



Courtesy Lower Columbia Engineering

This map shows how the donated land will be redeveloped in line with the Westport Corridor and Community Plan.

Westport: All ideas in county's plan still rely on possible funding

Continued from Page 1A

Georgia-Pacific inherited the 27 acres as part of its purchase of the Wauna Mill. The acres in Westport have not been used by Georgia-Pacific and have mostly fallen into disrepair.

The donation hit a roadblock a decade ago when the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality suspected contamination in the area from a sawmill operation in the 1950s.

After a lengthy regulatory process, DEQ issued a no further action statement, allowing the land to be donated and eventually used by the community, Ward said.

In the meantime, the county parks department continued to host public meetings and hired Lower Columbia Engineering of St. Helens to develop schematic design drawings of the proposed projects.

Clatsop County Commissioner Dirk Rohne, who represents the Westport area, said plans to put the 27 acres to use could create economic and recreational opportunities for local residents.

"That park and boat ramp development will allow everyone to enjoy the Lower Columbia River estuary," Rohne said. "I'm hoping it creates a movement to allow Westport to rejuvenate itself."

Andrew Niemi, of Lower Columbia Engineering who designed the proposed drawings, grew up in Westport and said the plans are a welcome improvement to the local residents.

Niemi said the current boat launch is not usable at lower tides and has inadequate parking, especially during the busy spring salmon season. The parking area has potholes and only a port-a-potty as a restroom.

Proposed improvements to the boat launch would include a boat washing station that would keep boats clean of possible invasive species. In addition, the parking area would be reconstructed.

The county is working with the Oregon State Marine Board for possible funding.

As for the park portion of the project, Niemi said, community members would have a larger space for walks along lighted paths and better fishing locations, including a handicap accessible fishing dock. The park area would also connect better with the Westport Ferry landing.

Wellville: Initiative shifted from a competition to a challenge

Continued from Page 1A

However, HICcup CEO Rick Brush said, there is no \$5 million prize to be awarded at the end of the five years.

As requested by the five Wellville communities, Brush said, the initiative was shifted from a competition to a challenge, so the communities could collaborate with each other.

"The idea is for all five communities to help each other achieve their personal best. The prize idea was dropped when the communities suggested this change," Brush said. "In the end, each community will 'win' much more than a financial prize ... in better health for all citizens, greater economic vitality, closer social connections and collaboration."

Through collaboration

with the other communities and residents in Clatsop County, the local Way to Wellville Strategic Advisory Council will take ideas and match them with interested investors. All ideas that work and fail will be shared among the participants and across the nation.

The initial focus areas for Clatsop County include addressing chemical dependency, mental health,

access to primary care, employment, obesity and food access, prenatal education and care, and time-banking service exchange.

"It's a really an opportunity for Warrenton and Clatsop County in general to have some outside perspective and in the future we will be able to leverage some of that for some kind of investment and programs," Kujala said.

Gadgets: 'We discourage cellphones and remove them as we see them'

Continued from Page 1A

A similar proposed policy sets the ground rules for staff use of personal electronic devices on school property or at district-sponsored events.

Hoppes said OSBA allows districts to have policies allowing or not allow-

ing technology in school. The proposed policy changes still need to go through multiple readings in a regular board session before possible adoption by the school board.

Without a specified age range, a first-grader could bring an iPad for educational purposes, board member

Grace Laman said.

As a district, Astoria has so far opted to allow personal technology, said Hoppes, while John Jacob Astor and Lewis and Clark elementary schools have rules mostly not allowing personal technology, as well as Astoria Middle School up to a couple of months ago.

"We discourage cellphones and remove them as we see them," said Lewis and Clark Principal Brian Ploghoft, adding that some students do read e-books at school.

One question raised by board members was the responsibility of the district in providing students educational software and online

Somers: Letters question Somers' leadership

Continued from Page 1A

No other commissioners seconded Rohne's motion and the proposal died.

Rohne said he spoke with former County Manager Duane Cole, who retired May 31, 2012, after three years with the county, and Columbia County Commissioner Earl Fisher. Both thought Rohne's motion was a good idea. However, the Board of Commissioners did not.

"It would be a group of professionals, without the manager involved," Rohne said. "Now the manager will be in charge of the process of evaluating himself."

Rohne recently received ridicule from the Board of Commissioners for supposedly acting outside his authority as a commissioner by discussing concerns about personnel issues with labor attorney Akin Blitz, on behalf of the commission. Rohne denies the claims.

After an executive session Dec. 23, the board, without Rohne present, approve a motion that stated in part, "individual commissioners do not have authority to hire attorneys or launch investigation. Such actions must be taken as a board."

No other actions have been taken against Rohne.

Letters at issue

Rohne's concerns stem from multiple anonymous letters he has received, and believes the county is not taking seriously. The letters question Administrative Services Director Dean Perez and Somers' leadership.

Besides the anonymous letters, Somers said, he has not received any specific complaints or word of any policies or laws that he has broken. If employees have concerns, he said, they can contact the Oregon Government Ethics Commission, the county attorney, the Board of Commissioners chairman or file a claim.

No such complaints have come forward, Somers said.

"If I could wave my wand and make things perfect in the world, we would be able to put some of this gossip and innuendos and this ill-mongered gossip kind of cesspool to bed so we can move forward," Somers said.

A wish to move forward

The recent focus on the anonymous claims is derailing the county as it prepares for another year filled with projects such as Clatsop Vision 2030 Together and upcoming budget meetings, Somers said.

"We have a lot of things going on and I would like to get back to the business of the county, and I suspect most of the commission and citizens would like to see that, too," Somers said. "If we need to do an evaluation to put that

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— **Scott Somers**
Clatsop County manager

to bed, let's do that and move on."

Somers considers a 360-performance evaluation one way to move the county forward. He received positive feedback from the Board of Commissioners in his 2014 review.

He scored highest in the "personal traits" category with an average of 4.9 out of 5. His lowest score was in "intergovernmental relationships" with an average of 4.3 out of 5.

To properly conduct a 360-performance evaluation, Somers said, a large sample of people must be gathered by an objective third-party firm to get an overall understanding.

Such performance reviews have not always worked in other agencies.

According to a Forbes article from 2012, "When it's done poorly, 360 programs create mistrust, anger, conflict and can leave a team with lower morale than when you started the exercise."

Somers said he has some concern the wide-reaching performance review may turn into a weapon against him, but overall he is confident it will be done properly, if the Board of Commissioners agrees to pursue it.

"It does give the opportunity for an employee that has been disciplined or held accountable to retaliate against their boss," Somers said.

When considering his time as county manager, Somers admits a large number of changes have occurred. Since March 2013, at least six department heads have left the county.

County Clerk Maeve Kennedy Grimes was fired in December after errors were discovered on the general election ballot. Also in that time, half the county staff were moved to higher deductible health plans and the Juvenile Detention Center closed.

"All the changes have 'ruffled some feathers,'" Somers said.

"I'd like to think all of it has been done very respectfully and with courtesy," Somers said. "If someone could show me where it hasn't, I'd love to see it."

EVENT AGENDA	
Wauna Mill 92326 Taylorville Road Clatskanie, OR 97016	
Noon:	Arrival and lunch
12:10 p.m.:	Welcome and introductions by VP Wauna Mill Manager Steve Francoeur
12:15 p.m.:	Property donation history by Georgia-Pacific spokeswoman Kristi Ward and Clatsop County Parks Manager Steve Meshke
12:20 p.m.:	Environmental remediation process by Georgia-Pacific Environmental Manager Jeff Sorensen
12:25 p.m.:	Community visioning process for the park by Andrew Niemi of Lower Columbia Engineering
12:30 p.m.:	Plympton Creek coho salmon habitat restoration by Lower Columbia River Council Watershed Coordinator Margaret Magruder
12:35 p.m.:	County park creation time line by Meshke
12:40 p.m.:	Questions and answers
12:45 p.m.:	Presentations of photo of Clatsop County
1 p.m.:	Event concludes



Courtesy Lower Columbia Engineering

This drawing shows how the donated land might look from the Plympton Creek perspective.

'That park and boat ramp development will allow everyone to enjoy the Lower Columbia River estuary. I'm hoping it creates a movement to allow Westport to rejuvenate itself.'

— **Dirk Rohne**
Clatsop County Commissioner

"If someone is waiting for the ferry, they would have a park to spend some time in," Niemi said.

The 27-acre donation includes Plympton Creek, which has been rerouted to an unnatural channel over the years. Plans are in the works by the Lower Columbia River Council Watershed to reconnect the creek with its historic channel, which could have a positive impact on fish habitat.

All of the ideas in the county's

Westport Corridor and Community Plan, made possible by the recent land donation, still rely on possible funding.

Niemi said he is confident the funding will come and his hometown will successfully see an extensive transformation in the coming years.

"There is no guarantee they will all be completed, but the chances are pretty good for the majority of it to come to fruition," he said.

features for students with personal devices.

Principal Lynn Jackson from Astoria High School said that many new curricula include a hard-copy book and online supplemental materials. He added that talk of personal technology for curriculum might also be premature, as the adoption of web-based curri-

ulum hasn't happened yet.

Board member Shawn Helligso wondered what the appeals process would be like. Hoppes said it hasn't been specified in policy, but that the district would work out the details for its administrative regulations and include the policies in the student and staff handbooks.