

Penrose Water Supply Project

Oct. 14, 2026 – Community Meeting – What we heard

Theme 1: Project need and whether storage tanks are the right solution

What we heard

Residents expressed strong interest in understanding the rationale behind replacing the existing reservoir with water storage tanks.

Feedback generally reflected a preference for rehabilitating or rebuilding the current reservoir and dam. Attendees also requested additional information about the project's purpose, alternatives considered, site selection process, proposed tank configuration, and how the project supports future water supply planning.

What we know today

- We evaluated four alternatives, including dam rehabilitation, dam replacement and construction of new storage tanks.
- The storage tank alternative was selected after comparing safety, infrastructure resiliency, long-term costs, operational requirements and regulatory obligations.
- The storage tank alternative was preferred from a community safety standpoint as it replaces a high-hazard dam and reservoir in a known landslide area.
- The selected site uses much of the existing reservoir footprint and was evaluated based on engineering, environmental, operational and permitting considerations.
- The project is intended to support our broader water system and make more effective use of existing water rights.

What we're still evaluating

- Whether adjustments can be made to project approach and characteristics.
- Opportunities to further explain the alternatives analysis and the factors that led to selection of the preferred alternative.
- Questions raised by residents regarding future use of Fisher Reservoir, which is not owned by Colorado Springs Utilities.

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Theme 2: Geology, slope stability and engineering safety

What we heard

Residents expressed significant concern about the site's geology, including slope stability, landslide risk, groundwater impacts, seismic activity and the weight of the proposed tanks.

What we know today

- The tank foundation system is being designed based on these investigations.
- The proposed foundation system is intended to transfer loads deeper below the surface rather than concentrating loads in near-surface soils with the current dam.
- Current project plans do not include groundwater drawdown wells but can be added or addressed if/when needed.
- The completed foundation shafts are not expected to impede groundwater flow.
- Technical studies supporting the project will be included in the development review process. Relevant documents that do not jeopardize the security of the site and water resources will be available during those review processes through normally approved processes or procedures.

What we're still evaluating

- Information on slope stability, earthquake design considerations, proximity to fault lines, geologic conditions and groundwater.
- How best to communicate technical findings and engineering assumptions in a format that is understandable and meaningful to residents.
- Questions regarding independent review, agency oversight and permitting requirements for geologic studies.
- Opportunities to provide more information on foundation stability.
- Opportunities to provide more information on how leaks or cracks in concrete tanks are prevented and detected.

Theme 3: Traffic, construction impacts and neighborhood safety

What we heard

Traffic was one of the most common concerns raised during the meeting. Residents asked about truck routes, school and pedestrian safety, congestion, emergency access, construction parking, road impacts and construction schedules.

What we know today

- A Traffic Control Management Plan will be developed before construction begins.
- Marland Road South is currently identified as a secondary construction access route.
- Employee and contractor passenger vehicles are expected to use the primary access point near the intersection of South Marland Rd and Cheyenne Mountain Zoo Road.
- Road conditions will be documented before construction and reviewed after construction is complete.
- Any project-related damage to roads will be repaired.
- Construction is anticipated to take approximately three years.
- Most work is expected to occur during normal weekday daytime construction hours.

What we're still evaluating

- Final construction access routes.
- Detailed truck-routing plans.
- Construction staging and parking locations.
- Potential traffic mitigation measures, such as police officers in marked vehicles.
- Temporary construction access points that avoid neighborhood roads.
- Coordination with neighboring properties and organizations, including Cheyenne Mountain Zoo and The Broadmoor.
- How construction plans may affect emergency access and evacuation routes.
- Whether additional traffic-management measures may be appropriate as project design advances.

Theme 4: Emergency preparedness, tank safety and risk management

What we heard

Residents asked how the proposed tanks would perform during emergencies, including leaks, structural failures, earthquakes and severe storm events. Many requested more information about emergency response and potential downstream impacts.

What we know today

- The storage tanks are designed by licensed professional engineers in accordance with applicable industry standards.
- The proposed storage tanks will include engineered structural systems and overflow protection.
- In the event of an overflow, water would be conveyed through dedicated overflow piping to the existing stormwater system.
- A Standard Operating Plan (SOP) will be developed before any solution is placed into service.
- Construction inspections will occur as part of the project.

What we're still evaluating

- Additional information requested by residents regarding emergency scenarios.
- Final operating procedures and emergency-response protocols.
- Questions regarding agency oversight, inspections and long-term operational monitoring.
- Opportunities to provide additional information comparing the risks associated with storage tanks and the existing reservoir system.

Theme 5: Visual impacts, trees and neighborhood character

What we heard

Residents expressed concern about storage tank visibility, impacts to views, removal of mature trees and the overall appearance of the facility.

What we know today

- Portions of the storage tanks are planned to be constructed below existing grade to reduce visibility.
- The project team is evaluating landscape restoration, grading and backfill alternatives.
- Additional visual simulations are being developed from multiple viewpoints.
- The project and development plan will include restoration requirements following construction.
- The project plan intends to identify trees that may be affected and work to minimize impacts.

What we're still evaluating

- Citizen advisory committee to review and provide input on landscape mitigation and restoration.
- Limitations with South Marland Road due to road surface and width.
- Final landscaping plans.
- Tree preservation opportunities.
- Potential screening measures.
- Backfill design alternatives.
- Architectural and aesthetic considerations raised by the community.
- Final visual renderings and view analyses.

Theme 6: Environmental impacts, wildlife and stormwater

What we heard

Residents asked about impacts to wildlife, zoo animals, stormwater, drainage, wildfire risk, groundwater and existing environmental conditions.

What we know today

- A Land Suitability Analysis has been completed as part of the development plan.
- Wildlife and vegetation surveys have been conducted as part of the development plan.
- Construction-phase erosion-control measures will be required.
- Stormwater and erosion-control plans will be reviewed through the permitting process.
- Current engineering evaluations indicate that the project is not expected to significantly affect groundwater movement.

What we're still evaluating

- Detailed construction-phase stormwater controls.
- Final post-construction drainage design.
- Community concerns regarding existing drainage issues.
- Additional information related to wildlife movement and potential impacts to nearby facilities and natural resources.
- Questions regarding emergency scenarios involving stormwater or tank overflows.

Theme 7: Transparency, information sharing and ongoing public involvement

What we heard

Residents consistently asked for more information, greater transparency and additional opportunities to review project documents before decisions are finalized.

What we know today

- We intend to continue providing information through public meetings, the project website and project communications.
- Technical studies, permit materials and supporting documents will be submitted through permitting review processes.
- Requests for those documents and studies are best requested through the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) process to ensure security of sensitive information, accuracy, and consistency.
- Community feedback is being documented and considered as project planning continues.

What we're still evaluating

- Additional opportunities to share technical information in a more accessible format.
- Near-future community engagement activities. For example, focusing our next meeting on a single topic such as safety.
- Requests for expanded access to project studies, visual renderings and alternative analysis information.
- Suggestions regarding community participation in landscaping, restoration and mitigation discussions.

Overall takeaways

The October 14 meeting highlighted five primary concerns:

1. Whether storage tanks are the right solution compared with repairing or rebuilding the reservoir.
2. Confidence in the geologic analysis and long-term stability of the site.
3. Traffic and neighborhood impacts during the anticipated three-year construction period.
4. Visual impacts, tree preservation and neighborhood character.
5. A strong desire for continued transparency, access to project information and meaningful community involvement.