South Hill/Lincoln Heights Water Tank FAQs

Note: these FAQs will be updated periodically.

The City of Spokane provides clean drinking water to more than 200,000 people every day. The City operates the second largest water system in the state with seven source well sites, 23 pressure zones, and more than 1,000 miles of water main. The system is critical to maintaining public health, providing fire protection, and delivering needed water throughout our community. Infrastructure like water tanks are needed in key locations throughout the City to ensure that proper pressure and water accessibility is maintained for all customers.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why does the City of Spokane need a new water tank?

The need for additional storage was recognized in 2008, and the project was added to the 2009 to 2014 Six-year Water Capital Program at that time. Between 2008 and now, planning, budgeting, and funding acquisition has been occurring to allow the project to move forward.

Who benefits from this proposed tank and how do they benefit?

The City's water system has 23 pressure zones that ensure water will reach every customer. This tank will be located in what we call the "high system pressure zone." The high system pressure zone serves all homes on the South Hill south of about 14th Avenue. That means everyone living south of 14th Avenue will benefit directly from this project. The primary benefits of this tank are provision of adequate water during the peak demand months of July and August and availability of adequate water during a fire emergency.

In addition, to offset the impact the proposed tank will have to Hamblen park, parks improvements will be made within either Hamblen Park or another nearby park benefitting users of those parks. The nature of such improvements will be decided with input from the public.

How will the proposed tank be paid for?

All Spokane water system customers ultimately pay for infrastructure repairs and improvements needed in the system through their water bills.

What would the tank look like?

As seen elsewhere on this website, the proposed tank configuration would be in a "pedestal" configuration. That means it would be relatively narrow at the bottom (50 to 60 feet wide) and wide at the top (90 to 100 feet wide). Color schemes will be determined with public input. Council Member Lori Kinnear also has suggested the possibility of a mural project on the base of the tank.

What locations were considered and what issues does each site have?

There are very few locations on the South Hill that could accommodate a tank and meet the criteria given in the preceding question. Below is a list of the other locations considered and why they were not selected.

Location	**Concerns**
Ferris High School	At least 30 feet lower than Hamblen Park which would mean the tank would have to be 30 feet taller (130' height tank) At least 3,500 feet farther from transmission mains Not City owned (These challenges result in added cost of at least $2.5M)
Hazel's Cr Natural Area (southeast of Ferris HS)	At least 50 feet lower than Hamblen Park which would mean the tank would have to be 50 feet taller (150' height tank) At least 4,000 feet farther from transmission mains (These challenges result in added cost of at least $3M)
South Sports Complex (between Regal & Cook south of 46th)	At least 40 feet lower than Hamblen Park which would mean the tank would have to be 40 feet taller (140' height tank) At least 5,000 feet further from transmission mains (These challenges result in added cost of at least at least $3M)
Thorton Murphy Park	Approx. 100' lower than Hamblen which would mean the tank would have to be 100' taller (200' height tank) – not feasible
Lincoln Park (Southeast Blvd)	Approx. 20' lower than Hamblen which would mean the tank would be 20' taller (120' height tank) Also in a park Approx. 4000' from nearest transmission main (These challenges result in added cost of at least $3M)
Our Lady of Fatima	Barely 1 ac Not City owned Immediately adjacent to nearby homes
Adjacent to existing reservoir, north side of 37th & Stone (Garden Park)	Site quite small for a second reservoir (including construction staging area) Site not level Site is immediately adjacent to existing homes
31st and Napa (undeveloped area immediately east of Touchmark retirement home)	Steeply sloping and very little flat area for construction staging – substantial additional cost to construct reservoir at this location due to rock removal and constructability challenges. Site is immediately adjacent to existing homes
SE Blvd at about 32nd (west side)	Not flat Not City owned

	Immediately adjacent to nearby homes Better used as commercial since it is on an arterial
Hamblen Park	Public opposition to this site Unclear if Spokane Park Board support could be secured
Hamblen Elementary School	Property not owned by the City Site location is currently in a natural state with mature conifers

Is this tank necessary now because of the proposed Greenstone housing development in the vicinity of 34th & Crestline?

No. The need for this tank was identified several years ago before the Greenstone development was proposed. The Greenstone development, if constructed, will create a tiny demand for water compared to demand created by the tens of thousands of homes that already exist and would be served by the proposed tank.

We have plenty of water and good pressure. Why do we need another tank?

Additional storage capacity is need for the high system pressure zone to supply emergency water in the event of a power outage or fire event as well as for normal high demand summer operations. In addition, the Washington State Department of Health has confirmed the City's determination that additional tank volume is required.

Can this tank be buried?

To function correctly, the needed reservoir must be at the same top elevation as the other two reservoirs in this pressure zone at 33rd & Lamont and Garden Park (37th & Stone). In general, buried tanks are feasible only when they can be located on the top of a hill.

Will there be any noise associated with this tank following construction?

No. This tank will operate entirely on gravity.

Will this tank cause traffic to increase in the area?

No. The proposed tank would be visited by a single water department pickup truck about once every day or two.

Will the tank have blinking lights or cell phone antennae on top?

Yes, to provide proper warning to aircraft, there will be blinking red lights on top. Such lights will be difficult to see from ground level due to the shape of the tank. Regarding cell phone antennae, there likely will be cell phone antennae installed on this tank to provide better cell phone service for area residents and travelers.

What about other tank sites such as the South Sports Complex, Hamblen Elementary School, Thorton Murphy Park, Lincoln Park or other vacant properties on the south hill?

See additional information under "What other locations were considered and why weren't they selected?" question above.

What do I do if my question isn't answered above?

Please email your question or comment to highsystemtank@spokanecity.org. Answers to the questions/comments received will be added to this list. Please check back periodically.