

# 8

## Public Facilities and Utilities

The purpose of the Public Facilities and Utilities Element is to address service and infrastructure needs for development under the General Plan and establish guiding policies and implementing actions to mitigate potential impacts of development on these facilities and services. This element focuses on specific functional needs of the City's public services and facilities, and clearly distinguishes issues related to City services from those related to other service providers over which the City has no control. It addresses schools, libraries, and cultural facilities; and water, sewer, and solid waste services.

Table 8-1 summarizes community services in the City of Los Banos by service provider.

8-1: Community Service by Service Provider	
Type of Service	Providing Agency
Schools (K-12)	Los Banos Unified School District
Schools (College)	Merced Community College District
Parks and Recreation	City of Los Banos
Policy	City of Los Banos
Fire Protection	City of Los Banos
Street Maintenance	City of Los Banos
Water Service	City of Los Banos
Storm Drainage	City of Los Banos
Solid Waste	City of Los Banos
Sewer Service/Wastewater Treatment	City of Los Banos
Electricity	Pacific Gas & Electric
Natural Gas	Pacific Gas & Electric
Telephone	AT&T

## 8.1 SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### SCHOOLS

The Los Banos Unified School District operates 10 public schools in the Planning Area. As of 2006 the schools were running an average of five percent over capacity. Table 8-2 summarizes enrollment and capacity counts for these schools. All schools are located within a ¼-mile walking distance of either a park or school open space facility.

The District also has one alternative high school, an adult education program, operates the Learning Center, a latchkey child care program, and STAR, a before/after school program.

The District is in the process of building a new high school, and is planning a new junior high, five new elementary schools and support facilities. These improvements to current school facilities will create excess capacity at each educational level.

The Merced Community College (Los Banos campus) is located on a 120 acre site west of Los Banos Creek on the north side of SR-152. The College has estimated that both total enrollment and staffing will double in the next 25 years, with a 2030 forecasted enrollment of about 900 students, 42 faculty and 23 staff members.

8-2: Existing Public Schools in Los Banos

School	Enrollment	Capacity <sup>1</sup>	Percent Capacity
<b>Elementary Schools (K-5)</b>			
Charleston Elementary	357	366	97.5
Miano (R.M.)Elementary	918	854	107.5
Los Banos Elementary	988	776	127.3
Henry Miller Elementary	866	786	110.2
Volta Elementary	277	317	87.4
Lorena Falasco Elementary	828	659	125.6
<b>Total Elementary Schools</b>	<b>4,234</b>	<b>3,758</b>	<b>112.7</b>
<b>Middle Schools (6-8)</b>			
Westside Union Intermediate	801	780	102.7
Los Banos Junior High	1,423	1,433	99.3
<b>Total Middle Schools</b>	<b>2,224</b>	<b>2,213</b>	<b>100.5</b>
<b>High Schools (9-12)</b>			
Los Banos High	2,221	2,288	97.1
San Luis High (Continuation)	157	160	98.1
<b>Total High Schools</b>	<b>2,378</b>	<b>2,448</b>	<b>97.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,836</b>	<b>8,419</b>	<b>105.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> Total student capacity includes portable classrooms when applicable.

Source: Enrollment data from California Department of Education, 2006-07; Capacity data from Los Banos School District, School Facility Master Plan, January 2005.

**Projected Enrollment**

Buildout of the General Plan will result in the addition of 16,860 households (single family and multi-family), with an additional population of approximately 55,640.

The Los Banos Unified School District estimates student buildout using an average student generation factor of 0.738 students per single family household and 0.948 students per multifamily household. Since existing schools at Los Banos are already at or near capacity and many new residential projects are in the pipeline, new schools must be built quickly to meet population demands. Population and school needs are detailed in Table 8-3.

**Planned Facilities**

According to a California Department of Education report, an estimated 3.2 percent of all school-going children in Merced County attend religious, private or chartered schools in 2004-05. Future school demand estimates have taken this into consideration. An estimated 255 acres will need to be set aside for public school uses. The exact size and location of future school sites is a matter under school district control. Land use goals, however, require that school facilities be located within walking distance of neighborhoods for accessibility and safety reasons.



*New schools will need to be constructed to help existing facilities accommodate new students.*

8-3: Buildout of Public School Student Population and School Demand

Type	Current Students	Additional Students from Approved Development <sup>1</sup>	Future Students from Proposed Development <sup>1</sup>	Current Capacity <sup>2</sup>	Students at Build-out in Excess of Current Capacity	New Schools Needed <sup>3</sup>	Acres Needed <sup>4</sup>
K-5	4,234	3,683	4,154	3,758	8,313	13	130
6-8	2,224	1,016	1,145	2,213	2,171	3	45
9-12	2,378	1,543	1,742	2,448	3,215	2	80
Total	8,836	6,240	7,041	8,419	13,699	18	255

<sup>1</sup> Assumes 0.439 elementary-, 0.124 middle- and 0.175 high-school students per single family household, and 0.552 elementary school, 0.146 middle school, and 0.250 high school students per multi-family household.

<sup>2</sup> Assumes average school capacity of 650 students (grades K-5), 800 students (grades 6-8), and 1,650 students (grades 9-12). Number of schools needed are rounded up.

<sup>3</sup> Assumes average school sizes of 10 acres (grades K-5), 15 acres (grades 6-8), and 40 acres (grades 9-12).

<sup>4</sup> Student numbers is an estimate of those attending public schools only. According to the California Department of Education report 2004-05, 3.2 percent of all County's students attend private schools.

Source: Los Banos Unified School District, 2007

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities are the network of public and private institutions that support the civic and social needs of the population. They offer a variety of recreational, artistic, and educational programs and special events. New community facilities are not specifically sited on the General Plan Land Use Diagram. Small-scale facilities are appropriately sited as integral parts of neighborhoods and communities, while existing larger-scale facilities are generally depicted as public/semi-public land use, as appropriate. These facilities in Los Banos can be grouped into the following categories:

- **Community Centers.** Facilities designed to meet the needs of the population for civic meetings, recreational activities, social gatherings, and cultural enrichment.

- **Cultural Facilities.** These facilities house scientific and historical exhibits or offer space for artistic performances and presentations. The Los Banos Milliken Museum and the Ted Falasco Arts Center are examples of these facilities.
- **Civic Buildings.** These include City and County administrative and public buildings.
- **Libraries.** Facilities in which literary, artistic, and reference materials are kept for public use and circulation. The Los Banos Branch Merced County Library located at 1312 Seventh Street near Downtown is one of the most heavily used services in the city.

- **Medical Facilities.** This includes hospitals, public and private clinics, care facilities, and medical offices. The Memorial Hospital Los Banos (MHLB) is the largest health care provider in the city. It is affiliated with Sutter Health and serves residents as far as Dos Palos or Firebaugh. The MHLB has a landing pad adjacent to the hospital and is connected by helicopter with Memorial Hospital in Modesto. There are no current plans to expand hospital services.
- **Religious Facilities.** Religious facilities include houses of worship and other related uses.

**GUIDING POLICIES**

- PFU-G-1 Provide superior educational opportunities for children and all members of the community.
- PFU-G-2 Provide public and cultural facilities that contribute to Los Banos’ positive image, enhance community identity, and meet the civic and social needs of residents.

**IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS**

**Schools**

- PFU-I-1 Ensure adequate elementary school sites are reserved in new subdivisions, consistent with the Land Use Diagram and State law.
- PFU-I-2 Require that elementary schools be located close to residential neighborhoods, and away from major streets to avoid vehicular traffic and noise.

- PFU-I-3 Maintain a close, collaborative relationship with Los Banos Unified School District on all matters of mutual interest.

This includes the provision and location of school sites and facilities, the development of education programs that are in line with City goals, the creation of natural hazards preparation workshops or anti-drug abuse programs with Los Banos Police, and the development of joint internship programs with Los Banos City Departments and local businesses.

**Community Centers**

- PFU-I-4 Locate new Community Centers in mixed-use Neighborhood Centers, Downtown, or in parks, and offer incentives for developers who set aside land for the development of Community Centers.

**Cultural Facilities**

- PFU-I-5 Support the development of a range of cultural and arts facilities, such as museums, performing art centers and art exhibition spaces throughout the city.
- PFU-I-6 Explore the long term demand and feasibility of creating a heritage trail linking significant historical landmarks in Los Banos.

**Libraries**

- PFU-I-7 Work with the Los Banos Branch of the Merced County Library to create either a new large library facility or several satellite branches to serve additional population in Los Banos.

PFU-I-8 Require new development to pay its fair share of the costs of expanding library services to maintain current service levels.

**Institutions**

PFU-I-9 Work with health care providers to maintain a full range of health care facilities and services designed to meet regional and community needs.

PFU-I-10 Facilitate the provision of safe, affordable, and quality elder care facilities, child care services and transitional housing for families who reside or work in Los Banos.

PFU-I-11 Ensure accessibility for disabled persons to all buildings offering health and social services, consistent with the Americans for Disabilities Act of 1990.

PFU-I-12 Make provisions for houses of worship and pre-school facilities in new residential areas on arterial or collector streets.

**8.2 WATER, WASTEWATER, AND SOLID WASTE**

---

The Public Works Department is responsible for providing water and wastewater utility services to residents. Long-term facility planning is done with master plans, which have been updated to implement this General Plan.

**STORM DRAINAGE**

Major water features are located within the Planning Area and mapped on Figure 5-5. These features include rivers, fields and canals which provide important drainage resources for the city. Los Banos Creek, a dominant drainage feature in the region, runs to the west of the city while Mud Slough flows northwest through the Planning Area. The City operates shared drainage ditch facilities with Central California Irrigation District (CCID) and Grassland Water District (GWD) which divert water through the Planning Area. These ditches include the GWD San Luis Canal, the GWD Santa Fe Canal and the CCID Main Canal. The 2008 Storm Drainage Master Plan recommends various improvements related to disposal of drain water including standards for detention basins and proposed pump stations. The locations and capacities for these pump stations are illustrated in Figure 5-5.

**WATER SUPPLY**

Los Banos is located in the San Joaquin River Hydrologic Region and extracts ground water from the Delta-Mendota Sub-basin to meet all of the city’s water supply. The city’s 13 wells have a total maximum production capacity of about 15,575 gallons per minute (gpm), connected to an elevated storage tank with a capacity of 100,000 gallons and surface mounted storage tank of 5 million gallons. At present, the quality of the water pumped is adequate. As illustrated in Figure 5-5, the locations of the wells are scattered throughout the city, generally within City Limits. To anticipate rising demand, the Public Works Department (PWD) has plans to construct a second 5 million gallon water storage tank and booster pump station in the northern part of the city prior to its need based upon development patterns.

### Projected Water Demand

The amount of groundwater pumped from city wells has been increasing steadily over the years. Anticipating increased demand from population growth is part of the City’s water management efforts. Table 8-4 shows water supplied by the City’s pumps for 2004 and 2005, and an estimate for 2030 based on the assumption that the per-capita use will remain constant during the planning period. Fire water pressure must also be considered when planning capacity increases for new development. Standard minimum water flow for residential development is considered to be 2000 gallons per minute (GPM), while for commercial and industrial development it is considered to be 3500 GPM.

The 2008 Urban Water Management Plan estimates that this supply is sufficient to meet city needs through 2030. The Public Works Department also believes the water supply is sufficient for needs in 2030 as the Delta-Mendota Sub-basin is connected to one of the deepest water basins in California.<sup>1</sup> While quantity is not expected to be a problem, it will be increasingly difficult to find good quality potable water as annual pumpage rises beyond 8,000 AFY. This mean that pumped water must be filtered or the City must find alternative sources of water to supplement ground water. The 2000 Water Master Plan recommended that treated surface water be used in conjunction with ground water. Whether this will be done will depend on future conditions, especially the cost of procurement. The City will continue its cooperation with Central California Irrigation District and Department of Water Resources to monitor water levels in the Delta-Mendota Sub-basin and explore other means to supplement groundwater.

<sup>1</sup> The Delta-Mendota Sub-basin has a capacity of 51,000,000 AF to a depth of <1000 feet. For details refer to “San Joaquin Valley Ground Water Basin” California Groundwater Bulletin 118, January 2006 by Department of Water Resources.

8-4: Current and Projected Water Demand

	2004	2005	2030		
			Existing and Approved <sup>4</sup> Development	Proposed Development	Total
Population	30,626	32,380	60,650	29,730	90,380 <sup>1</sup>
Water Demand (AFY) <sup>2</sup>	7,332	7,598	13,950	6,838	20,787 <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Population at year 2030 is based on full buildout of the General Plan.

<sup>2</sup> AFY (Acre feet per year)

<sup>3</sup> Water estimate for 2030 based on per capita ratio of 0.23 AFY, from 2005 Urban Water Management Plan estimate for 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Approved Development data are estimates possible with the information available at the time of public review.

Source: City of Los Banos 2005 Urban Water Management Plan

### WATER CONSERVATION

Los Banos does not have a Groundwater Management Plan, but it is actively managing its water system to maximize resources and prevent an overdraft of the groundwater subbasin. Because it relies entirely on groundwater, the City can be at risk of overdraft during severe or prolonged drought periods when reduced surface rainfall compromises the subbasin’s recovery. The primary factor affecting potable water supply is the difficulty of meeting drinking water standards due to arsenic concentrations in some local wells. Because of the positive influence of recharge of Los Banos Creek on groundwater quality, higher quality groundwater exists in the western portion of the Planning Area. To avoid purchase of water from outside sources, water demand control measures are being introduced to conserve water.

The Los Banos Public Works Department has a Water Conservation Program, put in place since 1999 to reduce water waste and conserve water supply. The program limits the watering of lawns to specific days of the week, depending on street addresses. In addition, the City performs water audits on high consumption accounts that are flagged during the billing process. It also implements other Demand Management Measures (DMMs) including large landscape conservation programs, providing separate accounts for industrial users and educating the public on water conservation.

### WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS

Wastewater is collected throughout the City via a network of sanitary sewer collection pipelines ranging from 6 to 30 inches in diameter. With the aid of 12 sewer lift stations, the influent is gravity fed into a Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) located in the northeastern portion of the City. The WWTP has seven facultative ponds and serves as the primary wastewater treatment facility for Los Banos. Table 8-4 summarizes wastewater treatment for 2004 and 2005, and an estimate for wastewater treatment service in 2030.

In 2004, the plant treated a total of 1,261 million gallons of wastewater, an average of 3.44 million gallons per day (mgd). In 2005, this rose to 3.78 mgd. Currently, the facility meets all State standards and requirements. Once the plant reaches 5 mgd, the City will be required to adopt a pretreatment program. Planning is currently underway for an expansion and conversion to secondary treatment, with a capacity of 6 to 8 mgd. However, even with the new facility, the City will fall short of the estimated 9 mgd needed in 2030. An additional facility (or an expansion of current facilities) will be required.

### WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

Treated water at the City's WWTP is currently ground discharged. The planned expansion of the WWTP includes the development of additional existing disposal area and the purchase of another 108 acres to bring the total irrigation area to 531 acres. This reuse reduces the demand on fresh water supplies available to the area.

### SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

Solid waste disposal throughout Los Banos is managed by the City, Public Works Department. Landfill operations are operated as an enterprise function by Merced County. The City contracts with Allied Wastes, Inc. for solid waste collection services. The majority of the City's solid waste is taken to Billy Wright Landfill, a Class III facility with a lifespan of 2010, located on the west side of the county. The landfill has a capacity of 3.65 million cubic yards and is nearing its full capacity. Additional waste is taken to Highway 59 Landfill, a Class III facility with a lifespan of 2035, located on the east side of the county. The county is currently studying the future needs of solid waste services including expansion of the Billy Wright Landfill versus a transfer station or relocating all waste services to the Highway 59 Landfill.

Currently, the City has a green waste service. A curbside commingled recycling collection program was implemented for residential, commercial and industrial areas. Table 8-5 illustrates solid waste diversion rates (the percent of waste that is recycled) from 1997-2005 for Merced County.

8-5: Current and Projected Wastewater Needs

	2004	2005	2030		
			Existing and Approved Development	Future Development	Total
Population	30,626	32,380	60,650	29,730	90,380 <sup>1</sup>
Wastewater Treatment (AFY)	3,857	4,234	8,275	4,056	12,332 <sup>2</sup>
Wastewater Treatment (MGD) <sup>3</sup>	3.44	3.78	7.38	3.62	11.00

<sup>1</sup> Population at year 2030 based on full buildout of the General Plan.  
<sup>2</sup> Wastewater estimate for 2030 from City staff.  
<sup>3</sup> One AFY (acre feet per year) = 8.92x10<sup>-4</sup> MGD (million-gallons per day)

Source: City of Los Banos 2005 Urban Water Management Plan

8-6: Merced County Solid Waste Diversion Rates, 1997-2005

Year	Diversion Rate (percent of waste that is recycled)
1997	47
1998	43
1999	48
2000	49
2001	50
2002	48
2003	45
2004	42
2005 <sup>1</sup>	39

<sup>1</sup> Diversion rates calculated with preliminary data, which is subject to change when a jurisdiction submits updated information.

Source: Consolidated Waste Management Authority, Waste Stream Information Profiles <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/Profiles/>, 2006.

ELECTRICITY AND GAS

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) is the service provider to the Los Banos Planning Area and maintains a system of underground and overhead lines to supply electricity to the city. PG&E is a public utility and therefore functions on demand. PG&E also provides natural gas via plastic and steel underground lines to city residents.

GUIDING POLICIES

- PFU-G-13      Ensure an adequate supply of fresh water to serve existing and future needs of the city.
- PFU-G-14      Ensure that adequate waste water treatment capacity is available to serve existing and future needs of the city.
- PFU-G-15      Promote the conservation of water within Los Banos.

PFU-G-16 Meet the city’s solid waste disposal needs, while maximizing opportunities for waste reduction and recycling.

**IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS**

**Water Supply, Wastewater Collection and Treatment**

PFU-I-17 Ensure that water supply capacity, quality, and infrastructure are in place prior to occupancy of new development.

PFU-I-18 Design stormwater and wastewater collection and treatment facilities to serve expected buildout of the areas served by these facilities.

PFU-I-19 Establish equitable methods for distributing costs associated with providing water and sewage service to development, including impact mitigation fees where warranted.

PFU-I-20 Implement recommendations put forth by the 2007 Strategic Wastewater Management Plan with regards to:

- The near-term expansion of the Wastewater Treatment Plant to 4.9mgd;
- The future expansion of existing treatment facilities beyond 4.9mgd, and/or the construction of a new membrane bi-reactor (MBR) facility to meet projected population growth; and
- The acquisition of land for treatment purposes.

PFU-I-21 Decline requests for extension of water and sewer lines beyond the Sphere of Influence, except in cases of developing regional water and sewer facilities or of existing documented health hazards and in areas where the City has agreements to provide services.

PFU-I-22 In partnership with County, State and federal agencies, work to prevent illegal wastewater disposal or chemical disposal practices.

PFU-I-23 Continue to pursue the identification and acquisition of surface water rights or supply agreements to meet future regional water supply needs.

**Water Conservation and Recycling**

PFU-I-24 Require all development projects to submit a landscaping plan:

- Commercial and public right-of-way, and park projects will be required to submit planting plans, irrigation plans, irrigation schedules and water use estimates for City approval prior to issuance of building permits;
- Industrial projects will be required to submit plans for water recycling and explain how water use will meet requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program during the plan review process. They will also be required to submit irrigation plans for proposed landscaping.

- PFU-I-25 Develop water filtration facilities to ensure the quality of groundwater meet federal and State drinking water standards. The City may place a temporary cap on urban development, if necessary, to allow facilities to catch up with growth.
- PFU-I-26 Become a signatory to the California Urban Water Conservation Council and implement all Demand Management Measures as soon as they become feasible.
- PFU-I-27 Implements recommendations set forth in the 2005 Urban Water Management Plan including initiatives such as:
  - A water survey program;
  - A water conservation program (Water Patrol); and
  - A Residential Plumbing retrofit program.
- PFU-I-28 Encourage the use of reclaimed water for irrigation and landscaping purposes.
- PFU-I-29 Promote the use of evapotranspiration (ET) water systems in irrigating agriculture and large parks.
- PFU-I-30 Educate the general public about the importance of water conservation, water recycling and groundwater recharge through the following means:
  - Making water production and treatment facilities available for tours by schools or organized groups;

- Encouraging educators to include water conservation in their curriculums; and
- Providing tips to business groups on water conservation and recycling.

Also see Chapter 5: Parks, Open Space, and Resources on policies related to storm water filtration and ground water recharge, and Chapter 7: Safety on policies related to flood and storm water management.

### Solid Waste Management and Recycling

- PFU-I-31 Reduce volumes of solid waste generated in Los Banos through recycling and resource conservation measures such as:
  - Requiring new and refurbished buildings be designed with on-site storage facilities for recycled materials to make recycling more convenient;
  - Using post-consumer recycled paper and other recycled materials in all City operations;
  - Supporting the commingled-recycling program; and
  - Continuing efforts to develop new specialized recycling programs for residential, commercial, industrial, and educational sectors.
- PFU-I-32 Support waste reduction and recycling programs through public education, including writing articles on City websites, newsletters, and other forms of publications.

PFU-I-33 Explore the possibility of attracting a material recycling company to locate a facility in Los Banos.

PFU-I-34 Work closely with the Joint Powers Authority to ensure adequate landfill space is available to meet projected growth.

One of the two designated landfill facilities for the city, Billy Wright Landfill, is projected to reach full capacity in year 2010, so planning early expansion of Billy Wright Landfill or alternative landfill space will be a priority.