

# Vulnerable bridges gain attention from city

## Tsunami threat requires bridge replacement

By Dani Palmer  
Cannon Beach Gazette

Bent over maps during a work session Oct. 15, Cannon Beach Emergency Preparedness Committee members and Public Works Director Dan Grassick worked on figuring out which option would be best for ensuring safe crossing at the north end of town in case of an earthquake and tsunami.

Because of the likelihood of a bridge collapse over Ecola Creek, the city's evacuation map guides residents and visitors south, toward midtown. It's a longer route that could eat up valuable time, Committee Vice Chairman Les Wierson said.

OBEC Consulting Engineers conducted a bridge study in 2011, warning the Fir Street bridge at Ecola Creek is "vulnerable to failure" even in a "relatively small earthquake" because of its age and construction.

"Saving lives is my top priority," Committee Chair-



CANNON BEACH HISTORY CENTER/SUBMITTED PHOTO

A bridge is out during the 1964 tsunami.

woman Carolyn Adamson said.

The committee took a closer look at the options, which are replacing the current traffic bridge or building a pedestrian bridge either nearby or in a different location.

Whatever the committee decides, Grassick said, 75-foot-deep piling would

likely be needed because of sand liquefaction.

The committee focused on pedestrian alternatives as they're the most affordable, and leaned toward a bridge over Ecola Creek near Necus' Park. It would actually be two bridges meeting on a small island in the creek, providing solid ground to build on.

A nearby option would require more costly permits to float equipment down the creek, Grassick said.

The third pedestrian option would lead people up Second Street before hitting a trail yet-to-be-built connecting to Highway 101.

According to the 2011 study, replacement of the existing bridge would cost

\$4.8 million while a 6-foot-wide pedestrian bridge could cost up to \$1.6 million.

If Cannon Beach does go with a pedestrian bridge, Grassick said, there are the options of a suspension or truss bridge. The latter would more likely survive, he added, as cables can break with suspension bridges.

Wierson again suggested taking a closer look at Washington County's bridge standards as they are designed to withstand earthquakes.

"The structural aspect is big," Grassick said. He added the bridge would need to be at least 10 feet wide with 1,000 people crossing it.

An Oregon State University engineering professor made computer models of potential evacuation routes in the city in 2011, estimating at least 1,080 people would head toward the bridge on a typical summer day after an earthquake.

Grassick said there are a number of ways to fund the bridge, including grants such as the Predisaster Mitigation Grant, sharing costs with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Connect Oregon grant.

Committee members agreed they would seek a bond measure if grants don't provide the money needed.

"To do this project, to get a final design, an in-depth geotech study needs to be done," Grassick added.

The committee will have to go through the City Council before taking any further steps. The topic could be reviewed this month.

## Stickers, new signs provide crucial info

By Dani Palmer  
EO Media Group

In a coastal community like Cannon Beach, knowing where you are is imperative in case of an earthquake or tsunami.

For most residents, that isn't a problem. But for the thousands of visitors who swarm the coast each year, it's good information.

Throughout Clatsop County, local agencies have been adding new signs or stickers to existing signage pointing out "You are here."

Cannon Beach Public Works Director Dan Grassick said the city has made reference to landmark Haystack Rock in some of its maps to help visitors out.

Michaela Jackson, a visitor to the coast from Denver, said she's heard about Oregon's earthquake threat, but wouldn't know where to go.

"I think a lot of people would just book it for the hills or follow the crowd," she said. "Some probably wouldn't even realize the danger at all. I think the maps are a good thing to pay attention to."

Cannon Beach began updating its evacuation

route maps last year and is working on deploying them now. They've been revised with 2013 Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries flood hazard study information.

The revisions are minor, but take some areas out of the hazard zone. They're not based on "exact or hard science," though, Grassick added. Tsunami waves could be larger than predicted.

"You get as high and far as you can," he said. "Don't stop running. The further you can get from the beach, the better and safer you're going to be."

In Tolovana Park, city staff have added four new signs to beach accesses since last fall, along with upgraded staircases.

Those evacuation route maps aren't only useful in case of an emergency, but add a level of convenience for tourists and new residents.

"A lot of people use the maps for getting around town," Grassick said with a chuckle.

All 10 Cannon Beach tsunami evacuation pedestrian route maps have been updated based on the latest information from the state



DANI PALMER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

New stickers show the Haystack Rock icon to guide people in an emergency.

of Oregon. These maps can be downloaded from the city webpage, [www.ci.cannon-beach.or.us/community/evacuationmaps](http://www.ci.cannon-beach.or.us/community/evacuationmaps). They may also be purchased at Copies and Fax, 171 Sunset Blvd., for a nominal cost.

## Chief Balzer removed due to 'personnel matter'

Balzer from Page 1A

Cannon Beach to raise their three daughters. He was a building contractor until 1999 before working for the police department for more than a decade. He was sworn in as fire chief in February 2012, taking over from Cleve Rooper, who had served as chief since 1989.

Balzer led the district through wildfires, made decisions regarding fire closures over severe drought seasons and served on the Cannon Beach Emergency

Preparedness Committee.

His department responded to a July 2012 fire that totally destroyed the Bistro Restaurant and Bar.

Under his and the Oregon Department of Forestry's direction, the city of Cannon Beach closed Ecola Creek Forest Reserve because of the dry weather around the Fourth of July.

He brought new equipment to the district, including a fire truck, and participated in volunteer events such as December's American Legion holiday toy and food drive.

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Domestic violence affects everyone residing in a household and if victims of domestic violence can learn

how to see abusive patterns they will be better prepared for current and future relationships. The program "Help Ending Abusive Relationship Tendencies" covers subjects related to the effects of domestic violence on children, parents

and other family members. Members discuss the dynamics of power and control and how to recognize

red flags. Call Juli Hol to reserve a spot at 503-325-3426, ext.103; toll-free crisis line, 877-770-5735.

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