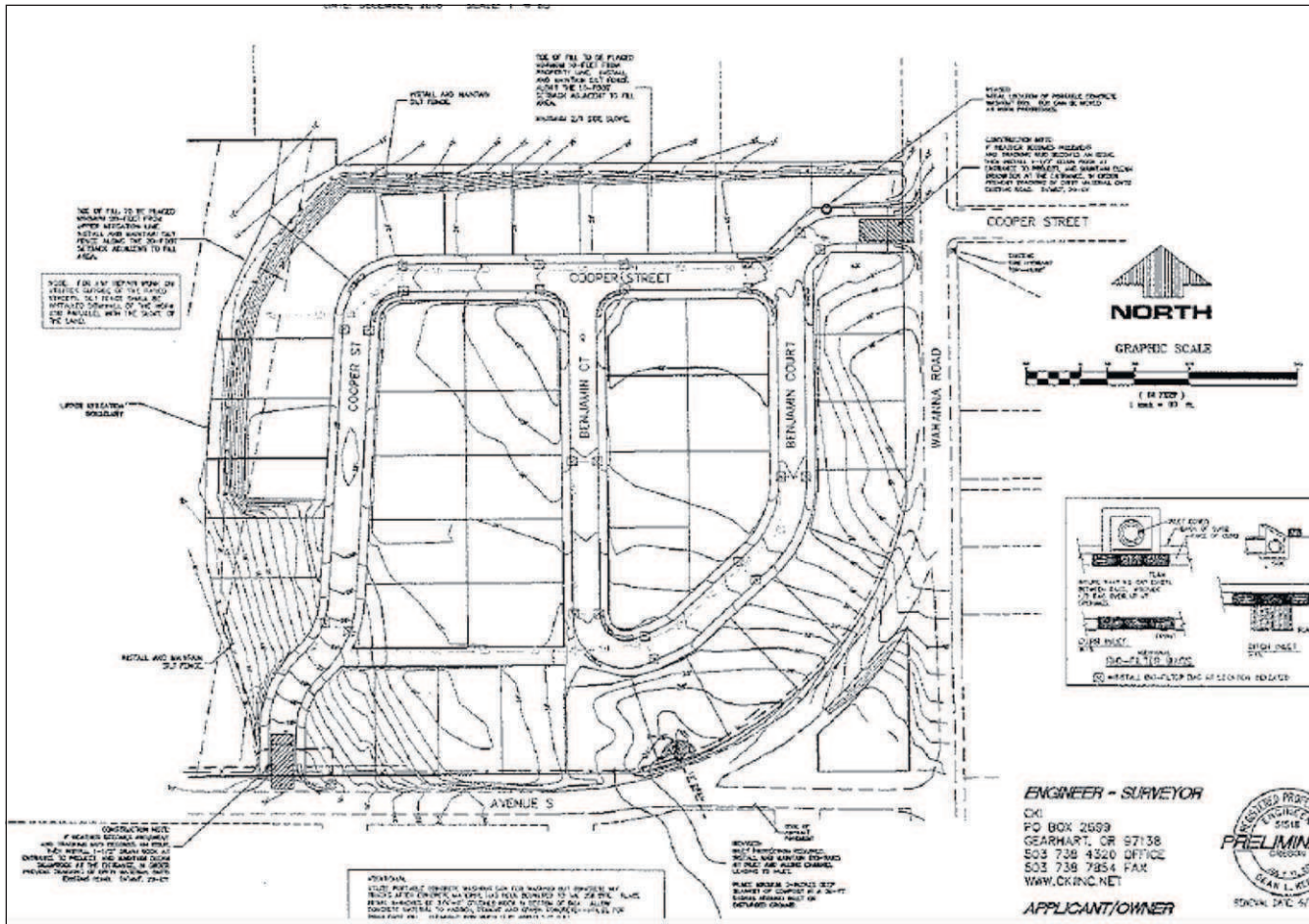




R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian
Site of the proposed Blue Heron Pointe housing subdivision on Avenue S and Wahanna Road in Seaside.



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian
Some infrastructure was installed at Blue Heron Pointe.



Submitted Photo
Rendering submitted to the Seaside Planning Commission of Blue Heron Pointe, a proposed 45-home project.

Housing: Subdivision to be built in three phases

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Previous project

A decade ago, the Ritchies proposed a subdivision with 58 homes. The owners put in sewer main lines, a pump station and sewer connections for each lot. Streets were paved and some lighting

fixtures installed before construction was put on hold.

“The economy was a roadblock,” Max Ritchie said.

He and his father were inspired to try again by the goal of filling the demand for affordable and workforce housing in the county, Ritchie said.

The new submission has a timeline of three building phases.

After feedback and discussion, “one or two of the planning commissioners suggested the sidewalks be built in Phase 1,” Ritchie said.

Commissioners were responding to goals of the city’s 2009 street system plan,

which calls for sidewalks, bike lanes and foot travel lanes along sections of Avenue S east of U.S. Highway 101. About 15 homes would be built in the first phase.

“We hope they’ll allow us to build the sidewalk in Phase 3, and if they don’t allow us to do it then, and they require it

at phase one, it will be a deal killer,” Max Ritchie said.

The market will dictate the time between phases, he added. “As long as the demand is there, I will keep building.”

Review on Tuesday

The Ritchies also own property in Gearhart and Warrenton,

including the 22,000-square-foot Clatsop Care Memory Community, developed by Dolphin Partners LLC with Steve Olstedt of Olstedt Construction in Seaside.

The Blue Heron Pointe project will be discussed at Tuesday’s Planning Commission meeting.

Water: 10 years of planning and regulations before construction

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Core conveyance

The core conveyance project — so named because it affects the main artery transmitting waste through the city — will allow most of the sewage from the city’s east side to head directly to the treatment plant, rather than, as it does now, “gravity drain” south to the overworked pump station, only to be pushed back north to reach the plant.

Once the project is completed, the now-bypassed pump station will take in less volume and may run at about 80 percent capacity rather than

100 percent — “and that’s a big deal,” Stelzig said.

“To take all this flow away from this pump station is an energy-saver,” he said, “and it keeps this pump station in better working order.”

The project builds capacity so that the city can process more wastewater, Public Works Director Jim Dunn said.

Warrenton is expecting significant new residential, commercial and industrial development that will increase demand on the sewer system.

New pump station

The core conveyance proj-

ect will include a new energy-efficient pump station at Ensign Road, near Tackle Time, replacing an old one to be torn out.

In addition, approximately 4,700 feet of new force main piping beneath the Skipanon River — bored 45 feet below the mudline — was recently laid and connected to the treatment plant, a structure built in 2006 in anticipation of the core conveyance project.

It took 10 years to get construction underway last fall, in part because of land-use rigmarole. This included obtaining several easements on each side of the Skipanon, plus the

state easement to cross the river itself.

“It really surprised me how involved that was,” said Jon Forrester, the project manager from HLB OTAK, the firm that designed the project.

The project is being financed with a state Department of Environmental Quality loan of \$1.9 million, \$500,000 of which is forgivable. Big River Construction Inc., put in a \$1.2 million construction bid. Several hundred thousand dollars have also been spent on design and engineering.

Michael Pinney, a senior environmental engineer with the Department of Environmental Quality, surveyed the project sites Wednesday to make sure the city is following through with the conditions of the grant.

Construction is scheduled to wrap up in about six weeks, Stelzig said.

Infrastructure problem

If the city could solve the “infiltration and inflow” — a common infrastructure problem faced by many cities —

the pump station would not be such an issue, Stelzig said.

So why not just address the problem rather than build the core conveyance? Stelzig said it can be less costly for a city to increase the size of a treatment plant and do core conveyance projects than to find and repair the many places where extra water seeps into the sewer system.

Warrenton has a contract with Kennedy/Jenks Consultants to conduct a study of the city’s infiltration and inflow to figure out how to address it.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian
Construction continues on a new pump station on Wednesday in Warrenton.

Grange: Last ‘another 100 years’

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Disrepair

The history of grange organizations throughout the United States dates back to the end of the Civil War. President Andrew Johnson ordered Oliver Kelley to go to Southern states and evaluate how to improve economic conditions.

Kelley found that the farming practices in the South were highly outdated, Netel Grange Treasurer Dave Ambrose said. To bring Northern and Southern farmers together, Kelley became one of the founders of the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry.

In the ensuing decades, the National Grange would serve as both a social society, as well as an advocate for pro-agricultural policies. Most notably, the National Grange fought on behalf of farmers near the turn of the 20th century during battles over railroad transportation costs, Ambrose said.

When Ambrose and Netel Grange Secretary Craig Holt assumed leadership in the 1990s, the building was in disrepair, Ambrose said. But by selling 2 acres of nearby property deeded to the land decades prior, the grange collected \$42,000 to rebuild. Repairs included a new roof, chimney, furnace, foundation and painting. Insurance covered extensive roof damage during a powerful 2007 storm, and other features such as heating have since been installed.

“It now is in just good enough shape to last about another 100 years,” Ambrose said. But in order for the hall to remain locally owned, the grange organization will need to avoid going bankrupt, Sunderland said. Should the organization run out of money, the Oregon State Grange would assume control of the hall.

In addition to the preschool, the grange also holds annual

dances and rents out the hall for events like weddings and birthday parties. The prices to rent the grange are strategically lower than other venues in the area, Ambrose said.

“It’s a community asset for the Lewis and Clark area,” Ambrose said. “It allows the community to have a low-cost meeting place.”

The grange has had early discussions with Blue Scorchers Bakery and Cafe in Astoria about hosting a dinner, pie auction and dance this summer.

“We might do something radical and make it a regular vegetarian event,” Sunderland said.

Much like he and Holt did in the 1990s, the grange will eventually need newer, younger leadership to take over, Ambrose, 72, said.

“It’s got a real history that should be kept,” he said. “We can hand it off to the next generation in better shape than when we found it.”

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