Dear Mayor and City Councilors,

Attached is an 1991 article from the Chicago Tribune which demonstrates how long the issue of dune grading has been contentious.

Please include this in the record for the FMP.

Thank you,

Jeff & Jennifer Harrison
539 N Laurel
SAND DUNE MAY LOSE PART OF ITS TOP AS RUSTIC GOES CHIC

Dan Fost, Special to the Tribune
JULY 17, 1991 – CANNON BEACH, OREGON

The Breakers Point condominiums were never a local favorite.

Polished, pricey and perched at the end of an unspoiled sandy beach, they seemed to go against the grain of the funky, down-at-the-heels community of artists and working-class folk.

High rollers from some West Coast metropolises now make their summer homes in the quarter-million-dollar condos, enjoying the benefits of a town that many liken to Carmel, Calif., before Carmel became trendy and expensive.

Now these condo owners want to bulldoze a mounting sand dune that blocks their view of the ocean. That angers some townspeople.

"They don`t understand the ocean," complained 21-year resident Vi Thompson. "They think they can do anything they want, and if something goes wrong they yell at the city."

The controversy over the dunes highlights some of the strains as the small town loses some of its rustic charm.

With fat wallets gained from selling their California homes at inflated prices, these new Northwesterners are blamed for dramatic rises in the cost of living.
Vi and Don Thompson own the weather-beaten Wavecrest Hotel, a seven-room inn without TV or radio. Don Thompson blames the Northwest's influx of Californians for many local ailments. "It's becoming more and more difficult to live simply," he said, because of rising costs.

The Breakers Point condos were first proposed in the early 1970s as a 175-unit development, but years of lawsuits delayed construction on the present 70-unit development until 1981.

"When they were building these condos, I remember some old woman shook her finger and said, 'You'll be buried by the sand,'" said Bob Farrell, the founder of a national restaurant chain that bears his name and the owner of a first-floor unit now hidden from view. "She was right."

Farrell doesn't mind walking 25 yards to get his view, but fellow condo-owner Stan Geffen complained, "The view is 90 percent of why you're here."

Some of the condos' seasonal residents want to shave about 6 feet off the top of the dunes, plowing it back toward the sea.

"Personally, I'd like them to be able to mow them down, but I don't know what that would do to the beach," said Kathy Lott, Farrell's daughter. "It's that old question of sacrificing nature for human enjoyment."

Real estate broker Craig Weston, who owns a first-floor unit and handles sales for the development, says the dunes may lower property values.

Snow fences and Yugoslavian sea grass arranged to catch the sand failed to prevent at least 3 feet of dune buildup last winter alone, Weston said, adding, "It's just devastating."

But Oregonians are an environmentally conscious lot, and a combination of condo dwellers and Cannon Beach citizens oppose any monkeying with the forces of nature.
Leading those forces against tampering with the dunes is Paul Visher, a retired aerospace engineer from Los Angeles building a large house next to Breakers Point. Visher’s concern is the protection the dunes might provide against a killer earthquake and a subsequent tidal wave.

The Northwest has major quakes roughly every 300 years, Visher said, and experts estimate the last one rocked the region in the 1690s. Sand dunes rising 50 feet above sea level—they’re now 35 to 40 feet at Breakers Point—will protect against the tsunami that follows a temblor, Visher said.

Federal, state and city agencies must approve any dune bulldozing, with the first decision due from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, city planner Rainmar Bartl said. FEMA must determine whether moving the sand will have an impact on flooding in nearby creeks.

Visher vows to take his fight to the U.S. Supreme Court, if necessary.

The Breakers Point battle is waged against the backdrop of dramatic changes hitting Cannon Beach. The comparisons to quaint Carmel are sometimes, but not always, favorable. Realtor Weston, for instance, boasts of the "neat Oregon Carmel atmosphere" in town; but another broker, Janet Rekate, said whenever clients made the Carmel analogy, "We almost hurled them out of the office."

"Cannon Beach is suffering from terminal cuteness," said environmental activist Rekate, a former city councilwoman. "Artists did come here to live and work, and that attracted developers, and that attracted people. Success destroyed what was so nice here."

Cannon Beach’s mild climate, proximity to Portland and Seattle and wide, stunning beaches have contributed to the growth.
Residents take pride that, even with the changes, Cannon Beach has not grown to resemble its neighbor, Seaside, noted more for a New Jersey shore atmosphere of rowdy teenagers.

Cannon Beach's most noteworthy landmark is the 235-foot Haystack Rock. Its silhouette is on nearly every state tourist brochure. Seagulls and puffins roost on its craggy dome, families flock to its bountiful tidepools and artists have painted its mossy visage for years.

Local artists no longer dominate downtown Cannon Beach, as out-of-town galleries and T-shirt shops seek to cash in on tourism.

Not all businesses appreciate the increased commerce. The annual Sandcastle Contest in early June draws 16,000 people to Cannon Beach (pop. 1,280). For this year's Sandcastle contest, one local restaurant closed its doors to avoid the crush of the season's busiest weekend.