

Capital Hill Reservoir Replacement Project FAQs



Q: Why is this project necessary?

A: The three existing Capital Hill reservoirs are 116, 97, and 79 years old and were not designed to current seismic resistant standards. The property on which the reservoirs are located is at the best elevation and at a location where significant existing water main infrastructure converges. This project completely replaces the three existing reservoirs with one new modern earthquake resistant reservoir while leaving ample space on the site for future reservoir storage to provide high-quality drinking water to meet the growth of the Rogue Valley long into the future.

Q: What is the overall size of the new reservoir?

A: The storage volume of the new reservoir will be 12 million gallons. The reservoir will be approximately 270' in diameter and approximately 32' tall, much of which will be below the finished surrounding elevation. The height above ground when completed may vary between approximately 15' and 25'.

Q: Why is the new reservoir just one tank?

A: After evaluating multiple design options, a circular 12MG tank was selected as the largest design that the site could accommodate and achieves the goal of completely replacing the storage volume of the three existing reservoirs while leaving space for growth in the future. The new reservoir will be divided internally into two cells, which offers more operational flexibility.

Q: Why create a new reservoir with the same water capacity as the existing reservoirs?

A: The goal for this project is to replace the three existing aged reservoirs with seismically resilient storage. Additional storage capacity is not necessary at this time. The design of a single 12MG reservoir as a replacement for the existing ones leaves ample space for future growth once it is needed.

Q: What is the earliest that construction of the new reservoir will begin?

A: June 2025.

Q: Will the neighbors continue to get water during construction?

A: Yes, neighbors will continue to get water throughout construction. With any large construction project, there could be brief times where local water is shut (usually less than a few hours) to make connections. We will communicate in advance when any planned temporary shutoffs might happen. Most of the neighbors in the immediate vicinity do not get water directly from these reservoirs but from the next higher reservoirs in our system.

Q: Will dust abatement be a part of the project?

A: Yes. Dust abatement for the project in general is intended to be included in the project requirements.

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Q: Will the pavement on the haul routes be repaired after the project is complete?

A: Yes. The project design team is working closely with the City of Medford Public Works Department regarding selection of haul routes and potential pavement repairs during and at the end of construction. All planned truck traffic will be in accordance with the City of Medford's recommendations which limit truck traffic to Capital Avenue except in rare, permitted uses of the site entrance on Valley View.

Q: How many truck trips will occur per day?

A: We don't know that yet but will let you know when we get further into design. We do know that there will be times during construction that there will be heavy truck traffic, and other times that there will not be many at all. We will communicate in advance when heavy truck traffic is anticipated.

Q: Will there be flaggers along Capital Avenue, such as at Sunrise and Valley View?

A: The use of flaggers and/or temporary traffic control lighting are options that are currently being considered. The decision will be made as we get further into the design phase.

Q: How will nearby streets such as Girard Drive be impacted during construction?

A: Truck and equipment traffic will be approaching from Sunrise Avenue and limited to Capital Avenue; there is no direct impact anticipated to heavy haul prohibited streets such as Girard Drive.

Q: Has the team addressed potential damage to infrastructure (i.e. water, sewer, gas) under the roadways being used by the trucks?

A: That would be highly unusual. Those utilities are usually buried deep enough that damage due to street-legal loads is unlikely. If any utilities are damaged, we will repair them.

Q: Will the concrete wall on Capital Avenue be left in place?

A: The wall along Capital Avenue is actually the wall of existing reservoir #3. At the completion of this project, that reservoir will be decommissioned and no longer used, though it is not scheduled for demolition.

Q: How many trees will be removed?

A: Our staff is reviewing options that maximize use of the site for water storage needs, balanced with wildfire safety and preserving the visual buffer of trees and vegetation. The majority of the site, which is not easily seen from the surrounding streets, is very open with few trees, but we will also consider replacing trees where possible when construction is completed.

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Q: Will the site be open to the public (such as a park)?

A: For the safety of the water system, the reservoir site will remain secured with fencing and gates, as it is currently.

Q: Will our water bill increase?

A: Medford Water applied for and received two Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loans from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), totaling \$97 million to support our Rogue Valley Water Supply Resiliency Program. The Program will use the WIFIA loans to fund several projects over the next ten years, including the Capital Hill Reservoir Replacement Project. Additionally, Medford Water has applied for (and is a finalist under review) grant funding which would apply toward this and several other ongoing and planned projects. Water rates are reviewed annually to keep pace with the cost of service and may change during this time, indirectly related to the project work necessary throughout the system.

Q: What time of day will construction occur?

A: We anticipate that construction activities will primarily be limited to the days and hours stipulated by the City of Medford, but we are still early in the design phase, and will address concerns regarding construction times, truck traffic, etc., when we know more.

Q: Will sound barriers be used during construction?

A: While a barrier option may seem reasonable, due to the extent and terrain of the site, the cost and limited effectiveness of such a barrier compared to the overall project make it cost prohibitive. We will address noise concerns better when we know more.

Q: How do I stay informed on project progress?

A: To learn more and to sign up for updates on the reservoir replacement project, go to medfordwater.org/CapitalHill. For more information on the public safety communications tower project, go to medfordoregon.gov/safetytower.

Q: I have questions about the relocation of the public safety communications tower, where do I go?

A: We have general information about the relocation of the tower, but if you would like more information, we recommend going to the City of Medford's project website at medfordoregon.gov/safetytower.