



What did Edwards think about the cost savings? "We actually increased our road risk using the modular design. With soil nail you build from the top down and it has much less risk on traffic. But when we realized that we could spend \$300,000 or better on a soil nail wall that would have far-reaching, negative effects on the homeowners and existing animal habitat, versus spending \$144,000 for a GravityStone Modular wall system that met all of our needs and then some, the decision was easy."



For more than 50 years, WestBlock Systems has set the standard for innovative, cost-effective and design-driven earth retention and barrier wall systems. Produced by a world-wide network of concrete block manufacturers, our products are sold direct and through dealers to both private and public sectors.

As distributors of masonry building materials since 1947, and manufacturers of concrete block since 1984, it's fair to say we've been around the block a time or two. Our intimate understanding of the various markets, trends, manufacturing technology, product engineering, and installation process make us an ideal partner. We not only talk the talk, we walk the walk. Focused on delivering customer-relevant solutions, our wide range of products reflect the perfect blend of form and function. From patented designs that ease installation and lower costs to unique textures and color options that compliment nature, WestBlock offers an efficient and effective way for customers to either grow their businesses or enhance their surroundings. Add our commitment to quality and it's no surprise that our products are readily accepted by manufacturers, engineers, contractors, and D.I.Y.'ers.

To learn more about WestBlock Systems and how our wide range of high quality products can help you meet your hardscape objectives, please call 800.332.6489.



CONTRACTOR EXPANDS ROAD, BUILDS RETAINING WALL AND SAVES \$156,000

Situation:

Access to a block of new homes built on a short plat on top of hill was compromised and required that the one and only roadway be expanded to meet code and city standards.

Challenge:

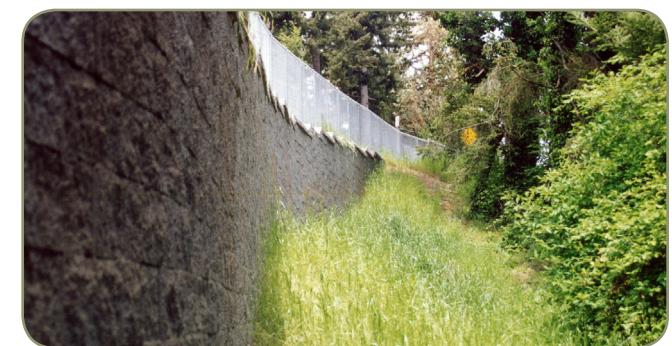
The challenge of widening the road was three-fold: First, the existing road could never be closed because people living in the homes needed to get in and out. Second, the area was on a steep, narrow hill with a school just below. And third, work could not disturb the natural wetland and animal boundary that surrounded the site.

Solution:

Use GravityStone Modular to construct a long, narrow wall up to 15 ft. high and 4 cells deep.

Results:

- GravityStone Modular saved the contractor more than \$156,000 in material costs alone.
- GravityStone Modular reduced mass excavation considerably, keeping the existing road open and local access flowing smoothly.
- GravityStone Modular left the animal boundary and natural wetland undisturbed.



Wind up and around to the homes sitting high atop a hill at the new San Maritz development in Lakewood, Washington, today and you're greeted by tall trees, a beautiful block wall and lush landscape, including a natural wetland at the foot of the hill. But that wasn't always the case. Once the homes were built, the City of Lakewood determined the one and only access road leading to and from the development was too narrow. That's when City engineers turned to Looker and Associates, awarding the Sumner, Washington, construction company the task of widening the road.



(From cover)

Monty Edwards, project superintendent for Looker & Associates recalls the multiple challenges facing his crew, "In order for the road to meet code and City standards we had to increase the existing street from 10 ft. to 24 ft. wide. And because the road was going up hill we had to build a wall that would hold the road." According to Edwards, that's when the real challenge began.

"We had to maintain a single lane of travel for existing homes located at the top of the hill. This limited the excavation immensely because after you apply a 1:1 temporary excavated slope and add live traffic driving on it, you have an extremely tight passageway. The bottom of the hill posed a completely different challenge due to a natural wetland buffer zone and a school."



Exploring the options

Edward's team looked at all the various wall options including a poured in place concrete wall with footing, Kelly Block, (large precast units) and rockery. But space constraints and environmental issues rendered the alternatives less than ideal. "Because the wall would be 15 ft. high at various points, a soil nail or shotcrete wall would require us to excavate 14 ft. back into the hillside in order to accommodate the fabric. That option meant we would need to cut into the homeowner's property. Deal with sewer and waterlines, shutting them down, relocating them and then turning them back on again. Doing all that would increase the length of the project from days to weeks. We knew the residents couldn't be without water and sanitation for that long. Plus, we would have had to run a crane behind the wall and disturb the animal boundary, which was also unacceptable," says Edwards. "That's when we called in Sound Retaining Walls (SRW)."



Capitalizing on GravityStone Modular

After reviewing the parameters of the job, SRW recommended installing the GravityStone Modular wall system. It called for far less mass excavation than alternative M.S.E. type wall systems. "Once you enter the tall but narrow wall structure arena your options are limited and expensive as heck. GravityStone Modular not only met the physical specifications of the job better than alternative products, but it also cost considerably less than any of the other options," says Kevin Lindstrom, owner, SRW, Tacoma, Washington.

Edwards was sold. "GravityStone's interlocking design meant we didn't have to excavate the road out as much as we would have had to with say a soil nail wall. In fact, we were able to install the GravityStone Modular wall system from ground level to 15 ft. high and get all the support we needed going just 4 cells deep. The wall has been up for two years now and it's stronger than ever."

(Continued on back page)



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