterey Unit (CALFIRE BEU) serve lands that fall within the State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) in San Benito County for wildland fires. CALFIRE BEU does not operate year-round and has established an Annual Operating Plan (AOP) that delegates operational responsibilities, relationships, and expectations at the field unit level. When CALFIRE BEU is not in operation, HFD assumes full responsibility for fire protection services.

COLLABORATION

HFD has two automatic-aid agreements with the South Santa Clara County Fire District and the Aromas Tri-County Fire District. These agreements allow for reciprocal emergency response, ensuring coordinated service delivery, improved resource sharing, and enhanced emergency coverage throughout the region.

STAFF

The Hollister Fire Department is authorized for 47 full-time equivalent positions, including command staff and sworn personnel consisting of the Fire Chief, Battalion Chiefs, Captains, Engineers, and Firefighters. Currently, HFD has 45 full-time staff members who hold various

certifications, including 43 who hold Firefighter I, 41 who hold Firefighter II, and 41 staff members who are EMT certified²². Despite two vacancies, the Department reports that overall staffing levels have remained relatively stable over the years.

The Department conducts required personnel training, including EMS, supervisor, job-specific, fire, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training, as well as quarterly hands-on training sessions. HFD utilizes Target Solutions to deliver substantial training to personnel, which is scheduled on a monthly basis. The training division also informs personnel about potential external training opportunities that the City provides educational reimbursement.²³

FACILITIES

The Hollister Fire Department operates four facilities, three within the city limits and one (Station 4) in San Juan Bautista. All four facilities are staffed 24/7 with on-site personnel. HFD also maintains a fire prevention facility that operates from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays as well as a training facility that is utilized as needed.

The Department engages in various facility-sharing practices. HFD's Station 3 is located on Hollister Airport property and also serves as the helipad for the airport. The building that houses Station 4 is connected to the San Juan Bautista City Hall, and both agencies share space where IT equipment and other materials are co-located. Additionally, the City of San Juan Bautista stores items within one of Station 4's apparatus bays.

HFD also participates in regional training partnerships through the South Bay Regional Public Safety Training Consortium (PSTC), which contracts with HFD for the occasional use of the Department's training facility. Under this arrangement, PSTC reimburses HFD for staff presence on-site during training events or may offer course enrollment opportunities in lieu of payment.

Additionally, the Department shares facilities with other City departments. The fire prevention facility is shared with the Planning and Engineering Departments, while the Department's training tower is located at the City's wastewater facility.

²² EMTs have the basic knowledge and skills necessary to stabilize and safely transport patients ranging from non-emergency and routine medical transports to life-threatening emergencies.

²³ City of Hollister Fire Department, Request For Information. September 2025.

Figure 9-1: Fire Stations Serving the City of Hollister

STATION	LOCATION	YEAR BUILT OR ACQUIRED	CONDITION ²⁴	DAILY STAFFING	FLEET
Station 1 (Headquarters)	110 5th Street	Built in 2012	Fair	(1) Fire Chief (3) Battalion Chief (4) Fire Captain (3) Fire Engineer (3) Fire Fighter (1) Admin	Engine 11 Rescue 61 OES Type 1 Truck Reserve Engines
Station 2 (Hollister)	2240 Valley View Rd	Built in 2003	Fair	(3) Fire Capitain (3) Fire Engineer (3) Firefighter	Engine 12 Water tender 52 Engine 642 Reserve Engines
Station 3 (Hollister)	Hollister Airport	Purshased 2018	Poor	(3) Fire Capitain (3) Fire Engineer (3) Firefighter	Engine 13 Water Tender 53
Station 4 (San Juan Bautista)	24 Polk Street	Began occupancy in 2013	Fair	(3) Fire Capitain (3) Fire Engineer (3) Firefighter	Engine 14 Engine 644 Training Tower
Training Facility	2690 San Juan Bautista	Built in 2018	Excellent	N/A	1 Type 1 Engine 1 Type 3 Engine 1 Aerial Appartus
Fire Prevention	339 Fifth St	Began Occupancy in 2026	Fair	(1) Deputy Fire Marshal (1) Inspector (1) Senior Support Services Assistant	2 Support Vehicles

²⁴ Facility condition definitions: **Excellent**—relatively new (less than 10 years old) and requires minimal maintenance. **Good**—provides reliable operation in accordance with design parameters and requires only routine maintenance. **Fair**—operating at or near design levels; however, non-routine renovation, upgrading and repairs are needed to ensure continued reliable operation. **Poor**—cannot be operated within design parameters; major renovations are required to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation.

DISPATCH

The Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 (SCR9-1-1), a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) serving Santa Cruz and San Benito counties, is the primary public safety answering point (PSAP). Calls are received and dispatched based on predetermined parameters.

While CALFIRE utilizes its Emergency Command Center (ECC) unit located in Monterey for dispatch.

SERVICE DEMANDS

Several factors affected service demands for the City’s fire services, including population growth in both Hollister and the unincorporated areas of San Benito County. Furthermore, increased commercial activities within the City of Hollister have continued to accelerate service demand levels, including fire prevention inspections, in recent years.

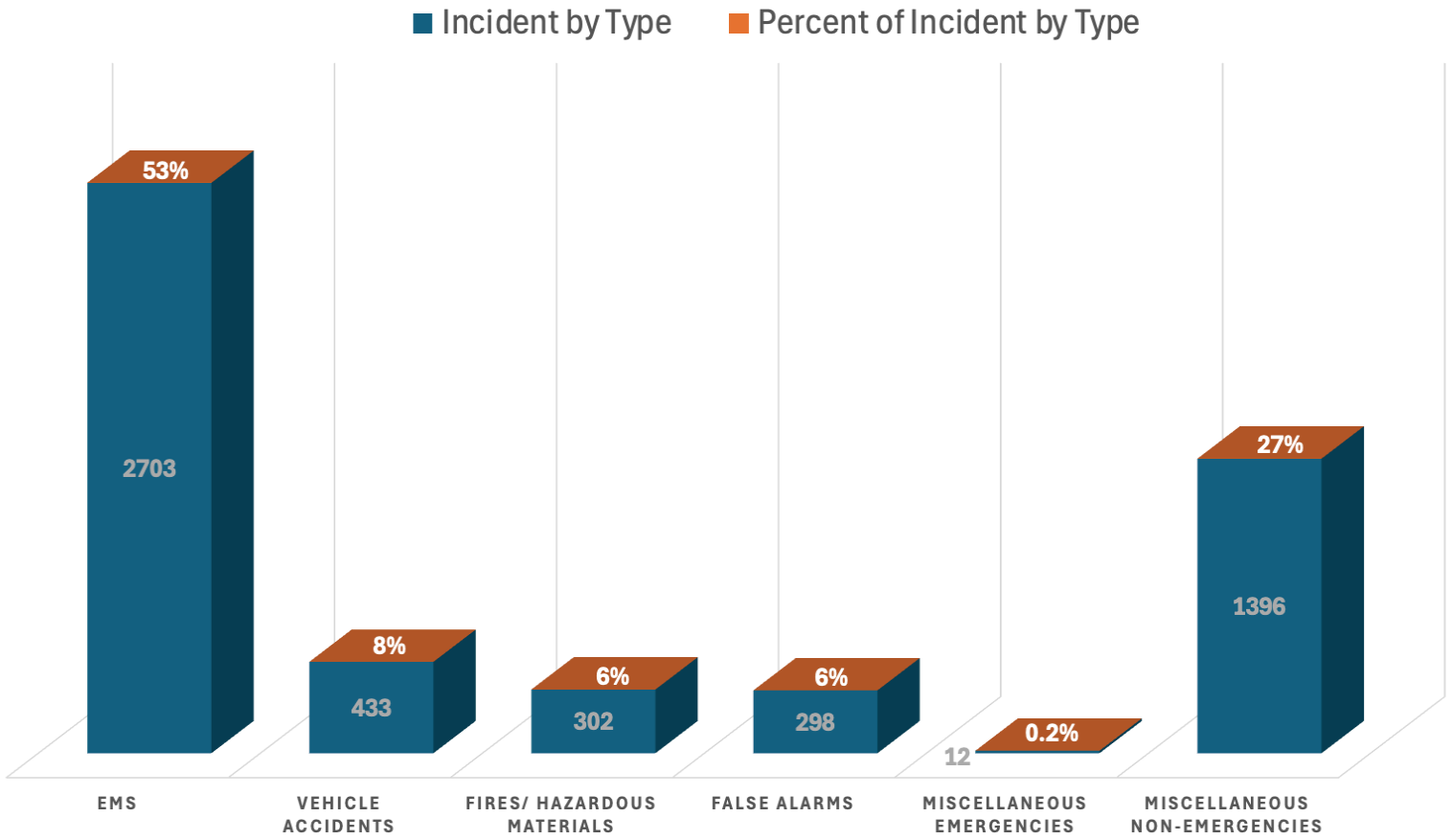
The number of service calls generally reflects the demand for fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Total calls for services have increased by 10 percent from 4,667 calls in 2020 to 5,144 calls in 2024. Mutual aid calls accounted for two to four percent of total calls annually.

Figure 9-2: Hollister Fire Department Calls for Services, 2020-2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Service Calls	4667	4858	4941	5089	5144
Mutual Aid Calls	145	171	117	112	143

Of the total 5,144 calls for services received in 2024, 80 percent were related to EMS and miscellaneous non-emergency incidents, such as emergency standby, public service assistance, and agency assistance, accounting for 53 percent and 27 percent of total calls, respectively. Vehicle accidents accounted for eight percent of the total calls, while both fire/hazardous material incidents and false alarms each represented six percent of the total calls. Miscellaneous emergencies made up only 0.2 percent of the total calls received.

Figure 9-3: Hollister Fire Department Calls for Services by Type, 2024



ANTICIPATED DEMAND

As outlined in Chapter 5, countywide growth projections indicate that the City of Hollister is expected to experience a slight increase by 2060. Therefore, demand for fire services from population growth is likely to remain stable.

However, the Department notes that the City's growing elderly population is likely to increase service call volume. Additionally, aging infrastructure throughout the City could lead to more fire incidents, leading to higher service demands.

INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

HFD reports various infrastructure needs across facilities.

- Station 1— Lighting, painting, and vehicle exhaust system upgrades are reportedly needed within the next 1-2 years. These projects are estimated to cost \$200,000 and are expected to be funded by the general fund and impact fees.
- Station 2— Upgrades include lighting, plumbing, electrical work, flooring, and gutter painting. These projects are estimated to cost \$150,000 and are anticipated to be funded by the general fund and impact fees.
- Station 3— The current facility, purchased in 2018, is reported to be in poor condition, requiring major renovations to restore the facility and ensure reliable operation. The Department estimates that constructing a new brick-and-mortar station in a different location will cost roughly \$15-25 million. Funding is expected to come from the general fund and impact fees.
- Station 4— Bay door replacement and flooring repairs are identified at the station located in San Juan Bautista. These upgrades are estimated to cost \$100,000 and are expected to be funded by the City of San Juan Bautista.
- Training Facility— Updates to apparatus covering, classroom, training props, and the new fire hydrant location are needed within the next five years. These projects are estimated to cost \$200,000, and the Department indicates the potential to establish an enterprise fund by hosting training events to fund these capital projects.

CHALLENGES

The Department noted various challenges in providing adequate fire services. First, current department funding levels are projected to be insufficient to cover rising costs of goods or to

address infrastructure needs. Another challenge is HFD's broad coverage area relative to the number of existing stations and the variability of locations, resulting in non-ideal response times.

Additionally, due to increasing demand, local hospitals have become overcrowded, resulting in longer EMS transport times and additional delays on scene while awaiting an EMS provider.

Furthermore, HFD notes that adopting a Strategic Plan or a Standards of Coverage document that outlines the Department's core mission, goals, and priorities for both staff and the public could enhance efficiency and service delivery. A strategic plan or similar guiding document would also provide an opportunity to engage with the community to identify and address priority needs.

Several California city fire departments have implemented a strategic plan to identify effective strategies and goals to improve fire services. For example, the City of Ventura Fire Department developed a five-year strategic plan to address increased call volume, workload, potential operational changes, and staffing recommendations. Additionally, as part of this effort, the Ventura Fire Department hosted a series of open-house events at the fire stations, providing community members with the opportunity to engage directly with City leadership, meet local firefighters, tour facilities, learn about current conditions, and participate in discussions pertaining to the preparation of the plan.²⁵

Similarly, the City of Riverside Fire Department adopted a strategic plan to improve service delivery and address current and emerging organizational needs. The Riverside fire department's plan was designed to align the department's priorities with the City's mission and goals, ensuring consistency in expectations and services. The plan was developed with extensive community and employee engagement, ensuring that those directly involved with the services and aware of the service levels provided have a voice in shaping departmental decisions and goals.²⁶

Overall, department-level strategic plans, in coordination with broader citywide initiatives, ensure that specific operational challenges are identified and addressed by personnel who are most familiar with fire service operations and community needs.

²⁵ City of Ventura Fire Department, Strategic Plan. 2022-2027.

²⁶ City of Riverside Fire Department, Strategic Plan. 2023-2028. Updated June 2025.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED FACILITIES

HFD indicates opportunities to increase the use of Station 1 and the training facility for training events. Additionally, the Department reports the potential to further utilize Station 2 for public meetings.

SERVICE ADEQUACY

This section reviews indicators of service adequacy, including response times, Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating, and the number of complaints received. There are many measures of a successful fire protection service. For example, the agency would meet guidelines established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) (formerly the Commission on Fire Accreditation International), and the California EMS Agency.

ISO CLASSIFICATION

The ISO classifies fire services in communities as an indicator of the general adequacy of coverage. Communities with the best fire department facilities, systems for water distribution, fire alarms and communications, and equipment and personnel receive a rating of 1. Structures within five miles of a fire station with no hydrants are classified as ISO 4X. The split rating designates properties within five miles of a fire station but more than 1,000 feet from a recognized water source.

The most recent ISO classification for HFD is 3/3X, which was published in 2020. This rating indicates that most properties are within 1,000 feet of a water source and meet other fire safety standards (Class 3), while some parts of the community are more than 1,000 feet from a water source but within five road miles of a fire station (Class 3X).

RESPONSE TIMES

The City does not have a standard response time. However, HFD aims to meet the NFPA 1710 standard, which applies to most career fire departments and sets minimum requirements for resource deployment in fire suppression and EMS.

According to NFPA's 2020 guidelines, the standard for fire alarms is a turnout time of ≤ 80 seconds and a response time of ≤ 4 minutes for the first fire engine to arrive at the scene. The standard aims for 90 percent compliance with these benchmarks.

HFD’s four stations predominantly respond to their designated areas; however, if multiple calls are in progress or if station coverage is required, other stations will be dispatched to cover other areas or respond to additional calls. Due to the variability of distances in HFD’s response area, average response times are skewed. Figure 9-4 illustrates the average response time of the first fire engine to arrive at the scene across the four stations and three response areas in 2024.

Generally, average response times within city limits fall in the six- to seven-minute range across all four stations, with Station 2 reporting the shortest average response time of five minutes and 58 seconds. For response to San Juan Bautista, Station 4, which is located within the City of San Juan Bautista, has the fastest average response time at one minute and 44 seconds, meeting the NFPA’s four-minute standard. Response times from other stations to San Juan Bautista range from approximately six to 13 minutes. Response times to the unincorporated areas of the County are consistently the longest across all stations, ranging from approximately 11 to 13 minutes, with Station 2 reporting a high response time average of 13 minutes and 15 seconds.

Figure 9-4: HFD First Engine Arrival Response Times, 2024

STATIONS	RESPONSE AREAS		
	CITY OF HOLLISTER	SAN JUAN BAUTISTA	UNINCORPORATED SAN BENITO COUNTY
Station 1	6:24	8:56	12:49
Station 2	5:58	13:19	13:15
Station 3	7:08	5:58	10:53
Station 4	6:37	1:44	10:35

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

The Department reports that no resident complaints have been received in recent years regarding service delivery, response times, or facilities. However, the San Benito County Board of Directors has historically expressed concerns regarding service levels, particularly in the south and north ends of the county, during several public meetings. These are challenges related to the long response times in the area due to the lack of nearby fire stations.

- Determination 9-1. The Hollister Fire Department (HFD) provides a range of services, including fire prevention, arson investigation, hazardous material releases, public events, medical aid requests, vehicle accidents, and specialized rescue operations.
- Determination 9-2. HFD provides all fire response and rescue services within city limits, to the City of San Juan Bautista and the majority of San Benito County, with the exception of the Aromas Tri-Counties Fire Protection District area.
- Determination 9-3. HFD has two automatic-aid agreements with the South Santa Clara County Fire District and the Aromas Tri-County Fire District, which allows for reciprocal emergency responses with each agency.
- Determination 9-4. HFD engages in various facility-sharing practices, including Station 3 which is located on Hollister Municipal Airport property, and Station 4 which is co-located with San Juan Bautista City Hall, where office space and storage are shared. HFD also shares facilities with other City departments, including the fire prevention facility with the Planning and Engineering Departments while the Department's training tower is located at the City's wastewater facility. Additionally, HFD partners with the South Bay Regional Public Safety Training Consortium (PSTC), which contracts with the Department for the use of the training facility and provides reimbursement for staffing support during training events or offers enrollment opportunities to HFD staff in lieu of payment.
- Determination 9-5. HFD reports various infrastructure needs across its facilities: (1) maintenance projects at Stations 1 and 2, estimated between \$150,000 and \$200,000, funded by the general fund and impact fees; (2) a potential full upgrade of Station 3, costing \$15 million to \$25 million due to its poor condition; (3) door and flooring repairs at Station 4 requiring \$100,000, funded by San Juan Bautista; and (4) multiple upgrades at the HFD training facility estimated at \$200,000 with potential cost recovery via an enterprise fund.
- Determination 9-6. From 2020 to 2024, the total number of calls for service increased by 10 percent, from 4,667 to 5,144, with mutual aid calls accounting for 2 to 4 percent of the total calls.

- Determination 9-7. The demand for fire services resulting from population growth is likely to remain stable in the foreseeable future; however, the increasing elderly population and aging infrastructure in the City are likely to lead to an increase in service calls due to heightened demand.
- Determination 9-8. The most recent ISO classification for HFD is 3/3X, indicating that most properties are within 1,000 feet of a water source and meet other fire safety standards (Class 3), while some parts of the community are more than 1,000 feet from a water source but within five road miles of a fire station (Class 3X).
- Determination 9-9. HFD's four stations predominantly respond to their designated areas; however, if multiple calls are in progress or if station coverage is required, other stations will be dispatched to cover other areas or respond to additional calls. Due to the variability of distances in HFD's response area, average response times are skewed.
- Determination 9-10. Response times to unincorporated areas of San Benito County are the longest across all stations, averaging from 11 to 13 minutes. The County Board has historically identified service levels, particularly the south and north ends, as a challenge in several public meetings due to the lack of nearby fire stations.
- Determination 9-11. In addition to non-ideal response times due to a broad coverage area relative to the location and number of stations, the Department reports various challenges in service delivery, including overcrowding in local hospitals resulting from increased demand and inadequate funding to keep pace with the rising cost of goods.
- Determination 9-12. It is recommended that a department-level strategic plan, in coordination with broader citywide initiatives, be developed to ensure that specific operational challenges are identified and addressed by personnel who are most familiar with fire service operations and the unique needs of the community.

10. LAW ENFORCEMENT

SERVICES OVERVIEW

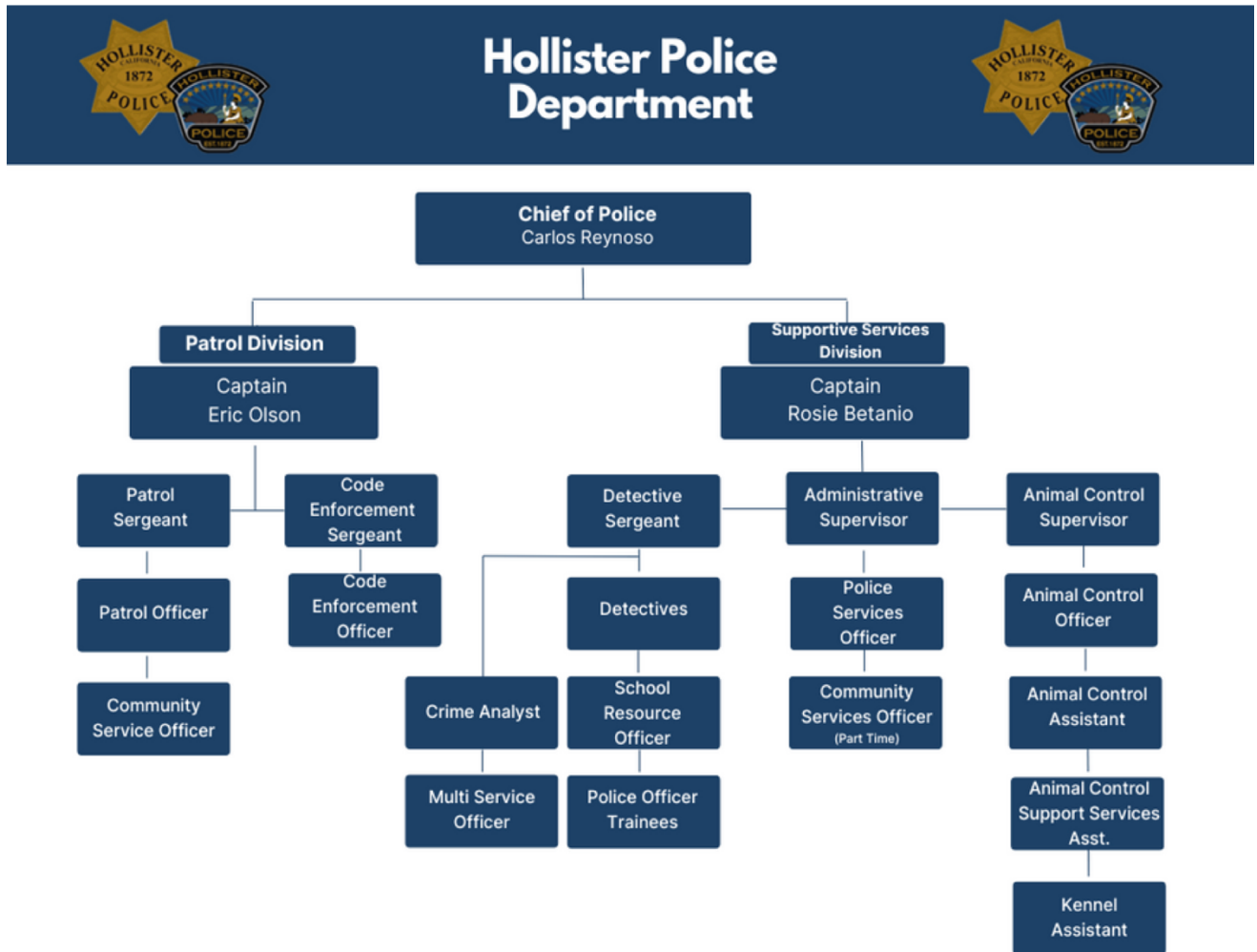
The Hollister Police Department (HPD) comprises both sworn and professional employees who provide a comprehensive range of law enforcement services to the Hollister community. The HPD is organized into two divisions: the Operations Division and the Support Services Division, both of which are overseen by the Chief of Police and led by captains. An organizational chart of the department can be seen in Figure 10-1 below.

The Operations Division, comprised of Patrol and Code Enforcement functions, is responsible for responding to both emergency and non-emergency situations. Patrol services operate on day shift, swing shift, and graveyard shift to ensure 24/7 coverage and prompt responses to community needs. In 2024, patrol officers responded to a wide range of calls for service, including traffic collisions, domestic disturbances, suspicious activity calls, burglaries and theft, mental health crises, and various other public safety concerns. The code enforcement officers work with community members to promote voluntary compliance with the City's codes and ordinances through communication, education, outreach, and community engagement.

The Support Services Division provides investigative and operational support functions to the department and is comprised of the following units:

- Investigations— The investigation bureau collaborates closely with various agencies, including the San Benito County Sheriff's Office, San Benito County Child Protective Services, the San Benito District Attorney's Office, and all neighboring law enforcement agencies. Staff handle major crimes and are responsible for writing and executing search warrants, which often lead to the seizure of evidence for prosecution.
- Records, Evidence & Property— The Records staff is responsible for managing and maintaining all official police records, such as incident reports, arrest records, traffic citations, and warrants.
- Animal Control— HPD provides animal control services within the City of Hollister and the County of San Benito. Staff is responsible for impounding stray or lost animals, conducting cruelty investigations, controlling rabies, selling dog licenses, handling lost pet reports, providing 24-hour emergency services, enforcing local and state ordinances, operating the animal shelter, offering educational programs, and administering the animal adoption program. The shelter cares for approximately 3,500 animals each year.

Figure 10-1: The City of Hollister Police Department, 2024



OVERLAPPING AGENCIES

HPD provides police protection within city limits, while the San Benito County Sheriff's Department provides services to the surrounding unincorporated areas. Additionally, the California Highway Patrol provides traffic enforcement on state and local freeways.

Mutual-aid agreements exist between these agencies, allowing for joint responses to emergency events that require additional personnel.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

HPD utilizes multiple social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram, X, and YouTube, to share information with the community. The City also offers residents the opportunity to sign up on Nixle.com to receive HPD-related alerts through email and text message as an alternate method to receive timely information from the department. Residents can also register for CodeRED, a new emergency notification system serving Santa Cruz and San Benito counties.

To further promote transparency, HPD has a compliments and concerns form available online for residents to submit reports about their experiences with members of the City's Police Department. Complaints may also be submitted in person, through email, or by mail. Additionally, residents have the option to address complaints directly with the Watch Commander or submit a complaint to the Chief of Police, any elected official of the City of Hollister, or the San Benito County District Attorney's Office.

HPD provides various online forms, including incident reporting, alarm permits, and police or accident reports. Additionally, for residents interested in volunteering, the Department offers a volunteer in policing form that can be submitted by mail or in person. HPD also runs a ride-along program for residents who wish to accompany an officer on duty in a Hollister Police Patrol Vehicle.

Through these initiatives, HPD reinforces its commitment to community safety, engagement, and transparency.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND FACILITIES

HPD headquarters is located at 395 Apollo Way in northwest Hollister. Additionally, the Code Enforcement Division operates out of a City building at 365 Fourth Street, while the Animal Control Division maintains a shelter at 1331 South Street.

The Department's various divisions operate a fleet of both marked and unmarked police vehicles, including 37 marked and 14 unmarked vehicles for the Patrol Division, four marked and one unmarked vehicle for the Animal Control Division, four marked vehicles for the Community Service Officers, and three marked vehicles for the Code Enforcement Division.

STAFFING

The City's Police Department is staffed with a total of 57 personnel, including 37 sworn officers.

Although there is no national or state-mandated per-capita target for sworn officers, municipal law enforcement agencies often maintain a certain number of officers to ensure a consistent level of service. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, as of 2023, the national average is 2.4 officers per 1,000 residents. In contrast, California reports slightly lower staffing levels, with approximately 2.3 officers per 1,000 residents.

As of 2024, the City of Hollister has significantly lower staffing levels of 0.85 sworn officers per 1,000 residents, compared to the national average staffing levels for similar-sized cities with populations of 25,000 to 49,999, which is 1.7 officers per 1,000 residents.²⁷

In 2019, a Police Department Organization Assessment conducted for HPD recommended adding 11 sworn positions to achieve an optimal level of services with approximately 48–50 sworn officers. According to HPD, this recommendation remains relevant today as the City grows and demand for public safety increases. Officers are now responsible for larger service areas and a higher volume of service calls, which increases the workload for existing staff.²⁸

To address backlogs and provide the necessary support to sworn officers, the 2019 Assessment Report recommended expanding civilian support in records management and property evidence. The Department has the Volunteers in Policing Program (VIP) to engage civilian volunteers to assist with or assume specific tasks.

This initiative aims to enhance HPD's efficiency by enabling sworn personnel to focus on duties requiring law enforcement authority. VIP personnel can support the Department in a variety of roles, including administrative tasks, graffiti abatement, patrol support, and functions within the Animal Control Division. Currently, the District has volunteers working at the Animal Shelter.

²⁷ FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Full-time Law Enforcement Officers by Region and Geographic Division by Population Group. Number and Rate per 1,000 inhabitants, 2019.

²⁸ City of Hollister Police Department, Request For Information. July 2025.

The VIP volunteer application materials and associated forms are available on the Hollister website.

While the sworn officers-to-resident ratio has historically served as a benchmark for service levels, modern best practices focus on workload-based analysis. This approach considers factors such as call volume, patrol responsibilities, investigations, and community expectations to evaluate staffing adequacy.

Currently, HPD does not conduct a formal workload assessment. However, the Department reports that the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) is scheduled to conduct a management study in the first quarter of 2026. The purpose of this review is to provide an updated analysis and guidance to support the Department in evaluating its staffing, workload, and operational needs, ensuring adequate service levels.²⁹

TRAINING

HPD offers a range of training opportunities for all Departmental staff. Sworn officers are required to participate in several mandatory training sessions each year. Additionally, officers who specialize in various fields, such as School Resource Officers, Detectives, and Range Master, among others, receive training tailored to their roles. For example, animal shelter staff participate in the CalAnimals Officer Academy and Human Law Enforcement training.

Furthermore, all department personnel participate in training programs that focus on communication skills, de-escalation techniques, and bias awareness in policing. Ongoing training is also provided for all staff members, covering essential areas such as firearms competence, understanding of policies and procedures, arrest and control techniques, and other key skills that require regular practice.³⁰

DISPATCH

SCR9-1-1 functions as the PSAP, with dispatchers serving as the first point of contact for callers dialing 9-1-1. SCR9-1-1 works closely with law enforcement, fire, and EMS agencies and has been serving HPD since 2011.

²⁹ City of Hollister Police Department, Request For Information. September 2025.

³⁰ Hollister Police Department, Annual Report 2024.

SERVICE DEMAND

CALLS FOR SERVICES

In 2024, HPD received a total of 39,269 service calls, equivalent to an average of 3,272 calls per month, or approximately 109 calls per day. As shown in Figure 10-2, the total number of service calls has increased over the last few years, rising from 28,503 in 2022 to 35,269 in 2023.

Similarly, officer-initiated activities, which include proactive actions typically carried out by patrol officers, such as traffic stops and pedestrian contacts, have increased significantly from 2022 to 2024, rising from 7,698 to 18,791, representing a 144 percent increase.

In contrast, 911 calls have remained relatively consistent over the past few years, with an annual range of 9,000 to 10,000 calls. Similarly, other administrative service calls have remained stable at approximately 11,000 per year from 2022 to 2024.

Figure 10-2: HPD Calls for Services

YEAR	911 CALLS	OFFICER-INITIATED ACTIVITY	OTHER CALLS	TOTAL CALLS
2022	9,724	7,698	11,081	28,503
2023	10,247	14,236	11,393	35,876
2024	9,278	18,791	11,200	39,269

CRIME RATE

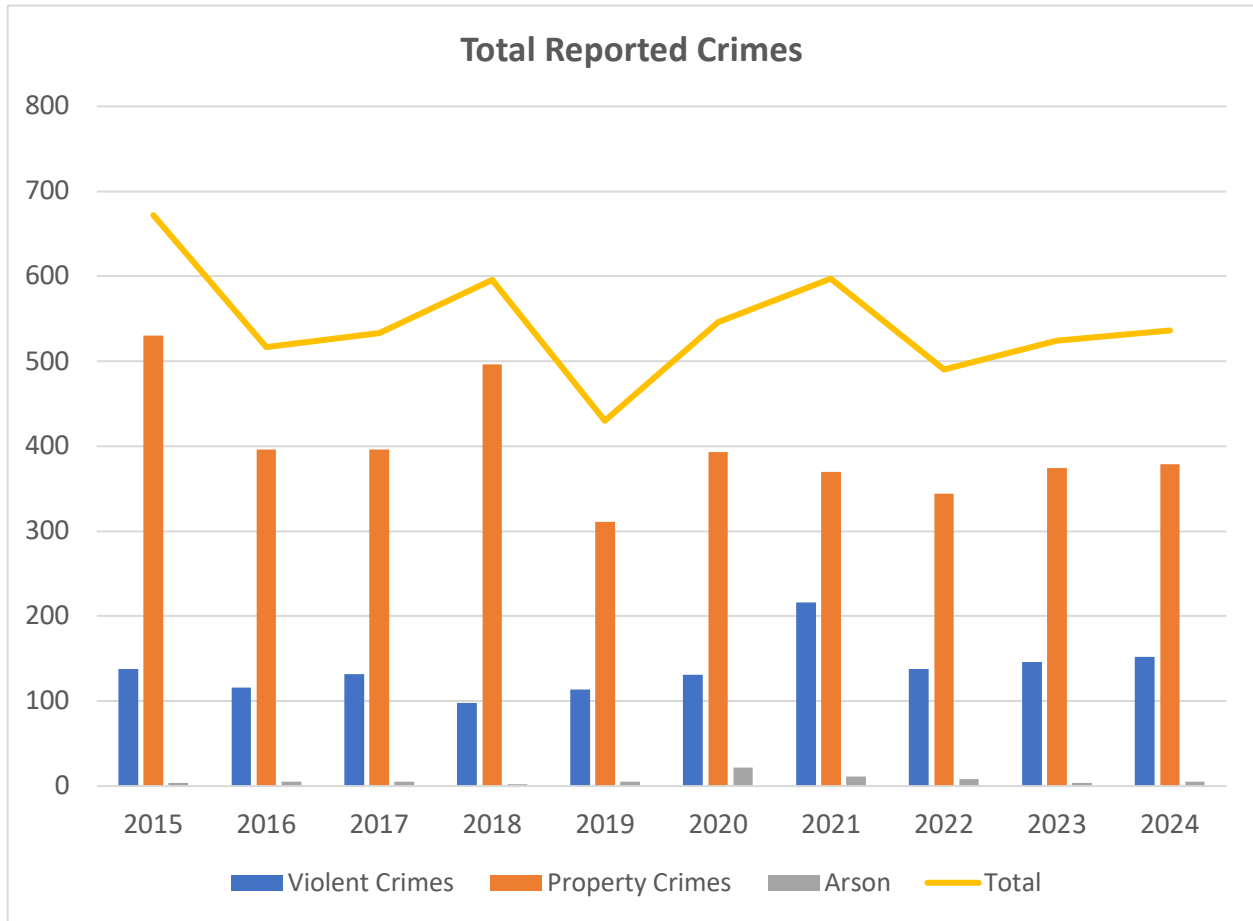
The Department of Justice (DOJ) Criminal Justice Statistics Center (CJSC) collects information on Crime and Clearances as reported by law enforcement agencies throughout the state. The data are reported as part of the FBI’s UCR Program and include the number of actual offenses and clearances per UCR guidelines. Supplemental data are also collected on the nature of certain crime types and the value of stolen and recovered property. This data tracks eight crimes: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault (together referred to as “violent crimes”), burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft (together referred to as “property crimes”), and arson.³¹

As shown in Figure 10-3, from 2014 to 2025, reported crime in the City of Hollister decreased by 20 percent, from 672 to 536. The highest number of crimes recorded during that period was in 2014, while the lowest number of crimes (517) were reported in 2016.

Between 2014 and 2025, property crime accounted for the largest share of reported crimes, ranging from 62 to 83 percent. In contrast, arson made up only 1 to 4 percent of all reported crimes during the same period.

³¹ The California Department of Justice (DOJ). Open Justice, Crime Statistics. <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/exploration/crime-statistics>.

Figure 10-3: Reported Crimes for the City of Hollister 2014-2025



ANTICIPATED DEMAND

As discussed in Chapter 5, based on countywide growth projections, the City of Hollister is projected to experience a minimal population increase by 2060. Therefore, the demand for public safety is likely to remain stable. However, Hollister’s Police Department notes that additional staff is necessary to enhance efficiency by enabling faster response times, increased visibility, and prevention efforts.³²

³² City of Hollister Police Department, Request For Information. July 2025.

SERVICE ADEQUACY

CRIME CLEARANCE

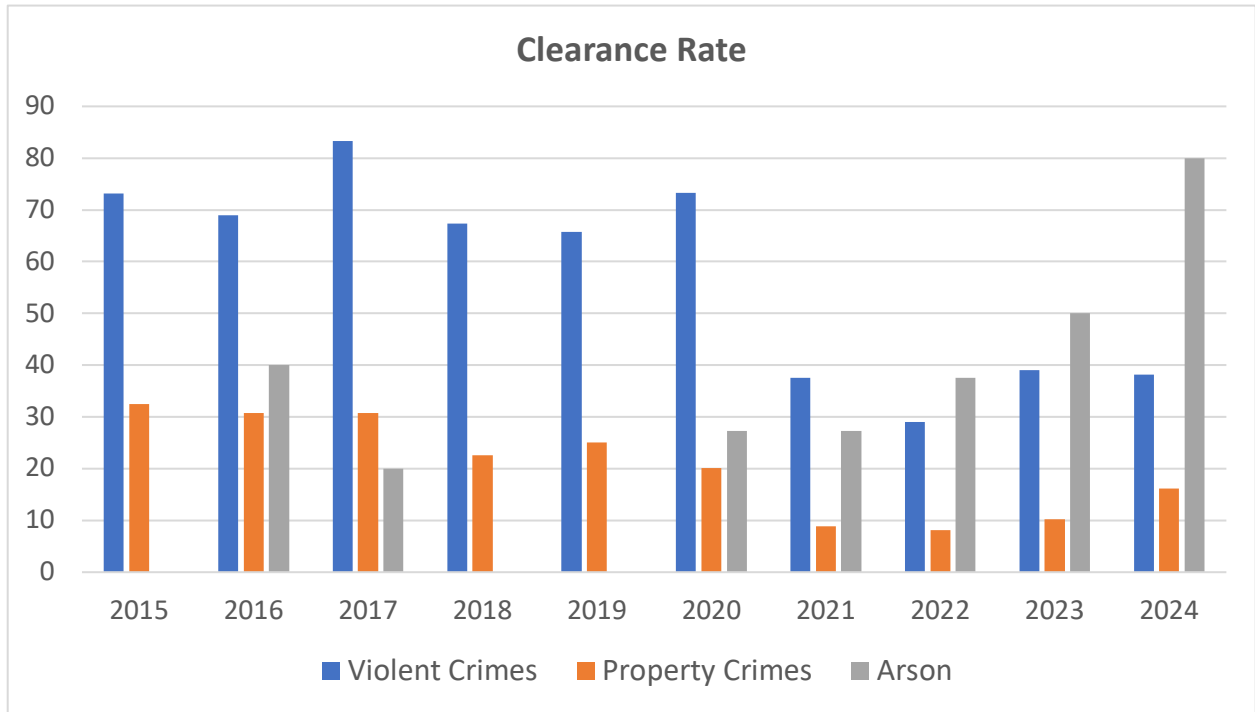
Many factors can gauge the effectiveness of a law enforcement agency, including crime clearance rates or the percentage of crimes solved. However, there are no standards or guidelines for the proportion of crimes that should be cleared.

Cleared crimes refer to offenses for which at least one person was arrested, charged, and turned over to the appropriate court for prosecution. A crime is also considered cleared by exceptional means if the offender dies, the victim refuses to cooperate, or extradition is denied.

Figure 10-4 shows HPD's crime clearance rates from 2014 to 2025. During this period, the average clearance rates were 58 percent for violent crimes, 28 percent for arson, and 20 percent for property crimes. In comparison, crime clearance rates across California for the same period average 44 percent for violent crimes, 21 percent for arson, and 10 percent for property crimes, showing that HPD maintains a higher clearance rate than the state average.³³

³³ The California Department of Justice (DOJ). Open Justice, Crime Statistics. <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/exploration/crime-statistics>.

Figure 10-4: City of Hollister PD, Crime Clearance Rate 2014-2025



RESPONSE TIMES

Although police response times for serious crimes in progress are an important indicator of service adequacy, there are no clear standards for what that response time should be. Traditionally, police response times are used to measure law enforcement effectiveness. HPD calls for services are prioritized based on the urgency and severity of the situation, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to address the most critical needs first.

- Priority 1: These are the most urgent and critical calls, indicating situations involving an immediate threat to life or property.
- Priority 2: These are cases where an event has occurred; however, the suspect may have left the scene, or there is no imminent danger to life or property.
- Priority 3: These are non-emergency cases involving property damage; while not immediately life-threatening, they still require prompt police attention.
- Priority 4: These calls are the least urgent and involve non-emergency issues with no current or potential property damage, and the suspect has already left the scene.

As illustrated in Figure 10-5, average response times for the most recent year, beginning September 1, 2024, through August 31, 2025, varied by priority level. Priority 1 calls received the fastest response, averaging just under six minutes. Priority 2 calls averaged nearly eight minutes, while priorities 3 and 4 had longer response times, ranging from approximately 13 minutes to 24 minutes.³⁴

These response times represent the elapsed time from the start of radio dispatch to the arrival of the first unit on scene, also known as incident response time (IRT). According to SCR-911's Standards of Excellence, the target IRT for law enforcement is five minutes and 30 seconds or less on all Priority 1 incidents. HPD's average response time of five minutes and 46 seconds for Priority 1 incidents slightly exceeds this standard.

³⁴ City of Hollister Police Department, Request For Information. September 2025.

Figure 10-5: HPD, Average Response Times from September 2024 - August 2025

PRIORITY LEVEL	TYPE OF INCIDENTS	AVERAGE RESPONSE TIMES
Priority 1	Injury accidents, robberies, crimes with weapons	05:46
Priority 2	Welfare checks with risk of injury, vehicle thefts in progress	07:56
Priority 3	Suspicious persons, trespassing, loud parties	13:04
Priority 4	Cold reports, barking dogs, parking violations	24:00

Dispatch Response Times

Building time, the time from when a 9-1-1 call is answered to when an officer is assigned, is used by SCR9-1-1 (HPD’s PSAP) to evaluate the agency’s overall performance. The building time standard for Priority 1 calls, which involve an immediate threat to life or safety, is 120 seconds. In 2024, SCR9-1-1 recorded an average building time of 78 seconds for Priority 1 calls within the Hollister Police Department’s jurisdiction and a 92 percent compliance rate with the 120-second standard.³⁵

According to SCR9-1-1’s 2024 annual report, this represents an improvement from the previous year, when the average building time for HPD’s service area was 80 seconds, with a compliance rate of 91 percent.³⁶

Challenges

The Department reports that several challenges affect response times and overall performance. Increased call volumes and competing priorities are causing delays in dispatch and officer availability during simultaneous emergencies. Additionally, growth, traffic congestion, and construction further extend travel times.

As previously mentioned, HPD also faces significant staffing shortages due to vacancies, training requirements, leave, and large or seasonal events such as the July 4th Motorcycle Rally, all of which impact coverage and response times.

The Department has also indicated that operational challenges, such as call complexity, language barriers, and multiple simultaneous reports, can slow dispatch, while officer safety concerns may require staging before entry.

³⁵ Hollister Police Department, Annual Report 2024. p.16.

³⁶ Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 (SCR9-1-1), Annual Report 2024.

Overall, these factors influence response times and public perception of service effectiveness.³⁷

INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

The City reports two active Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs): a parking lot expansion to add approximately 20 spaces to the rear lot to improve functionality, and the construction of a storage facility to house evidence vehicles retained for legal proceedings. These projects, estimated to cost \$650,000, will be funded through police impact fees. These fees are imposed on all new developments within the City to cover the expenditures associated with constructing or upgrading police facilities required to accommodate growth.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED FACILITIES

The City of Hollister is undertaking a new Dispatch and Real-Time Crime Center project to improve current emergency response times and operational efficiency by centralizing operations within the City. The existing dispatch center, SCR9-1-1, is located outside of San Benito County. The project is currently in the design phase, with blueprint development funded through impact fees. The total estimated cost exceeds \$4 million, and the City plans to pursue additional funding through state and federal grants.

HPD reports that the San Benito County Sheriff's Office is interested in partnering with the City for shared dispatch services once the Dispatch and Real-Time Crime Center is operational. Currently, the Sheriff's Office is located at 2301 Technology Parkway in Hollister and serves the areas surrounding the City. This collaboration could lower overall operating costs and enhance inter-agency coordination, while consolidating essential communications infrastructure within a single jurisdiction.

³⁷ City of Hollister Police Department, Request For Information. September 2025.

Determination 10-1. The Hollister Police Department (HPD) comprises both sworn and professional employees who provide a comprehensive range of law enforcement services to the Hollister community

Determination 10-2. HPD provides police protection within city limits, while the San Benito County Sheriff's Department serves the surrounding unincorporated areas, and the California Highway Patrol provides traffic enforcement on state and local freeways. Mutual-aid agreements exist between these agencies, allowing for joint responses to emergency events that require additional personnel.

Determination 10-3. HPD has 37 sworn officers, reflecting 0.85 sworn officers per 1,000 residents, well below the national average of 1.7 officers per 1,000 residents for similar-sized cities with populations of 25,000 to 49,999.

Determination 10-4. A 2019 organizational assessment recommended that HPD add 11 sworn positions to reach an optimal staffing level of 48–50 sworn officers. The recommendation was not implemented; however, it remains relevant today as the City grows and demand increases. HPD runs the Volunteers in Policing (VIP) Program to support sworn officers by assigning volunteers to administrative tasks, patrol support, graffiti abatement, and Animal Control. Currently there are volunteers working at the Animal Shelter.

Determination 10-5. Modern practices focus on workload-based analysis as benchmarks for service levels. This approach considers factors such as call volume, patrol responsibilities, investigations, and community expectations to evaluate staffing adequacy. According to HPD, a management study is scheduled for early 2026 to assess current staffing and operational needs.

Determination 10-6. In 2024, HPD received a total of 39,269 service calls, equivalent to an average of 3,272 calls per month, or approximately 109 calls per day. The total number of service calls has increased over the last few years, rising from 28,503 in 2022 to 35,269 in 2023.

Determination 10-7. From 2014 to 2025, reported crime in the City of Hollister decreased by 20 percent, from 672 to 536 incidents. During this period, property

crimes accounted for the majority of reported crimes (62–83 percent), while arson made up only 1–4 percent. Additionally, HPD’s clearance rates for various crimes were higher than the State average.

Determination 10-8. HPD’s response times are categorized into four priorities based on urgency, with Priority 1 incidents averaging 5 minutes and 46 seconds, which is slightly longer than the standard of 5 minutes and 30 seconds or less.

Determination 10-9. Various factors, including increased call volumes, staffing shortages, and operational challenges, affect the Department’s response times and overall performance.

Determination 10-10. The City reports two infrastructure improvement projects, consisting of a parking lot expansion and the construction of a vehicle storage facility, with an estimated total cost of \$650,000, to be funded through police impact fees from new development.

Determination 10-11. The City of Hollister is undertaking a new Dispatch and Real-Time Crime Center project to enhance emergency response and centralize operations, with an estimated cost exceeding \$4 million. The City reports that the project is currently in the design phase, funded by impact fees. The San Benito County Sheriff’s Office has expressed interest in partnering to share dispatch services once the Center is operational, which could lower costs and improve inter-agency coordination.

11. WATER SERVICES

SERVICES OVERVIEW

The City of Hollister and the Sunnyslope County Water District (SSCWD) provide water services and fire suppression to residents of the City of Hollister through two separate water distribution systems. The City serves the western portion of Hollister, while SSCWD provides water services for residences on the eastern side of Hollister, spanning from Memorial Drive to Fairview Road. Both the City's and SSCWD's systems are interconnected through multiple pressure-reducing valves (PRVs) and inerties.

Figure 11-1 illustrates the areas served by the City and the District.

EXTRA-TERRITORIAL SERVICES

The City provides domestic water during emergency conditions to residential estates located outside the city limits, along San Juan Hollister Road. These homes have their own water supply sources and storage tanks.³⁸

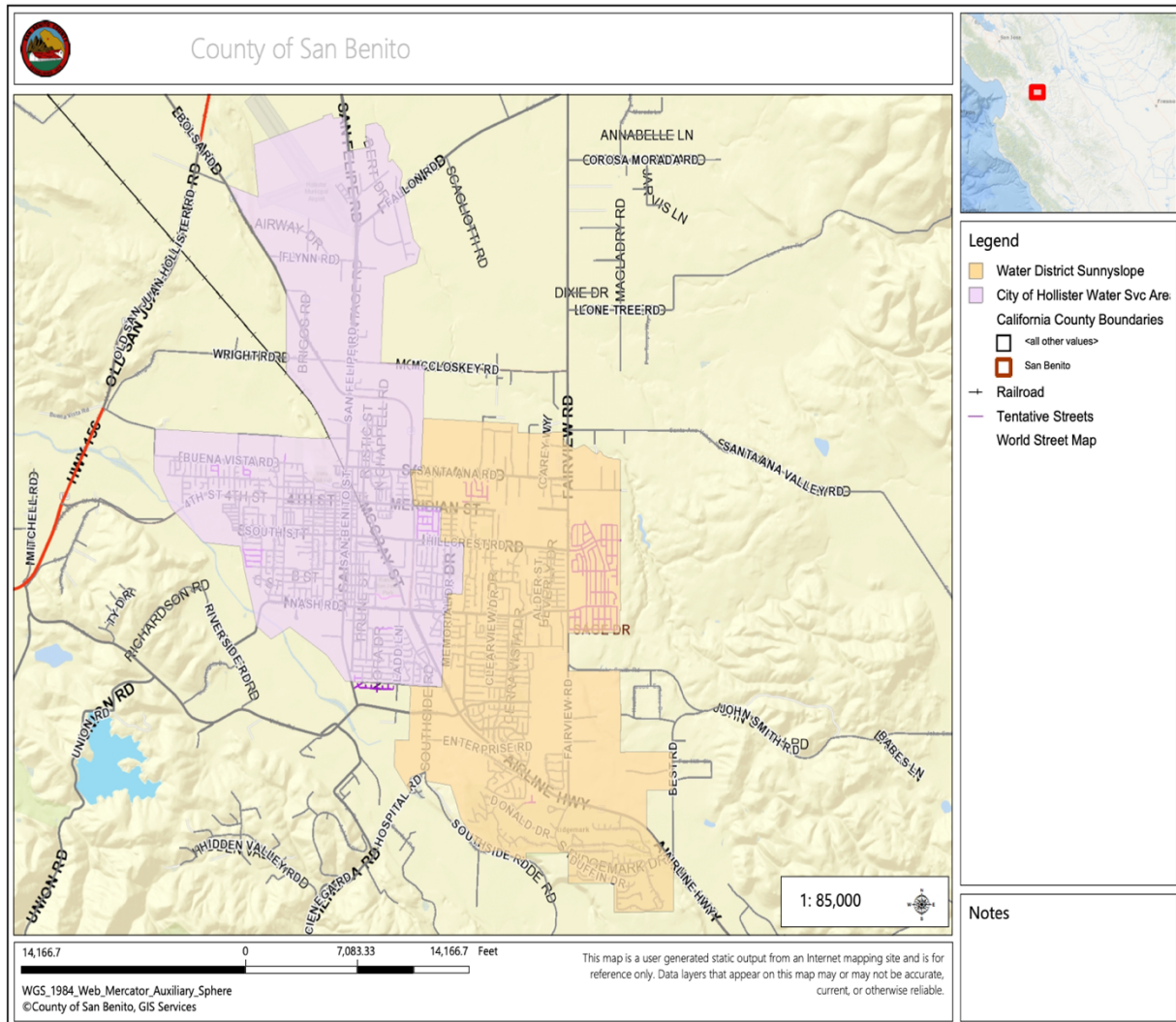
STAFF

The City's Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the water distribution system. The Department has 11 water operator staff, including the Public Works Director, Utilities Supervisor, and Environmental Programs Manager.³⁹

³⁸ City of Hollister, Final Water Distribution System Master Plan. August 2018. p.3-1.

³⁹ City of Hollister, 2024 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report.

Figure 11-1: Hollister and SSCWD Service Areas



PLANS AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Federal, state, and local agencies play regulatory roles in California water. Key regulators and regulatory provisions are discussed in more detail below.

REGULATORY AGENCIES AND KEY REGULATIONS

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets national standards for drinking water quality and oversees the implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The SDWA establishes regulations for the protection of public drinking water supplies, including standards for contaminants, treatment techniques, and monitoring requirements.

Another key federal law that provides the legal basis and authority for water quality standards is the Clean Water Act (CWA). Enacted in 1972, the CWA regulates pollutant discharges into surface waters through permits, addresses nonpoint source pollution, protects wetlands, and mandates water quality monitoring and reporting.

Section 303(d) of the CWA requires the identification of water bodies that do not meet, or are not expected to meet, water quality standards (i.e., impaired water bodies). For each impaired water body, the EPA and state or regional boards must establish a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), which is the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive while still meeting water quality standards. The TMDLs require local agencies to monitor pollutant levels and develop remedial actions that will prevent contaminants from exceeding maximum allowable levels.

In California, the implementation of the SDWA is primarily overseen by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and its Division of Drinking Water (DDW). The SWRCB is responsible for protecting water quality and ensuring compliance with state and federal drinking water standards.

The SWRCB also oversees the Safe Drinking Water Plan for California, which outlines statewide strategies to ensure the delivery of safe drinking water. The requirements for this plan are outlined in California Health & Safety Code Section 116355, which identifies the topics to be addressed and mandates periodic updates. The most recent plan was adopted in 2020, and it is currently updated to incorporate topics from previous plans, as well as new topics recently added and signed into law.

Notably, Assembly Bill 2501 (Chu), enacted in 2018 (Statutes of 2018, Chapter 871), amended Section 116355 to include a review of the use of administrators for disadvantaged communities' public water systems and an evaluation of the success of consolidating drinking water systems.

California's principal water quality law, the Porter-Cologne Act (1969), establishes the framework for regulating water quality in the state. This Act empowers SWRCB and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) to adopt water quality control plans, set water quality objectives, and issue permits for waste discharge.

Each RWQCB has jurisdiction over a major watershed region. Located in San Benito County, the City of Hollister falls under the jurisdiction of the Central Coast RWQCB. This regional board is responsible for protecting and managing water quality, developing and enforcing water quality objectives, and implementing plans to safeguard surface and groundwater resources within its jurisdiction.

The Central Coast RWQCB also plays a key role in implementing TMDLs and directing agencies to implement remediation strategies for impaired water bodies in its jurisdiction. According to the most recent integrated report, one water body in San Benito County is listed as impaired.⁴⁰ Regulatory oversight of these impaired water bodies falls under the jurisdiction of the applicable RWQCB based on the watershed in which each water body is located.

Groundwater management within California is governed by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). SGMA requires local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to develop and implement Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) to address overdraft and ensure the long-term sustainability of groundwater.

San Benito County encompasses all or portions of 13 groundwater basins that are crucial sources for agricultural, municipal, and environmental uses. In 2019, the North San Benito Basin was formed by consolidating the Bolsa, Hollister, and San Juan Bautista Subbasins (part of the Gilroy-Hollister Basin) with the Tres Pinos Valley Basin.⁴¹ Spanning approximately 200 square miles, the Basin is predominantly located in San Benito County, with small areas extending into Santa Clara County. The City of Hollister relies heavily on groundwater sourced from this region.

In July 2023, the Department approved the San Benito County Water District's (SBCWD) North San Benito Basin GSP. According to the plan, groundwater conditions have remained stable since 1987 due to the availability of imported water from the Central Valley Project

⁴⁰ State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). California 2024 Integrated Report (303(d) List/305(b) Report). https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/water_quality_assessment/2024-integrated-report.html.

⁴¹ North San Benito Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan. November 2021.p. ES-1.

(CVP), which is a critical source of supply for the City of Hollister. The CVP is a complex, multi-purpose federal water system comprising dams, reservoirs, canals, and other water infrastructure, extending 400 miles through central California. SBCWD purchases CVP water from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and distributes it to agricultural, municipal, and industrial customers across portions of the Hollister and San Juan Bautista basins.

The District employs a conjunctive management strategy, integrating groundwater and surface water resources to maximize the reliability of local water supplies. Surplus CVP water is recharged into the groundwater system through recharge basins constructed by the District to support long-term sustainability.⁴²

According to the most recent North San Benito Annual Report, 2024 experienced above-average rainfall, resulting in 50 percent CVP allocations for agricultural users and 75 percent for municipal and Industrial users. These conditions have led to a 35 percent decline in municipal groundwater demand and increased groundwater storage in most of the Basin.⁴³

⁴² San Benito County Water District, 2020 Agricultural Water Management Plan. p.24.

⁴³ San Benito County Water District, Annual Groundwater Report. Water Year 2024.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND FACILITIES

SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

The City of Hollister owns and operates approximately 90 miles of water mains for transmission and distribution of potable water within the City's water service area. This network includes the Cienega water main, which serves the Cienega zone.

The Cienega zone is one of the four pressure zones within the City's water system, along with the Low, Middle, and Allendale zones. The pressure zones divide the City's service area based on elevation and are supported with a combination of tanks, booster pumps, and pressure-reducing valves (PRVs) to ensure reliable and consistent delivery.

The City's water distribution system includes seven PRVs that currently serve the various pressure zones within the service area. The City also maintains two steel storage tanks at Park Hill and the Sally Flats Reservoir in the Cienega Valley, which exclusively serve the Cienega Zone.

Additionally, the City operates two booster stations, located at Memorial/Hillcrest and within the Allendale subdivision, to maintain adequate pressure and flow in higher elevation areas.

WATER SUPPLY

The City obtains its water supply from both groundwater and surface water.

Groundwater

The City maintains eight groundwater wells that extract water from the underlying groundwater basin for municipal supply. City Wells #1 (San Filipe) and #3 (Fallon) are inactive due to high nitrate levels, while City Well #6 (Airline), which served as an emergency standby, is also inactive due to excessive sand and consistently high aluminum levels.

Currently, the City operates three active groundwater wells located within the city limits: City Well #2 (Bundeson), City Well #4 (South), and City Well #5 (Nash), which feed into two storage tanks.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ City of Hollister, 2024 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report.

The City also maintains two groundwater wells, Cullum Well #1 and Cullum Well #2, that feed into Sally Flats Reservoir in the Cienega Valley, south of the city limits.⁴⁵ In 2024, the five active wells accounted for 28 percent of the City's potable water.

Furthermore, roughly 11 percent of the water supply in 2024 was sourced from SSCWD wells through a series of distribution system interties. Additional flows to and from SSCWD are driven by seasonal water supply demand.

Surface Water

The City uses surface water imported from the CVP via the Hollister Conduit to augment the City's water supply. The imported surface water is treated at the Lessalt Water Treatment Plant and the West Hills Water Treatment Plant, which are owned by the SBCWD and maintained by SSCWD.

In 2024, 50 percent of the City's water supply came from surface water treated at the West Hills WTP, while 11 percent was sourced from the Lessalt WTP.

CAPACITY

The City's five active wells can provide up to 4,632 Gallons Per Minute (GPM), with Wells #4 and #5 each providing 1,500 GPM, Well #2 providing 1,452 GPM, and Cullum Wells #1 and #2 each providing 90 GPM.

The City also owns and operates two steel water storage tanks located at Park Hill with a total capacity of 5.5 million gallons (MG). Additionally, a 0.5 MG underground concrete storage tank at the West Hills WTP provides operational support; however, it is not part of the City's water system configuration.⁴⁶

As part of the City's 2018 Water Distribution System Master Plan, the storage facilities were evaluated for emergency, fire, and operational needs. At the time, with a service area population of 22,940, the City had a storage surplus of approximately 539,480 gallons. However, with projected population growth of 42,133 by 2023 and planned developments, the City was expected to face a significant storage deficit. As a result, the Plan recommended evaluating long-term storage needs from a regional perspective, including coordination with SSCWD, given the agencies' interconnected water systems.

⁴⁵ City of Hollister, Final Water Distribution System Master Plan. August 2018. p.5-1.

⁴⁶ City of Hollister Public Works/ Water Department, Request For Information. September 2025.

Typically, additional tanks would be required to meet the recommended storage capacity associated with population growth; however, given the six intertie points between the City and SSCWD, an adequate emergency water supply may be available from SSCWD, if needed.

SERVICE DEMAND

The City of Hollister provides water services to 7,884 connections, which include residential, commercial, industrial, and landscape accounts. In 2024, the City’s annual water demand exceeded 925 MG. As shown in Figure 11-2, residential demand, which comprises both single-family and multi-family accounts, accounts for 70 percent of total annual demand.

Figure 11-2: The City of Hollister Demand by Connection Type, 2024

CONNECTION TYPE	ACCOUNTS	ANNUAL FLOW/ GALLONS
Single-Family Residential	6,856	556,834,439
Multi-Family Residential	278	92,620,522
Commercial/ Institutional	504	146,548,705
Landscape	188	48,380,891
Industrial	58	81,219,177
Total	7,884	925,603,734

SERVICE STANDARDS AND ADEQUACY

DRINKING WATER QUALITY

Generally, several threats to drinking water exist, including chemicals that are improperly disposed of, animal and human waste, pesticides, waste injected deep underground, and naturally occurring substances that can lead to contamination. Similarly, drinking water that is not properly treated or disinfected or that travels through an improperly maintained distribution system may also pose a health risk.

The City of Hollister regularly collects and tests water samples from designated sampling points throughout the water distribution system to ensure the water delivered to customers meets or exceeds federal and state drinking water standards. In addition to extensive monitoring of the treatment process, the City conducted over 800 tests for contaminants from January 1 to December 31, 2024.

The City prepares an Annual Drinking Water Quality Consumer Confidence Report to inform customers about the quality of drinking water delivered by the City of Hollister Water System, including any contaminants detected during quality testing conducted throughout the year.

In recent years, the City of Hollister has experienced several violations of drinking water quality standards, including exceeding the maximum contaminant level (MCL)⁴⁷. However, corrective actions were taken, including water system assessment and resampling, and all subsequent samples returned negative results.⁴⁸

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Under the Urban Water Management Planning Act of 1983, the California Water Code requires all urban water suppliers to prepare and adopt an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) and update it every five years. This requirement applies to all suppliers that serve more than 3,000 customers or supply more than 3,000 acre-feet (AF) of water annually. The Act aims to promote conservation, including the efficient use of local urban water supplies.

The City of Hollister prepares a UWMP in collaboration with SSCWD and SBCWD. The plan was most recently updated in 2020. As part of the UWMP, the agencies also developed

⁴⁷ The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water.

⁴⁸ City of Hollister Public Works/ Water Department, Request For Information. July 2025.

a joint Water Shortage Emergency Response Plan to support the planning and management of supply disruptions.

Additionally, all three agencies have updated their Water Shortage Contingency Plans (WSCPs), which provide guidance for managing supply and demand during water shortages. Following the 2012-2016 drought, a new WSCP mandate requires agencies to provide a more detailed analysis of water supply and demand, contingency actions, and plan implementation. The agencies' 2020 WSCP update includes documented procedures for plan implementation, standardized water shortage response stages, and quantification of the anticipated effects of contingency actions on both supply and demand.

WATER PRESSURE

SWRCB, through its Division of Drinking Water, regulates the minimum system pressures required in water distribution systems. Under the Waterworks Standards, Chapter 16, Section 64602, last updated on April 10, 2017:

- Each distribution system must be operated in a manner to assure that the minimum operating pressure in the water main at the user service line connection throughout the distribution system is not less than 20 pounds per square inch (psi) at all times;
- Each new distribution system that expands existing service connections by more than 20 percent, or that may otherwise adversely affect distribution system pressure, must be designed to maintain a minimum operating pressure of 40 psi, excluding fire flow.

Urban water systems must also maintain sufficient pressure to support fire protection. The NFPA recommends a minimum residual pressure of 20 psi at fire hydrants to ensure effective firefighting. Maintaining pressure at this level also helps prevent backflow, which could contaminate the public water supply.

Under normal operating conditions, the City of Hollister's system provides pressures between 30 and 75 psi, meeting or exceeding the outlined regulatory and operational standards.

INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

The City reports infrastructure needs in the Cienega Zone, specifically the replacement of the Sally Flats Reservoir and repairs to the Cienega water main. The water main, which is constructed of cast iron, requires upgrades due to its age and the vulnerability of the material.

A 2022 maintenance inspection of the Sally Flats reservoir identified various deficiencies, including cracked and damaged concrete surfaces, rusted steel, and water loss due to structural cracks. The inspection report recommended replacing the reservoir with two steel above-ground tanks.⁴⁹

However, the City has not yet allocated funding for the necessary upgrades to either the reservoir or the water main. Currently, the Department makes necessary repairs when leaks occur.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Maintenance Inspection, Cleaning, and Patch Repairs, Sally Flats Water Storage Reservoir. Final Report. City of Hollister. April 17, 2023.

⁵⁰ City of Hollister Public Works/ Water Department, Request For Information. September 2025.

Determination 11-1. The City of Hollister and the Sunnyslope County Water District (SSCWD) provide water services through separate but interconnected distribution systems. The City serves the western areas of Hollister, while SSCWD serves the eastern portions, spanning from Memorial Drive to Fairview Road.

Determination 11-2. The City of Hollister operates a 90-mile water distribution system divided into four elevation-based pressure zones. The system comprises storage tanks, booster stations, and pressure-reducing valves to ensure a reliable water supply throughout the City's service area.

Determination 11-3. The City of Hollister's water supply comes from a combination of groundwater and imported surface water. In 2024, the City's five active groundwater wells provided 28 percent of the City's drinking water, while roughly 11 percent of the water supply was sourced from SSCWD's wells through a series of distribution system interties.

The remaining 61 percent was supplied from surface water treated at the West Hills and Lessalt Water Treatment Plants. The City's water supply system is managed in coordination with the San Benito County Water District (SBCWD) and SSCWD.

Determination 11-4. The City's five active wells provide up to 4,632 Gallons Per Minute (GPM), and two steel storage tanks at Park Hill offer 5.5 million gallons (MG) of capacity, with an additional 0.5 MG operational tank at West Hills WTP.

Determination 11-5. A significant storage deficit may arise due to population growth in the City's service area, potentially requiring additional tanks; however, with six intertie points between the City and SSCWD, an adequate emergency water supply may be available if needed.

Determination 11-6. In 2024, the City of Hollister provides water services to 7,884 connections, with residential use accounting for 70 percent of the over 925 million gallons (MG) of total annual demand.

Determination 11-7. Service standards and system adequacy are evaluated based on drinking water quality, emergency preparedness, and water pressure. The City

regularly monitors its drinking water quality to ensure compliance with EPA and state standards; coordinates with regional agencies to update plans for conservation and addressing supply disruptions; and maintains water pressures between 30 and 75 psi to ensure reliable service, fire protection, and prevent water contamination.

Determination 11-8. The City has identified infrastructure needs in the Cienega Zone, including replacing the Sally Flats Reservoir and the aging Cienega water main. However, funding has not been allocated for these projects; instead, repairs are made as leaks occur.

12. PARKS AND RECREATION

SERVICES OVERVIEW

The City of Hollister owns and maintains eight pocket parks (<2.5 acres), six neighborhood parks (2.5-10 acres), and one Community Park (>10 acres). The City also holds joint-use agreements with the Hollister School District and the San Benito High School District to make School District-owned properties available for public use. Furthermore, the City leases property from San Benito County’s Veterans Memorial Park to provide public amenities, including a tournament softball field and skate park.

Figure 12-1: City of Hollister, Park Facilities Inventory

CITY PARKS		
POCKET PARKS. (8.13 ACRES)	NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS (26.4 ACRES)	COMMUNITY PARKS (49.72 ACRES)
Apricot Park Jerry Gabe Memorial Park John Z. Hernandez Memorial Park Las Brisas Park McCarthy Park Mirabella Park Nora Drive Park Tony Aguirre Memorial Park	Allendale Park Dunne Park Frank Klauer Memorial Park Santa Ana Park Valley View Park Vista Park Hill	Water Reclamation Recreational Facility
JOINT USE PARKS		
NEIGHBORHOOD/ SCHOOL PARKS (43.5 ACRES)	COUNTY PARKS (3.59 ACRES)	
Calaveras School Park Cerra Vista School Park Ladd Lane School Park Marguerite Maze Sports Complex Rancho San Justo Sports Complex Rancho San Justo Sports Complex R. O. Hardin School Park San Benito HS Tennis Courts	Hollister Skate Park (within Veterans Memorial Park) Hollister Softball Fields (within Veterans Memorial Park)	

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND FACILITIES

FACILITIES

The City of Hollister offers a wide range of recreational amenities across its community, neighborhood, pocket, and joint-use school parks. Publicly available facilities include playgrounds, multi-use turf fields, baseball/softball fields, and courts for basketball, tennis, and volleyball. Visitors can also enjoy paved walking paths, picnic areas with BBQs, and outdoor fitness stations.

Select parks also offer unique amenities, including a splash pad at Valley View Park; a fenced dog park at Jerry Gabe Memorial Park; a night-lit skate park with bowls and ramps at Hollister Skate Park; and scenic overlooks and natural areas at Vista Park Hill. Due to joint-use agreements, school parks, including Calaveras School Park and Cerra Vista School Park, are not available during school hours.

The City also offers rental options to the public for various parks and recreational facilities:⁵¹

- Parks— Calaveras Park and Vista Park are available for rentals. Liability insurance is required for all park rentals.
- Sport Complexes— School gym and fields are available at the Marguerite Maze Sports and Rancho San Justo Sports Complexes. Additionally, two lighted softball fields, including a concessions area with shade and picnic tables, are available for rental at the Veterans Memorial Park.
- Indoor Facilities—The Dunne Park clubhouse is available for small events, such as birthday parties, and can accommodate up to 40 people. Similarly, the Hollister Community Center offers a variety of rooms for rent with different occupancy levels, including the San Benito Room (150 people), the Gabilan Room (50 people), and the Calaveras Room (20 people).
- Veterans Memorial Building— Managed by local Veteran groups, it has a capacity of up to 1,000 people.

Rentals are arranged through the Recreation Department, while rental forms are available online or at the Department offices.

⁵¹ The City of Hollister, Park Facility Master Plan. March 2018.

The City of Hollister Recreation Division also offers a range of formal programs for youth and adults. Adult recreational opportunities include year-round basketball and softball leagues, for which participation fees are charged per team. For youth, the City offers a range of traditional sports programs, including soccer, volleyball, and flag football. These programs provide uniforms, medals, and team photos to participants and require individual registration fees. Additionally, alternative free youth programs such as tennis and Junior Giants Baseball are also offered through partnerships with the San Benito County Police Activities League (SBC PAL).

SERVICE DEMAND

Hollister's population growth reflects the demand for parks and recreation facilities. However, other factors, such as community preferences and climate, also affect demand. Population projections for the City of Hollister are discussed in Chapter 6.

STAFF

As of FY 24-25, the Parks and Recreation division has eight full-time positions budgeted. Currently, the division is staffed with a Director, a Manager, a Maintenance Worker, and two Recreation Coordinators, with vacancies for two Maintenance Workers and one Administrative Assistant.

SERVICE STANDARDS AND ADEQUACY

PLANS AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is a nationally recognized authority on recreation planning and amenities. Historically, NRPA published park area and facility standards per 1,000 residents. In 2019, however, NRPA replaced these fixed standards with NRPA Park Metrics, a data-driven benchmarking tool available on the NRPA website that allows agencies to compare their service levels with those of similar agencies based on factors such as population, budget, and other community characteristics, rather than relying on one-size-fits-all national standards.

NRPA also recommends that local municipalities establish their own park and recreation standards, noting that agencies are as diverse as the communities they serve. The City of Hollister conducts planning and sets regulatory requirements for park and recreation services in the Open Space Element of its GP. According to the 2005 General Plan, the recommended parks level of service standard is four acres of park space per 1,000 residents within the

greater Hollister Planning Area. The 2005 GP also indicates that this standard may be met by calculating the total square footage of both County and City parks within the Hollister Planning Area.⁵²

PARK AREAS

As of 2025, the City of Hollister owns a total of 84.25 acres of parkland, which equates to 1.93 acres per 1,000 residents based on the City's current population of 43,492. When including all city-owned and joint-use parks within the city limits, the total parkland increases to 131.34 acres, or 3.02 acres per 1,000 residents. Therefore, to meet the General Plan standard of four acres per 1,000 residents, the City would need an additional 90.39 acres of city-owned parkland or 43.3 more acres, when including joint-use parks.

Furthermore, as the City continues to grow, more parkland may be required to meet the General Plan's standard of four acres per 1,000 residents. It is recommended that the City continue to collaborate with San Benito County, as recommended in the General Plan, to ensure that sufficient parkland and recreation facilities are available for residents.

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

The City's most recent CIP includes various planned facility improvement projects for the Parks and Recreation facilities:⁵³

- One of the major capital projects is the construction of a new park at Fire Station #2 by FY 25-26. The park is anticipated to include various facilities, such as turf play areas, a habitat restoration area, a dog park, group exercise stations, a Pickleball court, a Basketball Court, playground equipment, picnic shelters/pavilions, walking/jogging trails, restrooms, parking, and an art installation. This project is anticipated to cost \$1,826,125 and will be funded through the Proposition 68 Grant, which is funds received through the Parks and Water Bond Act of 2018.
- Various general improvements are planned for Dunne Park, with an estimated cost of \$180,000 scheduled for FY 25-26. The improvements will include replacing the restroom and playground structure, as well as the fence surrounding the tennis and pickleball courts. Additionally, new turf will be installed on the north side of the park. The project will also include lighting for the tennis and pickleball courts, a BBQ area,

⁵² City of Hollister, Community Services and Facilities Element, December 2005, p.5.21.

⁵³ City of Hollister, 5-Year Capital Improvement Projects Program. FY 25/26 – 29/30. Facility Improvements.

and a basketball court. Furthermore, repairs and painting to the exterior and interior of the clubhouse at Dunne Park are planned. These projects will be funded through a combination of Proposition 68 funds and City park impact fees.

- The City plans to extend the Fiber Optic Network to all parks and City-owned facilities in Hollister and the surrounding areas that are not yet connected, enabling eventual connectivity to City residences and businesses along the routes by FY 28-29. The project is currently at the design stage, funded by the Local Agency Technical Assistance (LATA) grant awarded to the City by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

- Determination 12-1. The City of Hollister maintains a diverse park system that includes eight pocket parks (less than 2.5 acres), six neighborhood parks (2.5 to 10 acres), and one community park (over 10 acres). The City also has joint-use agreements with the Hollister School District and San Benito High School District, allowing public access to school-owned recreational spaces. Additionally, the City leases portions of San Benito County's Veterans Memorial Park, which features amenities such as a tournament softball field and a skate park.
- Determination 12-2. The City offers a range of recreational amenities across its parks and joint-use school facilities, as well as park and facility rentals, and youth and adult recreation programs.
- Determination 12-3. As of 2025, the City of Hollister owns a total of 84.25 acres of parkland, which equates to 1.93 acres per 1,000 residents based on the City's current population of 43,492. When including all city-owned and joint-use parks within the city limits, the total parkland increases to 131.34 acres, or 3.02 acres per 1,000 residents.
- Determination 12-4. To meet the City's General Plan (GP) adopted standard of four acres per 1,000 residents, the City would need an additional 90.39 acres of city-owned parkland, or 43.3 more acres, when including joint-use parks.
- Determination 12-5. Additionally, as the City continues to grow, more parkland will need to be dedicated to meet the GP's standard of four acres per 1,000 residents. It is recommended that the City continue to collaborate with San Benito County, as recommended in the General Plan, to ensure that sufficient parkland and recreation facilities are available for residents.
- Determination 12-6. It is recommended that the City use the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) data-driven benchmarking tool, Park Metrics, available on the NRPA website, to assess current service levels and compare them with those of other agencies with a similar profile nationwide. This tool considers factors such as population, budget, and community characteristics, offering a more comprehensive comparison than relying solely on the parkland-per-resident benchmark.

Determination 12-7. Planned infrastructure improvement projects include the construction of a new \$1.8 million park at Fire Station 2 and \$180,000 in improvements at Dunne Park, including upgrades to the restrooms, playground, and court. Additionally, the City aims to expand its fiber optic network to all parks and facilities by FY 28–29, with design work currently underway.

13. STORMWATER

SERVICES OVERVIEW

The City owns and operates a storm drain system comprising multiple networks of inlets and pipes that route untreated runoff from impervious surfaces, including roofs, parking lots, roads, sidewalks, and other hardened surfaces. This runoff is directed either to the San Benito River or Santa Ana Creek, both of which flow north to the Pajaro River, or a terminal basin within the City's system.

The system also features numerous basins that collect untreated runoff, which help control flooding within the City. Additionally, during wet weather events, the City's industrial wastewater treatment plant (IWTP) collects stormwater to support overall system capacity and environmental compliance.

EXISTING SYSTEM

The City of Hollister's storm drain system includes approximately 59 miles of storm drain pipes, roughly 1,235 manholes, 1,845 inlets, and a series of detention and retention basins. The system features 20 outfalls, with eight discharging to the San Benito River and 12 to Santa Ana Creek, as well as open channels that help convey runoff throughout the City.

SERVICE STANDARDS AND ADEQUACY

PLANS AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1972 regulates stormwater runoff and other non-point source discharges through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program established by the EPA.

In 1987, the CWA was amended to require regulation of stormwater discharges from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), construction activities, and industrial sources. These requirements fall under Section 402(p) of the CWA and are implemented through the NPDES program.

The NPDES Stormwater Program is implemented in two phases. Phase I applies to medium and large MS4s serving populations of 100,000 or more. Phase II applies to small MS4s

located in urbanized areas and municipalities (as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau), as well as to certain small construction activities involving areas of 1 to 5 acres.

The City of Hollister is subject to the Phase II NDPEs General Permit requirements for small MS4s, which is regulated by SWRCB and enforced locally by the Central Coast RWQCB. The permit requires the development and implementation of a Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) that outlines existing and proposed measures to reduce pollutant discharges to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP). Stormwater pollutants include automotive fluids, sediment, detergents, animal waste, pesticides, fertilizers, chemicals, trash, oils, food processing waste, and other substances.

The City of Hollister has adopted a SWMP that consists of six program areas that offer a comprehensive strategy to reduce urban runoff pollution:

- Public Education— Educating the community through web pages, brochures, TV ads, storm drain marking, hotlines, and event participation,
- Public Participation— Involving the community via public meetings, presentations, web comments, river cleanup days, and employee training,
- Illicit Discharge Detection/Elimination— Mapping storm drains, inspecting outfalls, collecting hazardous waste, enforcing ordinances, and using video surveillance,
- Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control— Updating grading ordinances, adopting BMP manuals, and providing outreach materials to contractors,
- Post Construction Storm Water Management— Reform any new and redevelopment project planning and development process to minimize long-term post-construction impacts to water resources, and
- Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations— Conducting facility surveys, implementing Best Management Practices (BMP) for municipal operations, and training employees.

Through the ongoing implementation of these programs, the City of Hollister aims to protect water resources, reduce pollution, and comply with applicable regulations.

INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

In 2011, the City adopted a Storm Drain Master Plan that provides a comprehensive analysis of the City's storm drainage system, including assessment of existing conditions, projections of future needs, and recommendations for infrastructure improvements. Since then, the Master

Plan has not been updated; as a result, much of the information on system status and infrastructure needs is outdated.

However, the City's most recent CIP identifies several planned infrastructure improvements to the storm drainage system as illustrated in Figure 13-1. The projects include fixing flood-prone areas such as Bella Vista & Sunnyslope and San Benito & Haydon with new storm drain pipes, installing trash capture systems at key outfalls and drainage points to prevent pollution in local creeks and rivers, and upgrading the Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant to manage stormwater during heavy rains. These projects are estimated to cost \$12 million and will be funded through a combination of local funds and state grants, with completion scheduled for 2025-2028.⁵⁴

Determination 13-1: The City operates a storm drain system designed to manage untreated runoff from surfaces such as roofs and roads, directing it to the San Benito River, Santa Ana Creek, or internal basins. The system includes basins for flood control and utilizes the industrial wastewater treatment plant (IWTP) to handle stormwater during wet weather events.

Determination 13-2: The City has developed a Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) in compliance according to applicable regulations that includes a variety of programs designed to minimize pollutant discharges into local waterways.

Determination 13-3: The City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) outlines several infrastructure improvement projects, including installing new storm drain pipes in flood-prone areas and adding trash capture systems at outfalls. Overall, these improvements are estimated to cost approximately \$12 million and are expected to be funded through a mix of local funds and state grants.

⁵⁴ City of Hollister, 5-Year Capital Improvement Projects Program. FY 25/26 – 29/30. Drainage.

Figure 13-1: Storm/Drainage Planned Improvements

PROJECTS	PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS	COST	FUNDING SOURCES	FISCAL YEARS
Bella Vista and Sunnyslope Road Upgrade	Construct a new storm drain inlet and lateral to address flooding at the intersection	\$250,000	Fund 662	FY 26-27
Bridge Road Outfall	Install a trash capture system in the storm line before the river outfall	\$5,244,542	Prop 1 Grant, Fund 662	FY 25-26
IWTP Stormwater Improvements Project	Reconfigure IWTP for stormwater retention, including new pipelines, valves, and pumps.	\$2,632,781	Storm Drain Impact, Fund 662	FY 25-26
San Benito and Haydon Street Upgrade	Install 1,600 linear feet of 24-inch storm drain pipe to alleviate flooding	\$850,000	Fund 662	FY 27-28
(2) Trash Amendment Compliance	Install a Stormwater Treatment Device at two locations to manage creek overflow	\$2,450,000	Fund 305 & Fund 662	FY 27-28
(2) CDS Trash Separators	Install storm drain trash capture structures and modify existing pipes	\$719,000	Fund 662	FY 26-27

14. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OPTIONS

The City of Hollister currently engages in shared facilities, joint-use agreements, or operational coordination with neighboring agencies and districts to provide a range of services, including fire protection, law enforcement dispatch, water supply, parks, and training facilities.

No additional alternative governance options are recommended at this time. However, governance structures may need to be reviewed following the adoption of the City's proposed SOI by LAFCO to ensure alignment with long term growth strategies and potential service needs.

APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF DETERMINATIONS

GROWTH AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS

- According to the California Department of Finance (DOF), Hollister’s estimated population is 43,492. This indicates a roughly 15 percent increase and a 1.4 percent Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR) since 2015, when the population was 37,671.
- Growth projections for San Benito County indicate an average annual growth rate (AAGR) of approximately 0.47 percent from 2020 (64,432) through 2060 (77,666). Applying the County’s AAGR to Hollister’s 2025 population estimate suggests the City’s population could increase to approximately 51,248 by 2060.
- The City of Hollister has a range of proposed, under review, and recently approved development projects, including residential, commercial, industrial, public, and mixed-use uses. As of 2026, there are eight projects under review totaling approximately 158 residential units (including 17 below-market-rate units). While recently approved projects include approximately 145 residential units (including 50 below-market-rate units), approximately 54,541 square feet of industrial development, and approximately 178,811 square feet of commercial and institutional uses. These developments may result in incremental population growth and employment-driven growth within the City as they are built and occupied.

The City’s 2040 General Plan outlines a growth management framework within the Land Use and Community Design Element that prioritizes orderly and balanced development. Key strategies include encouraging infill development before outward expansion, aligning future growth with the City’s ability to provide infrastructure and public services, requiring annexations to be contiguous and revenue neutral, coordinating annexation and development review with San Benito County and other agencies, and ensuring that development remains within the capacity analyzed in the General Plan.

THE LOCATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES WITHIN OR CONTIGUOUS TO THE AGENCY’S SOI

- The statewide Median Household Income (MHI) for 2017-2021, according to Census Bureau data, is estimated at \$84,097; hence, the calculated threshold of \$67,277 defines whether a community is identified as disadvantaged. Therefore, with a median income of \$87,761, the City of Hollister is not considered a disadvantaged community.
- In contrast, the DWR mapping tool identifies disadvantaged communities (DACs) in several areas within and near the city limits, including sections southeast and west of the City, the area around the Baler Aquatic Center within the Sphere of Influence (SOI), and much of the southern SOI extending beyond City boundaries.

PRESENT AND PLANNED CAPACITY OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC SERVICES, INCLUDING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND DEFICIENCIES

FIRE SERVICES

- The Hollister Fire Department (HFD) provides a range of services, including fire prevention, arson investigation, hazardous material releases, public events, medical aid requests, vehicle accidents, and specialized rescue operations.
- HFD provides all fire response and rescue services within city limits, to the City of San Juan Bautista and the majority of San Benito County, with the exception of the Aromas Tri-Counties Fire Protection District area.
- HFD reports various infrastructure needs across its facilities: (1) maintenance projects at Stations 1 and 2, estimated between \$150,000 and \$200,000, funded by the general fund and impact fees; (2) a potential full upgrade of Station 3, costing \$15 million to \$25 million due to its poor condition; (3) door and flooring repairs at Station 4 requiring \$100,000, funded by San Juan Bautista; and (4) multiple upgrades at the HFD training facility estimated at \$200,000 with potential cost recovery via an enterprise fund.
- From 2020 to 2024, the total number of calls for service increased by 10 percent, from 4,667 to 5,144, with mutual aid calls accounting for 2 to 4 percent of total calls.
- The demand for fire services resulting from population growth is likely to remain stable in the foreseeable future; however, the increasing elderly population and aging infrastructure in the City are likely to lead to an increase in service calls due to heightened demand.
- The most recent ISO classification for HFD is 3/3X, indicating that most properties are within 1,000 feet of a water source and meet other fire safety standards (Class 3), while some parts of the community are more than 1,000 feet from a water source but within five road miles of a fire station (Class 3X).
- HFD's four stations predominantly respond to their designated areas; however, if multiple calls are in progress or if station coverage is required, other stations will be dispatched to cover other areas or respond to additional calls. Due to the variability of distances in HFD's response area, average response times are skewed.
- Response times to unincorporated areas of San Benito County are the longest across all stations, averaging from 11 to 13 minutes. The County Board has historically identified service levels, particularly the south and north ends, as a challenge in several public meetings due to the lack of nearby fire stations.
- In addition to non-ideal response times due to a broad coverage area relative to the location and number of stations, the Department reports various challenges in

service delivery, including overcrowding in local hospitals resulting from increased demand and inadequate funding to keep pace with rising costs.

- It is recommended that a department-level strategic plan, in coordination with broader citywide initiatives, be developed to ensure that specific operational challenges are identified and addressed by personnel who are most familiar with fire service operations and the unique needs of the community.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- The Hollister Police Department (HPD) comprises both sworn and professional employees who provide a comprehensive range of law enforcement services to the Hollister community.
- HPD provides police protection within city limits, while the San Benito County Sheriff's Department serves the surrounding unincorporated areas, and the California Highway Patrol provides traffic enforcement on state and local freeways. Mutual-aid agreements exist between these agencies, allowing for joint responses to emergency events that require additional personnel.
- HPD has 37 sworn officers, reflecting 0.85 sworn officers per 1,000 residents, well below the national average of 1.7 officers per 1,000 residents for similar-sized cities with populations of 25,000 to 49,999.
- A 2019 organizational assessment recommended that HPD add 11 sworn positions to reach an optimal staffing level of 48–50 sworn officers. The recommendation was not implemented; however, it remains relevant today as the City grows and demand increases. HPD runs the Volunteers in Policing (VIP) Program to support sworn officers by assigning volunteers to administrative tasks, patrol support, graffiti abatement, and Animal Control. Currently, there are volunteers working at the Animal Shelter.
- Modern practices focus on workload-based analysis as benchmarks for service levels. This approach considers factors such as call volume, patrol responsibilities, investigations, and community expectations to evaluate staffing adequacy. According to HPD, a management study is scheduled for early 2026 to assess current staffing and operational needs.
- In 2024, HPD received a total of 39,269 service calls, equivalent to an average of 3,272 calls per month, or approximately 109 calls per day. The total number of service calls has increased over the last few years, rising from 28,503 in 2022 to 35,269 in 2023.
- From 2014 to 2025, reported crime in the City of Hollister decreased by 20 percent, from 672 to 536 incidents. During this period, property crimes accounted for the majority of reported crimes (62–83 percent), while arson made up only 1–4 percent. Additionally, HPD's clearance rates for various crimes were higher than the State average.

- HPD’s response times are categorized into four priorities based on urgency, with Priority 1 incidents averaging 5 minutes and 46 seconds, which is slightly longer than the standard of 5 minutes and 30 seconds or less.
- Various factors, including increased call volumes, staffing shortages, and operational challenges, affect the Department’s response times and overall performance.
- The City reports two infrastructure improvement projects, consisting of a parking lot expansion and the construction of a vehicle storage facility, with an estimated total cost of \$650,000, to be funded through police impact fees from new development.

WATER SERVICES

- The City of Hollister and the Sunnyslope County Water District (SSCWD) provide water services through separate but interconnected distribution systems. The City serves the western areas of Hollister, while SSCWD serves the eastern portions, spanning from Memorial Drive to Fairview Road.
- The City of Hollister operates a 90-mile water distribution system divided into four elevation-based pressure zones. The system comprises storage tanks, booster stations, and pressure-reducing valves to ensure a reliable water supply throughout the City’s service area.
- The City of Hollister’s water supply comes from a combination of groundwater and imported surface water. In 2024, the City’s five active groundwater wells provided 28 percent of the City’s drinking water, while roughly 11 percent of the water supply was sourced from SSCWD’s wells through a series of distribution system interties.
- The remaining 61 percent was supplied from surface water treated at the West Hills and Lessalt Water Treatment Plants. The City’s water supply system is managed in coordination with the San Benito County Water District (SBCWD) and SSCWD.
- The City’s five active wells provide up to 4,632 Gallons Per Minute (GPM), and two steel storage tanks at Park Hill offer 5.5 million gallons (MG) of capacity, with an additional 0.5 MG operational tank at West Hills WTP.
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- In 2024, the City of Hollister provides water services to 7,884 connections, with residential use accounting for 70 percent of the over 925 million gallons (MG) of total annual demand.
- Service standards and system adequacy are evaluated based on drinking water quality, emergency preparedness, and water pressure. The City regularly monitors its drinking water quality to ensure compliance with EPA and state standards; coordinates with regional agencies to update plans for conservation and addressing

supply disruptions; and maintains water pressures between 30 and 75 psi to ensure reliable service, fire protection, and prevent water contamination.

- The City has identified infrastructure needs in the Cienega Zone, including replacing the Sally Flats Reservoir and the aging Cienega water main. However, funding has not been allocated for these projects; instead, repairs are made as leaks occur.

PARKS AND RECREATION

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- As of 2025, the City of Hollister owns a total of 84.25 acres of parkland, which is equivalent to 1.93 acres per 1,000 residents based on the City's current population of 43,492. When including all city-owned and joint-use parks within the city limits, the total parkland increases to 131.34 acres, or 3.02 acres per 1,000 residents.
- To meet the City's General Plan (GP) adopted standard of four acres per 1,000 residents, the City would need an additional 90.39 acres of city-owned parkland, or 43.3 more acres, when including joint-use parks.
- Additionally, as the City continues to grow, more parkland will need to be dedicated to meet the GP's standard of four acres per 1,000 residents. It is recommended that the City continue to collaborate with San Benito County, as recommended in the General Plan, to ensure that sufficient parkland and recreation facilities are available for residents.
- It is recommended that the City use the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) data-driven benchmarking tool, Park Metrics, available on the NRPA website, to assess current service levels and compare them with those of other agencies with a similar profile across the nation. This tool considers factors such as population, budget, and community characteristics, offering a more comprehensive comparison than relying solely on the parkland-per-resident benchmark.
- Planned infrastructure improvement projects include the construction of a new \$1.8 million park at Fire Station 2 and \$180,000 in improvements at Dunne Park, including upgrades to the restrooms, playground, and court. Additionally, the City aims to expand its fiber optic network to all parks and facilities by FY 28–29, with design work currently underway.

STORMWATER

- The City operates a storm drain system designed to manage untreated runoff from surfaces such as roofs and roads, directing it to the San Benito River, Santa Ana Creek, or internal basins. The system includes basins for flood control and utilizes the industrial wastewater treatment plant (IWTP) to handle stormwater during wet weather events.
- The City has developed a Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) in compliance according to applicable regulations that includes a variety of programs designed to minimize pollutant discharges into local waterways.
- The City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) outlines several infrastructure improvement projects, including installing new storm drain pipes in flood-prone areas and adding trash capture systems at outfalls. Overall, these improvements are estimated to cost approximately \$12 million and are expected to be funded through a mix of local funds and state grants.

FINANCIAL ABILITY OF AGENCIES TO PROVIDE SERVICES

- The City's last completed audit in FY 20-21 highlighted several financial management issues, including ineffective financial closing and reporting processes, improper reconciliation of grant revenues and expenditures, and inadequate controls over notes receivable and cash reconciliations.
- Delayed financial audits have limited the City's eligibility for state and federal grants. Additionally, the City continues to experience operating deficits, driven by slow revenue growth, outdated user fees that no longer cover rising service costs, and stagnant sales tax revenues. These factors further threaten the City's long-term fiscal stability as temporary American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds expire and the City increasingly relies on reserves to balance the budget.
- It is recommended that the City conduct timely annual audits to ensure regulatory compliance, promote fiscal transparency, identify and address any ineffective financial practices, and facilitate informed decision-making.

STATUS OF, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR, SHARED FACILITIES

FIRE SERVICES

- HFD has two automatic-aid agreements with the South Santa Clara County Fire District and the Aromas Tri-County Fire District, which allows for reciprocal emergency responses with each agency.
- HFD engages in various facility-sharing practices, including Station 3 which is located on Hollister Municipal Airport property, and Station 4 which is co-located with San Juan Bautista City Hall, where office space and storage are shared. HFD also shares facilities with other City departments, including the fire prevention facility with the Planning and Engineering Departments while the Department's

training tower is located at the City's wastewater facility. Additionally, HFD partners with the South Bay Regional Public Safety Training Consortium (PSTC), which contracts with the Department for the use of the training facility and provides reimbursement for staffing support during training events or offers enrollment opportunities to HFD staff in lieu of payment.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- The City of Hollister is undertaking a new Dispatch and Real-Time Crime Center project to enhance emergency response and centralize operations, with an estimated cost exceeding \$4 million. The City reports that the project is currently in the design phase, funded by impact fees. The San Benito County Sheriff's Office has expressed interest in partnering to share dispatch services once the Center is operational, which could lower costs and improve inter-agency coordination.

PARKS AND RECREATION

- The City has joint-use agreements with the Hollister School District and San Benito High School District, allowing public access to school-owned recreational spaces. Additionally, the City leases portions of San Benito County's Veterans Memorial Park, which features amenities such as a tournament softball field and a skate park.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE NEEDS, INCLUDING GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

- The City of Hollister engages residents through public meetings, its website, and various social media platforms. Additionally, the City offers multiple channels for filing complaints and, in accordance with the California Public Records Act (CPRA), offers a public records portal that enables residents to submit requests, correspond with City staff, and track the status of their requests.
- The City of Hollister largely complies with the requirements outlined in State laws related to the Brown Act, website materials, and best practices to ensure easy access to significant planning documents and annual budgets.
- It is recommended that the City make up-to-date Ethics Training Certifications and completed Form 700s available on the Hollister website to ensure transparency and accountability.
- The City of Hollister demonstrated accountability in its disclosure of information and cooperation with the LAFCO questionnaires and other requests for information.

ANY OTHER MATTER RELATED TO EFFECTIVE OR EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY, AS REQUIRED BY COMMISSION POLICY.

- The City of Hollister’s previous General Plan was adopted in 2005 with a planning horizon through 2023. In 2021, the City initiated an update to reflect current conditions, community priorities, and evolving State policy requirements.
- The updated General Plan with a planning horizon of 2040 was adopted in December 2024. However, it faced substantial public opposition, particularly regarding the proposed SOI expansion, agricultural land conversion, housing policies, and growth standards.
- The plan was subsequently repealed in March 2025, following a successful resident referendum. Following the statutory waiting period under California Election Code §9241, the City adopted a new General Plan in April 2026..
- The City’s Housing Element for the 2023–2031 cycle was included in the repealed plan; therefore, the City entered a period of noncompliance with State Housing Element Law.
- In April 2026, the City adopted a new 2040 General Plan incorporating revisions to address SOI expansion and other policy areas.
- The City’s Housing Element was also adopted and has been submitted to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and is currently under review for compliance with Housing Element Law.