Capital Hill Reservoir Replacement Project FAQs

Q: Why is this project necessary?

A: The three existing Capital Hill reservoirs, constructed in 1908, 1927, and 1945, and are 116, 97, and 79 years old. They are reaching the end of their useful life and were not designed to current seismic resistant standards developed since their original construction. The property on which the reservoirs are located is at the best elevation and has an existing network of infrastructure to distribute water to the entire system. To continue to provide reliable, high-quality drinking water to the growing population of the Rogue Valley long into the future, the existing reservoirs need to be replaced at the same location.

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 while leaving as much space as possible for the construction of future reservoirs as needed. Also, the new reservoir will be divided internally into two cells, which offers more operational flexibility.

Q: What is the current status of the project?

A: Following a public bidding process, Slayden Constructors was selected as the lowest bidder at $31,025,750, which was approved for award by the Board of Water Commissioners at their May 20, 2026, meeting.

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

A: At present, additional storage volume at this location is not necessary to meet the needs of the system. However, the need to reconstruct the aged and vulnerable existing reservoirs is clear. Upon completion of the new reservoir, not only will we have the same capacity as the three existing reservoirs, but we will have a modern seismic resistant tank, plus space to expand storage capacity in the future.

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

A: July 2026.

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 some times where local water is shut off for a short time (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: What can people in the neighborhood expect?

A: A robust public involvement program occurred during design of this project. Information on the project is posted to the project website which has an option to sign up to receive email updates; this information will be updated soon once we begin working with the selected construction contractor. We will be sharing more details about what the surrounding neighborhoods can expect during construction at an open house with the contractor and the public, currently anticipated for late June.

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.

Q: What route will construction traffic take to get to and from the construction site?

A: Medford Water coordinated with the City of Medford Engineering and Planning departments regarding potential construction traffic routes. Based on a cooperative review of the types of roads, including base foundations and pavement construction, it was determined that the route with the least impact would be along Sunrise Avenue and up Capital Avenue to the main site entrance. Any use of Valley View Drive for project-related traffic would be limited to special permitted use only; very few of these are anticipated and standard construction traffic would not be allowed along that street. In addition, there is no direct impact anticipated to heavy haul prohibited streets such as Girard Drive and N. Modoc Avenue.

The construction haul route and traffic plan are still preliminary; now that a contractor has been selected, a detailed Traffic Control Plan will be developed and submitted to the City of Medford for review prior to the start of any construction, and that plan will meet all City requirements for safety and work time restrictions. It will also include the use of flaggers and/or any temporary traffic control options.

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.

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.

Capital Hill Reservoir Replacement Project FAQs

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: What will happen to the "Caretaker's Cottage", located on the site?

A: Medford Water has undertaken the environmental sampling of the cottage and its interior. We anticipate that the cottage will eventually be properly removed and disposed of during a latter phase of this project.

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 at this time.

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.

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: How is the project being paid for, and will our water bill increase?

A: Medford Water does not receive any support from local taxes. To reduce impacts to customers, we have sought out and received federal funding sources, such as Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, totaling $97 million (awarded in 2022). The WIFIA loans are helping fund several projects over the next ten years, including the Capital Hill Reservoir Replacement Project.

Medford Water was also selected to receive a FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant of $34.8 million for several major water system resiliency projects. Approximately $17.8 million of that grant was to support the Capital Hill Reservoir replacement project. Unfortunately, the BRIC grant program has been in limbo since March of 2025 when the current administration abruptly attempted to cancel the program. Recent developments with the BRIC program

Capital Hill Reservoir Replacement Project FAQs

leave us cautiously optimistic that this funding source may be reinstated. 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 which is 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., but we 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.