

they often have large, open spaces like cafeterias and gymnasiums that easily convert to sleeping areas.

“It can be so expensive to retrofit buildings that owners of businesses are gravitating toward these minimum levels of safety to assure people get out of the building, but then you have to deal with the building afterwards,” explains Chris Poland, a consulting engineer and resiliency expert who worked with the Beaverton School District in its planning. “Schools are a special building cluster because, from a recovery standpoint, getting children back in school so families start to feel settled is very important.”

The more resilient the school building, the more likely it is to be open soon after the mega-quake and even serve as a shelter in the aftermath of the disaster.

In Beaverton’s case, the district is using a \$680 million bond to design its new schools to double as emergency shelters and be functional shortly after the earthquake happens. Its new high school, costing \$98 million, is designed with an emergency generator, as well as plumbing and electric wiring constructed with emergency services in mind. The features cost the district \$900,000, only a frac-

tion of the total cost of the project.

Yu suggests that communities have conversations about school resilience before putting bond measures to vote — additional resilience features can bolster the usefulness of an already important school building.

“It becomes an equity piece and a community asset,” Yu says.

But first, the conversation needs to happen.

“The question your readers need to ask themselves is: ‘Is it sufficient to know that we have minimum safety or do we want to upgrade our buildings so we can get them up to service in a month, or better, so they can serve as shelters?’” Poland tells *EW*.

According to 4J’s long-term facilities plan, another bond measure could emerge in 2018 or 2019. The plan proposes to replace or completely renovate North Eugene High School and Camas Ridge Elementary. It also looks at renovating Edison Elementary, one of the oldest and most historic schools in the district, as well as a yet-to-be-determined additional elementary school.

The bond measure could be 4J’s chance to incorporate

‘It’s very small-minded thinking to be throwing this back on taxpayers.’

— CONSTANCE VAN FLANDERN, EUGENE 4J PARENT

seismic resilience into its planning.

For parents like Van Flandern and Parsons, the knowledge that disaster could strike at any time is frightening.

“When parents are getting together, they’re doing calculations of the likelihood their kids will be in school when the earthquake hits,” Parsons says.

Van Flandern says she wants to see schools in Oregon pursuing federal funds for resilience planning.

“It’s very small-minded thinking to be throwing this back on taxpayers,” Van Flandern says. “This is a state-wide problem that needs immediate attention.”

But, she says, it doesn’t help anyone to sweep the issue under the rug. “We should be having these conversations all the time,” she adds. ■

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