The City of Carlsbad is located in northern coastal San Diego County and is bordered by the City of Oceanside to the north; the Cities of Vista and San Marcos to the east; the City of Encinitas to the south; and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The Carlsbad coastline includes three large beaches: South Carlsbad State Beach, Carlsbad State Beach, and North Carlsbad State Beach. As of 2014, Carlsbad has an estimated population of 110,169 people, which is projected to increase to 129,381 by 2050 (SANDAG Regional Growth Forecast, 2010).

Carlsbad is organized under a council-manager form of government and is governed by a five-member city council consisting of an elected Mayor and four elected council members.

The City of Carlsbad’s adopted Sphere of Influence is coterminous with the City’s incorporated boundary.

The City of Carlsbad provides fire protection and police services city-wide, and water and wastewater services to portions of the city. The subsidiary Carlsbad Municipal Water District provides water services to the majority of the city territory. The southeastern portion of Carlsbad receives water service from the Olivenhain Municipal Water District or the Vallecitos Water District; and wastewater services from the Vallecitos Water District or the Leucadia Wastewater District. Trash hauling and disposal service is provided by contract with Waste Management, Inc.