



Photos by Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

An inspection of Pier 2 by the state Department of Transportation in January revealed areas underneath the eastern dock in need of critical repair.

Port: 'This has got to be a wake-up call'

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"We know what it's like to have a bridge close, and this is really important to the economy," Bert Hartman, the managing engineer for the state's bridge program, said of a potential closure.

He said transportation staff are open to working with the Port on strategic repairs to help keep the dock open. The state has suggested routes where heavier truck traffic could still go out on Pier 2 to pick up fish while avoiding the critical dock.

An old pier

As bad as the east side of Pier 2 seems, the west side might be even worse. The Port recently applied for \$1.5 million in grants through the ConnectOregon program to

repair the western side, where commercial fishing boats pull up to deliver their catch to the fish processors.

The Port's application for state funds is under review in the committees deciding the fate on ConnectOregon projects.

Three years ago, the Port declared an emergency on the west side of Pier 2, closing portions to vehicle traffic and bringing in former Astorian and expert marine engineer Bill Gunderson of PND Engineers Inc. of Seattle.

Gunderson's report found the west side to range from critical to good condition, with many of the deficiencies due to deferred maintenance.

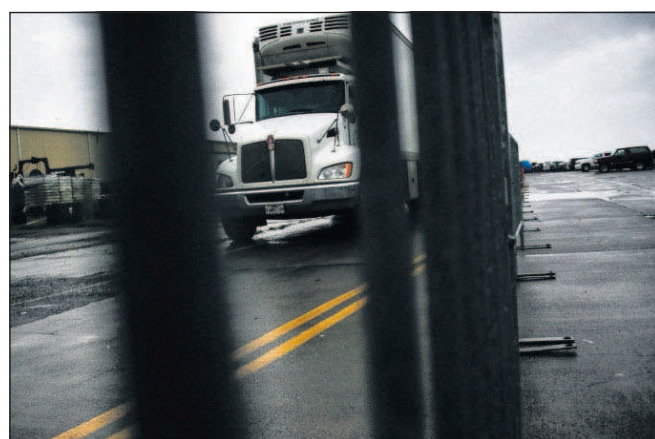
Knight said it seems like every piece of the Port's property has deferred maintenance and that several issues are coming together at once, with the challenges at Pier 2, the need

to develop a stormwater treatment system by the end of June, the sea lions at the East End Mooring Basin and the shuttered causeway heading into the marina.

Pier 2 is already tied up as collateral with the state for previous loans that financed the building of Bornstein Seafoods' plant on the Port's central waterfront and the creation of the seafood cluster.

Knight said the Port has a meeting next week with the state Infrastructure Finance Authority and transportation officials to talk about a financial path to fix the issues on Pier 2.

"I'm not anticipating anything but a lot of cooperation from the state," Knight said. "This has got to be a wake-up call for all of the Port's infrastructure issues. But our priority is Pier 2."



The Port of Astoria is gating off large areas of the eastern dock of Pier 2, where the state has recommended a 3-ton weight limit on vehicles. The closures are cutting truck traffic on Pier 2 to one-way.

Digital: The team has run into a few discrepancies

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When the map goes live on the parks department website, "you will see a very beautiful pattern of lines and labels that show you those sections, and those lots, and those graves," he said.

What's more, the site will allow users to look up more than just the full name, birthdate and date of death of the deceased. In many cases, the entries will include the cause of death, occupation, marital status, next of kin, parents' names; along with other details, such as the mortuary that handled the funeral, the type of burial carried out, the interment cost and whether the remains were originally buried in a different cemetery, like Astoria Pioneer Cemetery.

In addition, since the parks department no longer has full-time staff at Ocean View Cemetery, the online map and information system will help compensate for the customer service cutbacks.

"So, if people go out to the cemetery and they're wanting to find somebody, and there's nobody there, this (online map) will act as that missing person to kind of show them where the grave is that they're looking for," Patterson said.

The site will also make it easier for the parks staff to help the public find and purchase available plots, Angela Cosby, the parks director, said.

'A research tool'

Since 2014, Scott, city staff and volunteers, have pulled burial data from the cemetery's



Terra Patterson flips through a book of burial permits, dating back to the early 1900s.

Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

handwritten paper documents and more than 18,000 typed index cards and plugged the information into a spreadsheet, which Scott is using to centralize, systematize and, eventually, publicize the information.

"It is some very interesting stuff in there. I was fixated on it once I got it together," Scott said. "My gosh, just thinking about people's lives that have come and gone, and you have information about them that no one's really seen in this way.

That, I think, is very powerful."

Right now, Kailee Deibert (a part-time staff member) and Janet Miltenberger (a department volunteer) are helping to cross-check the information against the many thousands of grave marker and burial permits, adding whatever new information turns up.

With about 22,000 records of purchases or burials documenting more than a century's worth of plots — and with each record containing several pieces of data

— it makes sense that Patterson and her team have run into a few discrepancies. Sometimes they discovered that the facts on the ground (so to speak) contradicted the written records.

For example, a widow who purchased a plot next to her spouse, intending to be buried there, might get remarried and choose to spend eternity next to someone else; and somehow the record showing that she sold back the first plot never got amended. Or perhaps a per-

son thought to be buried in one spot actually ended up in a different one.

"As you can imagine, over 100-plus years, sometimes mistakes are made," Patterson said.

Scott's system, based on the corrected information, will be far less likely to contain such inconsistencies. "We're trying to make it as error-proof as possible," Patterson said.

"Genealogists should be real happy about the idea that you can go through this and find

'That's the history of our community there, and I would think most people that you talk to in Astoria have some tie to the cemetery.'

Terra Patterson
recreation coordinator
overseeing the project

information about people electronically," Scott said. "This a research tool that we've built."

Heritage

And there's another important reason for the digital undertaking: Ocean View Cemetery's oldest burial records are fragile and fading. Many from the early 1900s are written in soft, erasable pencil — and rather illegibly, as Deibert and Miltenberger, both of whom spent time transcribing the dense paper archives, discovered.

"These aren't going to last forever," Patterson said, flipping through the stacks of burial permits. "That's the history of our community there, and I would think most people that you talk to in Astoria have some tie to the cemetery."

Cremation: 'In Oregon, you can do anything you want with the ashes'

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"If your loved one is cremated, you have a lot more options of what to do with the remains, or do nothing with the

remains," Warr said.

What's more, a cottage industry of cremation jewelry and keepsakes has cropped up in recent years.

"Cremation jewelry is

huge," Dutton said. "I cannot believe how many people want to keep a small portion of the ash in something like a bracelet or a necklace, that kind of stuff."

Dutton said that Oregon's

laws relating to the disposal of ashes makes cremation all the more appealing.

"In Oregon, you can do anything you want with ashes. Scattering in the rivers, mountains,

ocean is perfectly legal, and so a lot of people are not even using a cemetery any longer," he said.

And, cost-savings aside, many people romanticize the handling and disposal of ashes.

"People tell us, 'We want to be scattered together on a mountain top,' or, 'We want to be scattered out at the sea. We want to be traveling — maybe we'll wind up in a nice tropical area.'"