

Seaside: Deliberation will continue at meeting in early October

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have to look so far as Astoria to see what can happen when land is cleared and left to sit with Band-Aid measures taken.

"Considering the amount of water in the drought that we're in, it only takes a big rainstorm to wash all that dirt away."

Judy Madsen, a resident, said there has been a huge water problem ever since she and her husband moved to the Sunset Hills area in 1983.

In a wet winter, Madsen said, she and her husband pumped 2,000 gallons of water in a 24-hour period off their lot. "It's just loaded with springs everywhere up there," she said.

The whole area is "completely full of water when it's in the wintertime," Merilee Laurens, a resident, said. "The water just rushes down the street."

Natural springs pour down the street in the middle of springtime due to other construction projects, Greg Boat, a homeowner, said. "Basically, we live on a rock that has clay on top of it," he said. "I don't see how taking all of this foli-



Su Coddington, who serves on the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board, was among the residents who spoke at the Planning Commission with concerns about the Vista Ridge project.

age off of the side of the hill and then putting houses on there with an area that already has drainage issues is a smart or safe idea."

Neighbors Lief and Sani Morin say portions of the site may be considered

wetlands.

"The parcel flows into the wetlands below, which then flow into the Neawanna estuary, the Necanicum River, where both chum and coho salmon thrive," the Morins wrote in a letter to

the Planning Commission.

The impact of construction traffic, the need for additional signage, sidewalks and the lack of access routes for emergency vehicles to the site also concerned residents.

Su Coddington, who lives in the Sunset Hills neighborhood, shared concerns that the area also serves as a gathering place in the event of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami.

"I am concerned that when this earthquake comes — we're not talking about a size seven, we're talking about an eight or a nine — that land in this proposed development will slide and it will take the rest of us with it," said Coddington, who leads the city's Community Emergency Response Team and serves on the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board. "And our assembly area will no longer be of value to the residents that can get to our assembly area safely."

In his geotechnical and geohazard report, Mead acknowledged a large earthquake in the magnitude of 6.0 or more could trigger old deep-seated slides in this area.

As mitigation, exposed soil areas would be covered with straw and seeded, and steep slopes along the eastern boundary of the site that go down to the creek bed would not be built upon, Mead said in the report. Rain drains would be constructed away from foundations.

The Planning Commission will continue deliberation at a meeting in early October.

Warrenton: City has raised monthly water and sewer rates in recent years

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Warrenton's population jump — from 4,989 to 6,277 — has taken place as the city's infrastructure has come under increasing strain because of development. The city's water capacity is nearly maxed out, Mayor Henry Balensifer said.

"It is going to become more expensive to do development in the city until infrastructure can keep up with the pace of the demand to use it in development," he said.

Part of the reason War-

renton was such an attractive place to build, the mayor said, was that the city had a lot of flat, undeveloped land. But it is becoming more difficult for developers to find sites that aren't on or near wetlands, so navigating the environmental red tape makes the process more expensive.

"All the easy property has been built on," Collin Stelzig, the city's public works director, said.

Warrenton has had trouble accommodating the high rate of growth. Some projects

have been waylaid as developers waited for the city to upgrade pumping stations to bring sewer and stormwater service.

In the coming years, the state is expected to curtail Warrenton's water rights, scaling down the amount of water the city can pull from the Youngs Bay watershed. That puts Warrenton in a position where "the growth capacity you thought you had doesn't exist as much anymore," Balensifer said.

That reality drove Warrenton's decision to restrict

water hookups for large developments in areas outside the city — Clatsop Plains, for example — because of the water system's limitations. "That's to protect capacity for existing residents within the city of Warrenton and business within the city of Warrenton," he said.

The city has raised monthly water and sewer rates in recent years to help pay for operational costs, though the city has frozen the increases amid the pandemic-stressed economy.

Warrenton has discussed various methods, including enlarging its water reservoirs, to increase water capacity and otherwise prepare for another two decades of growth. Astoria's population grew 7.4%, hitting 10,181 in 2020.

Seaside's population gain topped 10%, arriving at 7,115. Neighboring Gearhart added 22.6% more residents, climbing to 1,793.

Cannon Beach lost full-time residents during the decade, declining almost 12% to 1,489.

The Knappa-Brownsmead area grew to 2,144 residents, or by 7.6%. Svensen had 853 residents in 2020 but wasn't counted as a separate place in 2010.

The Jewell area had 1,068 residents in 2020, a 10-year increase of 2.5%.

The portion of the county that experienced the largest overall growth rate — nearly 33% between 2010 and 2020 — was census tract 9506, a northwest rural area inland from the ocean. The population in the census tract expanded to 3,393.

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