

# Transit: District could seek loan to cover at least nine months

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natural disaster, Hazen said. The agency already used its contingency budget to cover a previous data loss, along with subsidizing Columbia County's portion of a route on U.S. Highway 30 between Astoria and Rainier, he said.

"I think this is an unnatural disaster right now, what we're going through with the federal government," he said, cautioning his gov-

erning board against being the test case in declaring the shutdown a disaster to tap remaining reserves.

Hazen outlined a list of potential cuts to save more than \$11,500 a week in operational costs during the shutdown. They include closing the route to Rainier; stopping all weekend service, including paratransit for people with disabilities; cutting the first and last runs of several major routes on weekdays; closing transit centers

in Astoria and Seaside on weekends; and cutting the hours of several employees, along with contributions to Hazen's retirement.

"That's what we would need to cut on a weekly basis to make up for the lost revenue for this last quarter," he said. "Now the problem is if it continues, we're going to have to cut further."

The transit district will not be reimbursed for services it does not provide. But if the cuts are not made

by the end of the fiscal year in June, the agency will be out of compliance with state budget law, he said, and commissioners would be personally responsible.

"We would unfortunately have the label of being the first transit agency in Oregon to go down this road — not the first in the nation to go down this road," he said of the cuts. "Other agencies are starting to make cuts as well."

Hazen also presented the

option of taking out a loan to cover operations. He recommended the loan cover at least nine months of federal reimbursements, or around \$430,000. Commissioners quickly warmed to the idea of borrowing over the prospect of cutting service or employee hours.

"Our mission is to provide service," Commissioner Pamela Alegria said. "I would not want to see any cuts. I think we're going backwards, not by our own

fault. So I'd rather see a ... loan."

Commissioner Bryan Kidder said the transit district should look at a combination of loans and cuts to borrow as little as possible. Commissioner Kathy Kleczek recommended Hazen explore a \$500,000 line of credit.

The transit district has scheduled a special meeting Wednesday, during which Hazen will bring the board financing options.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Some urban trails in Astoria are not included on city maps, such as the Pipeline Road Trail.

## Trails: Every neighborhood has a network of trails

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"We welcome this community to get out, take a hike and consider the 17th Street Trail one of many to walk for 2019," they said in a news release.

But the coalition hopes Astoria's unsanctioned trails will get more consideration someday.

Every neighborhood has a network of trails that crisscross property lines.

The city's trails master plan for 2013 to 2033 provides a roadmap for future improvements and offers recommendations for new trails inside the city limits, but the neighborhood trails are not marked on it and no new official city trails are in the works.

It's been outside the parks department's capacity to even provide much dedicated maintenance on popular but often problematic city trails, like the Cathedral Tree Trail, which winds up from Irving Avenue to the Column.

"We're still coming to a point of really being able to balance our operations effectively," said Jonah Dart-McLean, the city's parks maintenance supervisor.

In the past two years, the parks department has



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The Pipeline Road Trail is a popular place for people to walk their dogs in Astoria.

struggled to establish the true costs of running parks and recreation operations and programs. The department started to rebuild internally last year.

The type of trail work Dart-McLean would like to see done is not expensive, but it is time-consuming and labor-intensive. He would prefer to tackle trail work with an overall plan in place.

"It's just something we need to strategically tackle so we're not wasting resources on it," he said.

The city's map of existing trails includes the Astoria Riverwalk, the Cathedral Tree Trail, and a handful of smaller trails, most of which appear in or on the periphery of city

parks and property.

Not included are trails like the gravel path that runs down to Marine Drive from the intersection of Alameda Avenue and Hill Street in Uniontown, a convenient shortcut in a section with few access roads down to the main road. Or Pipeline Road Trail off James Street. This paved road popular with dog owners leads to a city reservoir. While it does not appear on the trails map, it is listed on city websites as a trail.

Years ago, Tessa Scheller, of the North Coast Trails Coalition, had hoped more of these unofficial trails could be included on the city's maps.

"They help build com-

munities," she said.

Trails can also be a financial opportunity, she added. Cleaning up trails and putting them on maps so people can find them and use them is often a surefire way to revitalize an area.

But Astoria's unofficial trails are unofficial for the same reasons now that they were over a decade ago: ownership.

The city couldn't identify neighborhood trails as future trails to develop if they were on private land, said Rosemary Johnson, a former city planner.

"It's not saying that you can't do those trails if they're not in the plan," she added. "Those were just not the ones we had control over."

And this has not changed.

"It's such a patchwork of ownership," said Dart-McLean. "And whose is the responsibility (for maintenance) when you make the trail better?"

For now, the trails coalition has shifted some focus back over to Warrenton, where city leaders, interested in promoting a "livable community," have again started prioritizing community amenities like pedestrian and bicycle trails.

## Vigil: 'He didn't ask for my registration. He didn't tell me why I was being pulled over'

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As a condition of his release, he was directed to check in with a pretrial release officer at the county jail across the street from the courthouse. While driving over to the jail, Maria Perez said she and her husband were stopped by authorities in two unmarked vehicles.

While one agent asked for her driver's license, another knocked on the window of the passenger side of her car and took her husband into custody, she said.

"I looked in the rearview mirror and saw already they had him in the car," she said.

Because the authorities were in unmarked vehicles, Maria Perez is unsure of who exactly pulled her over and why.

"He didn't ask for my registration. He didn't tell me why I was being pulled over," she said.

Both the Astoria Police Department and the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office said no local officers were involved with the traffic stop or Ruben Perez's detention. Other than receiving a heads-up from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents that they were planning to be in town, both agencies said no information concerning Ruben Perez was requested by or offered to ICE agents.

Under Oregon's sanctuary law, state and local law enforcement are prohibited from using public resources to arrest people whose only known crime is being in the country illegally.

As a general policy, the Astoria Police Department doesn't involve officers in immigration affairs, Deputy Police Chief Eric Halverson said.

The sheriff's office has cooperated with ICE in the past within the confines of state law, Sheriff Tom Bergin said.

"We have helped them in the past, but not with this one," Bergin said. "I honestly don't know how they do it."

A recorded message at ICE's public affairs office in Portland said requests for comment won't be addressed until furloughed workers in the government shutdown return.

The situation spotlights a larger controversy happening across the country over ICE



Ruben Perez, pictured with his granddaughter, was detained by immigration agents in Astoria in December after a court appearance.

enforcement at or near courthouses. Many judges and civil liberties advocates have condemned such arrests, warning it disrupts and undermines the criminal justice system. ICE has a policy of restricting arrests at sensitive locations, such as hospitals and churches, and some lawmakers have sought to add courthouses to the list.

Judge Paula Brownhill, the presiding judge of the Clatsop County Circuit Court, said the practice of detaining people near the courthouse can deter court appearances and has a serious impact on the administration of justice.

"Not only criminal defendants, but civil litigants, crime victims, and witnesses may be reluctant to come to court for fear of encountering ICE," Brownhill said in a statement. "If the district attorney is unable to prove a criminal case because an essential witness fails to appear, or a domestic violence victim is unable to obtain a protective order because she is afraid to come to the courthouse, our community is less safe for everyone."

### 'It feels impossible'

Maria Perez is feeling the absence of her partner. With her family's breadwinner away, she is struggling to support the two daughters and three grandchildren in her care. Emotionally, she can't help but feel confused and devastated.

She knows her husband has made mistakes. But when she remembers the hardworking, reliable father and man she loves, she wonders why he has to be in a detention center instead of back home while his deportation case is considered.

"I've depended on him for these 21 years," Maria Perez said. "It's not fair. I'm trying to be strong for my daughters, but it feels impossible."

## Visit: State invested \$100M to stabilize PERS rates

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Public Employees Retirement System remain key administration concerns, Brown said.

Last year, the state invested \$100 million to stabilize PERS rates for public schools. This year, Brown wants to double that.

Legislation that creates matching funds for local jurisdictions could ease the burden; for every \$4 a city or public agency invests, the state would match \$1 of that.

Increasing the amount public employees contribute could also be a part of addressing future pension costs.

"Do we want public employees to have more skin in the game, to bear in the risks and the costs of the market?" Brown asked. "I think we do. We're having a conversation now in terms of legislation and other ways to make that happen."

Emergency preparedness funding is also far

short of the need to withstand a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami. Of the coast's 135 bridges, in a 9.0 magnitude earthquake, "about 100 of them would be toast," Brown said.

State funding is focused on "key priority areas," she said. "In addition to public transit, our purpose is to ensure seismic resiliency of those bridges."

The federal government shutdown will add to the state's financial burden. With 9,600 federal employees throughout Oregon affected by the shutdown, the state must meet food stamp funding at the state level, an \$80 million monthly state expense, she said. The governor also seeks to ensure that federal workers have access to unemployment benefits.

### Education a centerpiece

The visit to the Seaside Rotary preceded a visit to Seaside High School, where Brown received a tour of the school district's career

and technical education programs.

Seaside School District Superintendent Sheila Roley and high school Principal Jeff Roberts introduced the governor to the school's new culinary program and members of the "CYBORG Seagulls" robotics club.

Career-oriented programs are "a game changer," Brown said, making education relevant for high school students. "It connects classrooms literally with their career, and at the same time we're providing employers with a skilled workforce," she said.

The governor said the best way to improve high school graduation rates is through access to career and technical education.

"The state is at a turning point in preparing for education," Brown said. "The economy is good right now. It is time for us to make a significant investment in our education system. If we wait, we're likely to face a recession. The time is now. I don't think our children

and families can wait any longer."

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