



KATHERINE LACAZE/EO MEDIA GROUP

The owner of the Chevron gas station near the south entrance to Seaside is planning to demolish the existing convenience store and build a new, larger one using the property directly north of the station. The project is anticipated to begin this spring.

# Convenience store at Seaside Chevron gets ‘major’ overhaul

## Construction of new building to take place in the spring

By Katherine Lacaze  
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — The owner of the Chevron gas station in south Seaside is replacing the existing convenience store with a new, larger building using the empty lot north of the site.

The Seaside Planning Commission at its January meeting conditionally approved a request by applicant David Vonada of Tolovana Architects, on behalf of owner Marci Utti, to demolish the convenience store associated with the Chevron gas station and construct a new two-story building.

“We think it’s important, for the gateway to the community, to update things and keep things looking nice,” Utti said.

The property is located at 1215 S. Holladay Drive, off U.S. Highway 101, or Roosevelt Drive, and between avenues M and N.

Construction is slated to start this spring, depending on financing. Utti

estimates the project will take about six months to complete.

The plan is to construct the new building and have it near completion before demolishing the old building to create “virtually no interruption to the business whatsoever,” Vonada said. Full services should continue throughout the entire project, which is important since it will take place throughout the summer months.

**‘It will be a major, major improvement over what’s there.’**

Architect David Vonada

The new building will be approximately 3,700 square feet on the first story, which will be used primarily for retail sales. The second story, which will be used for office space and storage, will be approximately 1,290 square feet.

“It will be a major, major improvement over what’s there,” Vonada said. “I think it’s going to be an attractive building on all four sides.”

Landscaped areas are proposed on the east and west sides of the building. The site plan also proposes new sidewalks be built along Avenue M, adjacent to the back of the building, and a portion of Roosevelt Drive, to create a continuous public walkway along that road. However, Vonada said, the final configuration for Avenue M, which is an unimproved right-of-way, is subject to input from the Seaside Public Works Department.

A short-term bike parking rack is proposed near the northeast pedestrian walkway between the building and the sidewalk fronting Roosevelt Drive. Not counting the pump island parking spaces, a total of 12 off-street parking spaces in front of the building will be provided, according to a staff report from Planning Director Kevin Cupples.

“We don’t want to try to reinvent the function of the site,” Vonada said.

The design team and owner are in the process of pricing the project and completing construction and bidding documents; they will proceed with submitting applications for building permits in the early spring.

## North Holladay repairs

Project from Page 1A

By completion, it will be completely rebuilt, from replacing utilities to laying new sidewalks. The project has been a “long time coming,” Public Works Director Dale McDowell said.

The North Holladay Drive dig began Jan. 18 after pothole work the week before.

General contractor Tapani Inc., of Battle Ground, Washington, presented the lowest of three bids at a little more than \$3.28 million. Seaside City Council approved the bid in December.

Tapani and city staff held a preconstruction meeting in early January to discuss how the project will impact bus routes, pedestrian and vehicle traffic and public utilities, as North Holladay Drive is a main thoroughfare.

Seaside School District Transportation Supervisor Anna Borges said it will be important for the contractor to keep the district informed of plans and which streets will be closed at what time, so she can make the necessary adjustments.

The construction crews will try to minimize the time families are blocked from their homes, City Engineer Geoffrey Liljenwall said.

“They need to go home at night and be able to park close to their homes,” he said.

In general, he added, “there is a lot of traffic that can go east to west,” and

get around the area easily.

Workers will replace the existing sewer, water and force mains along North Holladay Drive before reconnecting new and existing water and sewer services. Plans call for the installation of underground vaults and conduits for conversion of the existing overhead utilities — including electrical, telephone and cable — to underground utilities. By project finish, the city will pave roads and sidewalks.

Parts of North Holladay Drive are open to local traffic only, McDowell said. Certain intersections may be closed periodically throughout the day and evening.

Tapani has had two crews working on the project since it started. They plan to add a third crew in the middle of February. With 50-hour work weeks, the goal is to complete the project, or a bulk of it, before Memorial Day, May 30.

May 27 is the “key paving date,” when all the asphalt and curbs need to be laid, “so that road could be opened and used,” McDowell said. Tapani then will have additional time — about 30 days — to complete the sidewalks, landscaping and electrical hookups.

The contractor has set up staging areas for the project at Goodman Park on the corner of Necanicum Drive and 12th Avenue and near the city’s wastewater treatment plant off North Franklin Street.



JOSHUA BESSEX/EO MEDIA GROUP

Crews work on North North Holladay Drive in Seaside on Monday near 12th Avenue.

## Five Minutes With Reta Leithner

By Katherine Lacaze  
Seaside Signal

Seaside resident Reta Leithner is retiring after 40 years of being a real estate agent. Most recently she worked at the John L. Scott Real Estate Office in Seaside.

**Where have you worked over the years?**

I have been with several companies. As they’ve closed or the principal broker has retired or whatever, then you go somewhere else. Because I was not a principal broker: I’m just a broker.

**How long have you been at John L. Scott Real Estate?**

Three years. I started at Oregon Coast Realty. That was probably the longest. And then I was with Coldwell Banker for a very long time also. Forty years in Clatsop County — in Seaside actually. I grew up in a real estate family in Seaside. My mother was the secretary and my father was the broker. That was a very good education.

**You learned the business from them?**

Quite a bit. My father would take me with him.

**How soon did you realize it was something you wanted to do yourself?**

When my ex-husband and myself divorced and I came back to Seaside, I looked for a job, and there wasn’t anything available that would allow me to be with my children when they were home most of the time. In real estate, you could name your own hours. Every job I applied for, they told me I was overqualified or the hours would be detrimental to being a single mom. I couldn’t afford a full-time babysitter. My mom could help me out with the kids the two hours I needed. They would get home about 3 p.m., and she would watch them for two



KATHERINE LACAZE/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Reta Leithner, of Seaside, is retiring after 40 years as a real estate agent in the area. She looks forward to looking after her own house for a change and taking classes through ENCORE, a member-run education organization sponsored by Clatsop Community College.

hours. And that was fine. My parents were wonderful, they really were.

**What has been your favorite thing about the business?**

The people. Absolutely. It all goes back to the people. The Lord has sent me some of the most fantastic clients and some of the most fantastic friends as peers in the real estate industry. I mean, they are outstanding people. Not just outstanding Realtors.

**Would you say that is what you will miss the most?**

Oh, they’re not going to get a chance to miss me.

**How do you feel about retiring?**

It will be lovely. I will be able to get a few projects done, a whole lot of things I

would like to get done at my house. You know, they’ve always said the cobbler’s kids have the worst shoes, the hairdresser’s kid has the worst haircut. Well, this Realtor has the worst-looking house. She’s going to stay home and clean it for a long time, until it’s clean.

**What other interests and hobbies are you excited to pursue?**

Oh lots of them. I like to help people and I have several people around town that I look in on and help. I don’t know if you’ve ever heard

of ENCORE, sponsored by Clatsop Community College? It’s education through retirement. It is a whole bunch of retired people that still like to learn. **How long have you been involved in that?**

Just four years. I took a class just to see what it was, and I really liked it and I really believe in their program. But because of my work schedule, I couldn’t commit to a term of classes. But now I can, and I’m really excited to sit in the classroom and going back to school, so to speak, to be participating. Because that’s the kind of format they have: you participate. **Are you sad to retire?**

It’s my time to leave real estate. And I don’t know why. No angel has come to me and said, “You’re going to have to leave real estate.” It just seems like the natural progression. I’m “X” number of years old and I want to be able to see my grandchildren and visit with them in their environments. My son is here in Seaside and his daughter lives here, too. My daughter lives in Salinas, California. The kids go to Seaside, California, schools, and Pacific Grove — the Monterey Bay-area.

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