



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

ITEM NO. 5.2

DATE: October 20, 2026

TO: Chairperson and Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Steve Riley, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Hearing to consider a request for three Conditional Use Permit Modifications and Site Plan Design Review Modifications to authorize the installation of new PFAS water treatment systems at California Water Service (Cal Water) Stations 9, 19, and 31. Improvements include installation of 2 Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) vessels with associated control/electrical systems, underground utilities, and piping connections.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt resolutions:

1. Finding that the projects are categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Existing Facilities, which covers a project that consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use, including existing facilities of both investor and publicly-owned utilities used to provide electric power, natural gas, sewerage, or other public utility services, and directing the Planning Manager to file three Notices of Exemption in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, subject to project approval; and
2. Approving Conditional Use Permit Modification (CUPM) 26-002, Site Plan Design Review Modification (SPDRM) 26-002, Conditional Use Permit Modification (CUPM) 26-003, Site Plan Design Review Modification (SPDRM) 26-003, Conditional Use Permit Modification (CUPM) 26-004, and Site Plan Design Review Modification (SPDRM) 26-004.

SUMMARY

The Cal Water Station 31 Project (Station 31 Project), located at 732 Olivina Avenue, Cal Water Station 19 Project (Station 19 Project), located at 1748 Elm Street, and Cal Water Station 9 Project (Station 9 Project), located at 3474 East Avenue, consist of the installation of new PFAS water treatment systems at California Water Service (Cal Water) Stations 9, 19, and 31. Improvements include installation of two Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) vessels with associated control/electrical systems, underground utilities, and piping connections (collectively, "Projects"). Cal Water currently uses all three sites as water storage facilities (including existing water tanks) as authorized by long-standing Conditional Use Permits

(CUP). The General Plan and zoning regulations allow public and quasi-public uses on the sites with approval of a CUP. The Projects include requests for approval of Conditional Use Permit Modifications and Site Plan Design Review Modifications to expand each facility's capacity and add equipment necessary to provide efficient and reliable public water services.

DISCUSSION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Projects consist of the installation of new PFAS water treatment systems at California Water Service (Cal Water) Stations 9, 19, and 31. Improvements include 2 GAC vessels with associated control/electrical systems, underground utilities, and piping connections (see Attachments 2, 3, and 4 - Development Plans). GAC vessels are pressure or gravity contactors filled with granular activated carbon. Water flows downward through the carbon bed, where contaminants are removed by physical adsorption, chemisorption, catalytic reactions, and sometimes biological activity. Cal Water is proposing the improvements to provide efficient and reliable water service to its Livermore customers. Each of the Projects include the following entitlements:

- Conditional Use Permit Modification (CUPM): facilitates public and quasi-public land use by authorizing a new water treatment system and associated improvements for a treatment facility.
- Site Plan Design Review Modification (SPDRM): Ensures the site layout complies with the city's Development Code standards.

PROJECT SITE CONTEXT

The Project sites are existing water storage facility. The tables below summarize the General Plan land use designation, zoning classification, and existing land use on each Project site and surrounding properties. The Project Sites are shown in Attachment 1 location map.

Table 1 - Station 31 Site, 732 Olivina Avenue			
	General Plan Designation	Zoning Designation	Existing Land Use
North	Low Density Residential (LDR) 3	Residential Low Density (RL)	Single Family Residential
South	Low Density Residential (LDR) 3	Residential Low Density (RL)	Single Family Residential
East	Low Density Residential (LDR) 3	Residential Low Density (RL)	Single Family Residential
West	Low Density Residential (LDR) 3	Residential Low Density (RL)	Single Family Residential
Subject Site	Low Density Residential (LDR) 3	Residential Low Density (RL)	Water Storage Tank Facility

Table 2 - Station 19 Site, 1748 Elm Street			
	General Plan Designation	Zoning Designation	Existing Land Use
North	Low Density Residential (LDR) 4	T3 Neighborhood (T3N)	Single Family Residential

South	Low Density Residential (LDR) 4	T3 Neighborhood (T3N)	Single Family Residential
East	Low Density Residential (LDR) 4	T3 Neighborhood (T3N)	Single Family Residential
West	Low Density Residential (LDR) 4	T3 Neighborhood (T3N)	Single Family Residential
Subject Site	Low Density Residential (LDR) 4	T3 Neighborhood (T3N)	Water Storage Tank Facility

Table 3 - Station 9 Site, 3474 East Avenue			
	General Plan Designation	Zoning Designation	Existing Land Use
North	Medium Density Residential (MDR2)	Residential Low Density (RL)	Multi Family Residential
South	Medium Density Residential (MDR2)	Suburban Multiple Residential (RG-12)	Multi Family Residential
East	Medium Density Residential (MDR2)	Suburban Multiple Residential (RG-12)	Multi Family Residential
West	Medium Density Residential (MDR2)	Suburban Multiple Residential (RG-12)	Multi Family Residential
Subject Site	Medium Density Residential (MDR2)	Suburban Multiple Residential (RG-12)	Water Storage Tank Facility

STAFF ANALYSIS

General Plan Land Use

The Livermore General Plan 2045 designates the Station 31 site as Low Density Residential 3 (LDR3) and the Station 19 site as Low Density Residential 4 (LDR4), which are designed to accommodate the lowest range of suburban residential densities and provide opportunities for mostly single-family detached housing types in a range of neighborhood settings. The General Plan designates the Station 9 site as Medium Density Residential 2 (MDR2), which is designed to accommodate the mid-range of suburban residential densities in the city and provide single-family detached and attached housing types in a range of neighborhood settings. The proposed installation of new water treatment systems within existing, long-established water storage facilities preserves the sites' current functions, consistent with the land use designations.

Further, the Infrastructure Element provide policy direction to support the facilitation of Public and Quasi Public Uses, including utilities, such as:

- **Goal INF-2** Provide sufficient water supplies and facilities that meet current and future needs in an efficient and sustainable manner.
- **Policy INF-2.1 Potable Water.** Ensure the availability of potable water for the city's residents and businesses.
- **Policy INF-2.2 Water Efficiency.** Increase water efficiency in all new development and existing building stock.

The Projects implement these policies by enhancing an existing public utility facility to ensure continued delivery of safe and reliable drinking water. Therefore, the Projects are consistent with the General Plan.

Zoning District

The Station 31 Project site is zoned Residential Low Density (RL), which is applied to areas of the City that are appropriate for low-density residential dwellings of a single-family dwelling type on smaller lots than in the R-S zone. Directly related types of uses, such as community services and accessory facilities, may also be allowed. The Station 19 Project is zoned T3 Neighborhood (T3N), which is intended to allow additions and new development that respect and protect the integrity and quality of the neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown. The Station 9 Project is zoned Suburban Multiple Residential (RG-12), which is intended to provide areas for the location of low density, multiple-family residential dwellings and to establish regulations for their development.

Public and Quasi-Public service uses, including water utility facilities, require approval of a Conditional Use Permit in each of the above-described zoning districts to ensure compatibility in the district. All three water storage facilities were originally approved under CUPs in 2002, 1960, and 1958 respectively (Attachments 10, 13, and 16). The Projects propose Modification to the CUPs to authorize the construction of new water treatment systems, consistent with the zoning and Livermore Development Code Chapter 9.

Conditional Use Permit Modification

The Projects involve minor modifications to the originally approved water storage facilities, consisting of the installation of new water treatment systems and related improvements and associated control/electrical systems, underground utilities, and piping connections. Installation of the new water treatment systems and associated improvements would not increase staffing, noise levels, or hours of operation, and therefore would not intensify operations beyond typical activity levels.

The Projects include conditions of approval requiring Cal Water to coordinate with all relevant local agencies prior to building permit issuance (Attachments 9, 12, and 15). This coordination includes securing applicable temporary discharge permits from the Water Resources Division. Therefore, the Project is compatible with the surrounding residential development, subject to the conditions of approval.

Site Plan and Design Review Modification

Development Standards

Each zoning district establishes development standards for height, lot coverage, and setbacks. The minimum side and rear setbacks for all three sites are 5 feet. The minimum front setbacks are 15 feet (RL), 20 feet (T3N), and 25 feet (RG-12). These required setbacks apply to the proposed GAC vessels, which are compliant as shown on the site plan for each Project (Sheet C1 in Attachments 2, 3, and 4).

The maximum allowed lot coverage is 40 percent in the RL zone. The GAC vessels proposed Station 31 Project (12-foot diameter, ~113 sq ft each) bring total coverage to 3.8 percent, compliant with the RL standards. T3N and RG-12 have no maximum coverage limits.

The maximum permitted height limits are 35 feet (RL), 24 feet (T3N), and 45 feet (RG-12). The proposed GAC vessels have an overall height of 21 feet 6 inches (Sheet M4 in Attachments 2, 3, and 4) and are fully compliant with the development and design standards.

Trees and Landscaping

Chapter 12 of the Livermore Municipal Code defines a protected tree as any tree with a circumference (CBH) of 60 inches or more; or any California native tree having a circumference (CBH) of 24 inches or more. The Station 19 Project proposes to remove four trees, and the Station 31 Project proposes to remove two trees, all of which are less than 24 inches in circumference and therefore are not considered protected. However, all three projects propose a variety of native and nonnative trees for screening, shown on the last sheet of the Development Plans (Attachments 2, 3, and 4) to minimize impacts to the surrounding neighbors and street frontages.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission find the Projects categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Existing Facilities, which includes a project that consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use, including existing facilities of both investor and publicly-owned utilities used to provide electric power, natural gas, sewerage, or other public utility services.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Location Map
2. Development Plans - CUPM26-002, SPDRM26-002
3. Development Plans - CUPM26-003, SPDRM26-003
4. Development Plans - CUPM26-004, SPDRM26-004
5. Resolution - Environmental
6. Resolution - Environmental
7. Resolution - Environmental
8. Resolution - Project
9. Exhibit A - Conditions of Approval
10. Exhibit B - Original Use Permit
11. Resolution - Project
12. Exhibit A - Conditions of Approval
13. Exhibit B - Original Conditional Use Permit
14. Resolution - Project
15. Exhibit A - Conditions of Approval
16. Exhibit B - Original Conditional Use Permit

Prepared by: Emily LaDue
Assistant Planner