



# SEASIDE Signal

OUR 115th Year

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## SEASIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Safe Routes program presents \$1.5 million school transportation plan

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

A state program aims to make getting to school safer for students.

The Safe Routes to School plan calls for more than \$1.5 million in safety upgrades on Spruce Drive leading to the Seaside School District campus, roadways at the elementary, middle and high schools and on streets throughout the neighborhood.

First on the list is safety at the intersection of Spruce and Alder Drive, about halfway up the hill to the campus, according to a report prepared by the Oregon Department of Transportation, NW Transportation Options,

the city and the school district working with the Portland-based Alta Planning + Design.

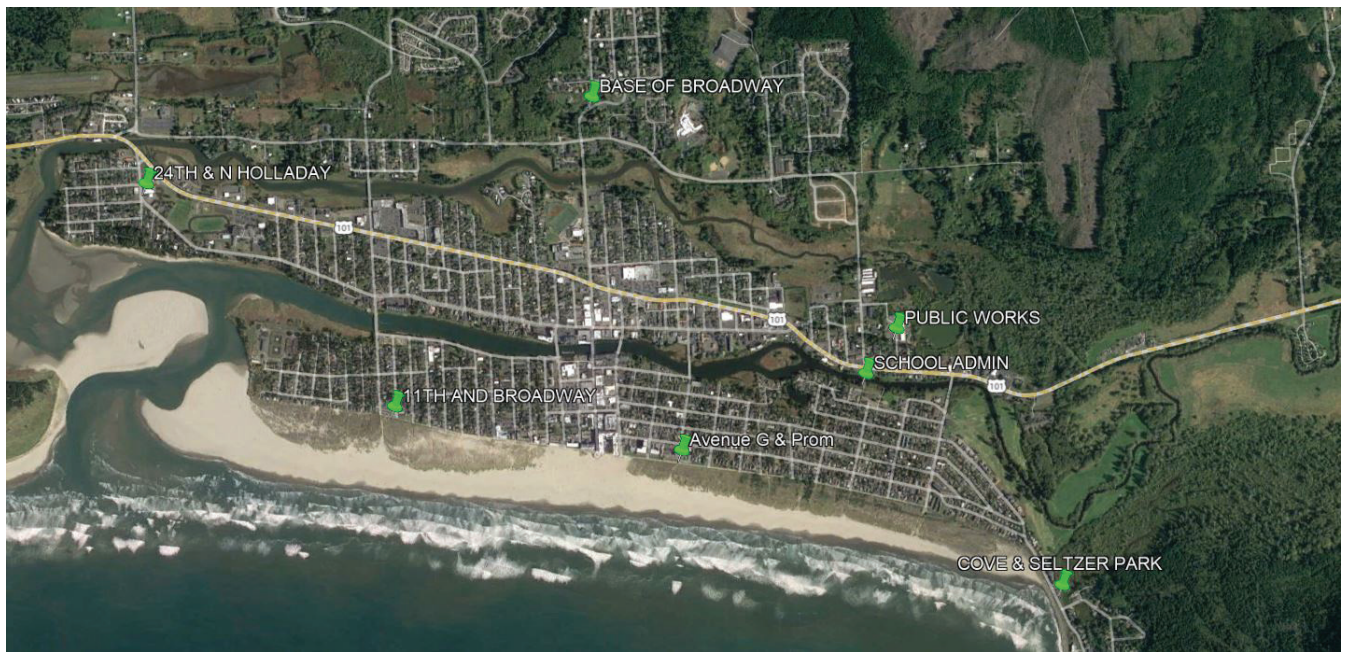
“The crossing at Alder and Spruce is a highly traveled area during school commute hours, but facilities are inadequate for safe travel for all active modes,” the planners wrote.

Costs for that crossing alone are estimated at just under \$214,000.

Sidewalk replacement on Spruce east of Alder is estimated at about \$85,000.

Crossing improvements at Wahanna Road and Broadway are penciled in at about \$46,000 to install high-visibility crosswalks and curb ramps on all four legs of the intersection.

See *Safe Routes*, Page A6



City of Seaside

Map of Seaside's siren locations. The school administration siren has been removed. Two more sirens are in Gearhart, at Little Beach and the 10th Street beach access.

## SEASIDE ASSESSES TSUNAMI WARNING SYSTEM

Sirens effective in distant tsunami

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

Seaside resident Jennifer North didn't hear the city's tsunami test sirens in January, and she didn't hear them in February either, despite alerts to her phone that tests would be underway.

She said she remembered when the sirens were tested monthly, and could be heard clearly throughout the city.

When she received an alert of a siren test in early March, she listened for the sirens. When she didn't hear them go off, she wondered if the system was working.

“I think maybe we should go back to that

because things get rusty around here,” North said. “It's mechanical. It needs to be tested more often. I am honestly concerned for our community that is the only reason I have been trying to bring this to the attention of our city leaders and the residents of Seaside.”

Geologist Tom Horning, a Seaside city councilor, acknowledged that he hadn't been hearing Seaside's sirens during scheduled drills either, but whether that would make a difference in the “big one” — a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami — was questionable.

The likelihood of the use of the sirens in an event close to the Oregon Coast is slim, as it will be preceded by a three- to five-minute earthquake that no one will miss.

“I'm not sure we needed the sirens in the first place,” Horning said. “I felt when we were

See *Sirens*, Page A3

### Complaint says campaign sign is too large, defenders say it's free speech

City attorney says sign is protected political speech

By R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal

Some residents want to bring down a campaign sign on private property at the corner of Pacific Way and North Cottage. They say the sign, which advocates a “yes” vote for Measure 4-213, is too big and vio-

lates the city's zoning code. They also say that the law is being exercised unfairly, as in the past, the city has required the removal of oversized campaign signs.

Mayor Paulina Cockrum, a proponent of the measure that would issue a \$14.5 million bond for a new firehouse and police station off of Highlands, said she put up the sign with permission of the property owner. “I was assisted in putting it up by a family member, a

See *Signs*, Page A5

Tsunami siren in north Seaside.

R.J. Marx



## Killer whales off the Pacific Coast

By KATHERINE LACAZE  
Seaside Signal

Marine mammal scientist Josh McInnes has spent nearly 15 years studying transient killer whales that inhabit the waters off the Pacific Coast from Alaska to California.

During this time, he has gained insight into their ecology, abundance, distribution, and community structure, which he shared last month for Friends of Haystack Rock's World of Haystack Rock Library Series.

McInnes' presentation on killer whales, or orcas, titled “Ecological Aspects of Transient Killer Whales off the California and Oregon Coast,” was especially timely as Pacific Coast whales participate in their spring migration.

“The open ocean is a very interesting ecosystem that is probably the least-known of all the marine ecosystems on our planet — or marine biome,” said McInnes, a graduate student at the Uni-



NOAA

Killer whales, as described in “Ecological aspect of killer whales off Oregon and California,” by Josh McInnes.

versity of British Columbia's Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries Marine Mammal Research Unit.

He has focused on transient killer whales — an important apex predator in the marine ecosystems along the Pacific Coast — for his thesis work, conducted in partnership with multiple other groups, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries, Transient Killer Whale Project, Marine Life Studies, Oregon State University Marine Mammal Institute and others.

McInnes also has relied

on speaking to locals and tracking their whale sightings to augment his research. Individuals can report their sightings on Facebook groups such as the Oregon Coast Killers Sighting Group.

McInnes' research, and that of partners and community scientists, has contributed to significant advances in knowledge regarding transient killer whales and culminated into the creation of a digital catalogue that synthesizes about 13 years of detailed data. This landmark publication, which came out in June 2021, is titled

“Transient Killer Whales of Central and Northern California and Oregon: A Catalog of Photo-Identified Individuals.”

### Behaviors and traits

Although stationed in British Columbia, McInnes also spends time traveling down the western coast and doing field work in Monterey Bay to gather data.

During the presentation, he shared that there are three distinguishable North Pacific killer whale ecotypes: resident killer whales; coastal transient killer whales; and offshore killer whales. Each creature has enough identifying features—including distinct patterns on their dorsal fins or scars — that scientists can even identify and track them individually.

McInnes' work has primarily focused on transient killer whales, which can be further broken into different groups. The Pacific Coast transient group is the one that people are most likely to see off the Oregon Coast, although McInnes said the academic community is starting to believe there are

See *Whales*, Page A3

## Seaside is fined by DEQ for wastewater discharges

R.J. MARX  
Seaside Signal



State of Oregon  
Department of  
Environmental  
Quality

Seaside received a nearly \$13,000 civil penalty in February for water quality violations associated with your wastewater treatment facilities. Specifically, the state Department of Environmental Quality cited the city for five separate occurrences of discharging untreated sewage into the Neawanna River during 2021.

According to the DEQ, the city discharged untreated sewage into the Neawanna River and adjacent wetlands five times in 2021, with spills ranging from 900 gallons on Jan. 4 to more than 10,000 gallons on Nov. 15. DEQ assessed a \$9,750 civil penalty for the violations.

DEQ assessed an additional \$3,150 civil penalty for sewage overflows on Avenue D and on Pine Street, both violations on Jan. 12, 2021.

DEQ also said the city did not provide a written report regarding the overflows.

The DEQ issued the penalty because the discharge of untreated sewage to waters of the state presents a risk to public health and the environment, they said in their notice of civil penalty and assessment and order.

Direct human contact with sewage or with insects that have been in contact with sewage may spread disease.

The DEQ may allow the city to resolve part of the penalty through the completion of a supplemental environmental project, an environmental improvement undertaken in lieu of a penalty.

Included in the notice is an order requiring the city to submit to DEQ and put a plan in place to investigate the capacity of the collection system and

See *Fine*, Page A6



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