

Carbon: 2020 deal is expected to bring in about \$1M in net revenue

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that can be used by industrial polluters to offset carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to climate change.

A deal with The Climate Trust in 2015 generated a net revenue of \$1.8 million for the city. The money fed a fund for future renovation work at the Astoria Library.

The 2020 deal is expected to bring in about \$1 million in net revenue and would likely go to the city's capital improvement fund, City Manager Brett Estes said. The money could be kept in reserve and doled out for city projects and needs in the coming years, he said.

Some routine timber harvest does occur in the watershed, but future cuts are not expected to be as large as in the past, resulting in less revenue for the city.

"These (funds) could be banked to be able to offset that," Estes said.

In an unusual move, The Climate Trust approached the city earlier this year with an offer to buy 2020 carbon credits.

"Is this contract a good value?" David Ford, a carbon credit consultant who worked with city staff on the agreement with The Climate Trust, asked the City Council on Monday. "My simple answer is, 'Yes, it's actually a very good deal.'"

The average price for forestry credits in the voluntary market is just over \$5. "This offer is substantially higher," he said.

The Climate Trust is interested in paying more because they have worked with the city before and are familiar with the project, Ford said. The story behind the project

also provides additional value.

"You're protecting wildlife habitat, you're protecting a high-quality water resource," Ford said. "So there's more benefits there than just the carbon value itself. ... It's a higher value than what you might find elsewhere in the marketplace."

For the 2020 deal, the city will need to complete a new forest inventory, purchase a buffer pool of credits and undergo a third-party verification and field audit of the carbon credits available.

Adding in the cost of project development and American Carbon Registry fees, City Forester Ben Hayes estimates the total cost to the city will be \$400,000.

The new inventory will be completed this fall and could reveal that even more carbon credits are available, Hayes said.



Colin Murphey/The Astorian

The Bear Creek watershed could generate around \$1 million in revenue under a new plan approved by the Astoria City Council.

Bridge: 'Research is pretty conclusive that ... suicide is often an impulsive decision'

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sure how practical or effective it would be to put up additional fencing or other barriers along the length of the bridge.

"It could cause other kinds of maintenance issues," Torres said.

'Guided by standards'

Since the two apparent suicides, there have not been any discussions internally at the department about changing how the bridge is monitored or policed.

Dorothy Upton, a state traffic operations engineer who responded to the Humbers' letter, appreciated the motivation behind their request, but wrote, "We are guided by standards about the types of signing we place along the highway and cannot sign for every variation

of human behavior."

"While any loss of life is tragic, it is not reasonable to have suicide prevention signing placed on a bridge where there are not even pedestrian facilities," she wrote.

People have used the Astoria Bridge's tall, main span as a way to end their lives ever since it was built 53 years ago. But the events of the past few weeks stand out.

When 24-year-old Daniel Williams jumped from the bridge on May 23, his death was the first suicide at the bridge in at least three years.

On Friday, police responded to a report of an unoccupied, parked, but still running car on the bridge. Investigators have not publicly released the driver's name.

"Every indication is that

he obviously jumped off the bridge, but we have not recovered his body," Oregon State Police Lt. Andrew Merila said. "There was no reason for that car to be there."

The bridge is already marked as closed to pedestrians. Traffic cameras near the off-ramp on the Oregon side and farther up monitor traffic conditions and are sometimes used by law enforcement to locate vehicles.

"If someone is up on the bridge, most of the time we get a call and we respond up there and take them off the bridge," Merila said.

Often people are just trying to walk across and are not a danger to themselves. Over the years, many of the people who have jumped drove up the main span and parked their cars before climbing over the railing.

"At this point, I don't know what else you can do," Merila said.

Carrie Barnhart, who had a history of schizophrenia and depression, jumped from the Astoria Bridge in 2015. Her death led to an examination of the gaps in Clatsop County's mental health safety net.

Karen Humber still hopes for a way to get suicide prevention signs at least at either end of the bridge. In a follow-up email to the state, she asked about how to change the state's policy so signs could be posted. She also wondered how much it might cost if private citizens raised money to pay for the installation.

"It may not completely stop somebody," she told The Astorian. "But maybe it could give them a moment of hope or an opportunity to

pause and rethink what they are doing."

"Some sort of barrier or safety net would probably be more ideal, but I'm not an engineer," she added.

'A permanent decision'

Amy Baker, the executive director of Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, said she would support efforts to install suicide prevention signs or physical barriers to make it harder to jump from the bridge — anything that makes people pause and consider other options.

"The research is pretty conclusive that, especially for youths and young adults, suicide is often an impulsive decision," Baker said, "and unfortunately it's a permanent decision."

Baker pointed to 9-foot suicide-prevention fences erected at Portland's Vista

Bridge, nicknamed "Suicide Bridge." Before the fences were installed, an average of two people a year jumped between 2008 and 2012. Since the fences went up in 2013, no one has died jumping, The Oregonian reported in April.

"There are very clear examples in other areas where they've been able to make access a little bit harder and allow for that pause," she said.

For many, suicide attempts at the bridge may seem like relatively rare occurrences. But to Baker and others in the mental health field, the bridge is a constant source of concern.

Its presence creates that much more of an opportunity for people struggling with suicidal thoughts. "To me, it's not just a bridge," Baker said.





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