

Bridge: Work is part of a \$16.7 million rehabilitation project

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Torres, a spokesman for the Oregon Department of Transportation. "Then of course the structural steel on the bridge itself was eroded."

Work through August

Oregon Bridge Construction, the Stayton-based contractor on the project, could have reopened the bridge Aug. 1, but would

have needed five additional one-week closures to finish the project. Instead, the contractor decided to work through August and have the bridge completely finished by Sept. 4.

"This really made sense since the closure has been already in place and the public has adjusted to it," Dave True, the Department of Transportation's project manager, said. "It is good

news because we will be completely finished with the Lewis and Clark River Bridge by Labor Day and there will be no more complete closures of the bridge."

Part of larger project

The bridge work is part of a \$16.7 million rehabilitation project that includes work on the Old Youngs Bay Bridge. Crews are repairing and replacing the

electrical and mechanical systems of the Old Youngs Bay Bridge, which are from the 1920s.

Most of the work on the Old Youngs Bay Bridge is being done during the daytime with flaggers controlling a single lane of traffic. The bridge will not be completely closed.

The overall project is scheduled to be completed in November 2017.

"Because we can't completely close the bridge, like we did with the Lewis and Clark Bridge, it takes longer to do the work," Torres said. "If we closed both lanes on that bridge we would have extraordinary backup."

As of 2013, the average traffic count on Old Youngs Bay Bridge was 20,000 vehicles a day. Lewis and Clark River Bridge had an

average of 11,400 travelers a day.

Both bridges are main connections to Lewis and Clark National Historical Park and the Astoria Regional Airport.

The spans also provide alternative routes between Astoria and Warrenton, alleviating some traffic pressure on U.S. Highway 30, the Youngs Bay Bridge and U.S. Highway 101.

Greenway: Development pressure not as high

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Unlike the two previous phases — Civic Greenway, from 16th Street to 41st Street; and Bridge Vista, from Portway Street to Second Street — Neighborhood Greenway does not face obvious residential and commercial development pressure.

Greater restrictions

The land along the river in Alderbrook is zoned for aquatic conservation, so development over the water is generally restricted to docks, piers and marinas.

Most of the residents at the meeting Thursday night appeared to favor even greater restrictions, such as limiting new development to no higher than the riverbank.

On land, much of the neighborhood is zoned residential, which mostly allows single-family and two-family homes with minimum commercial — such as day care centers — under certain conditions.

"Leave Alderbrook alone," said Rae Goforth, a community volunteer who lives in Uniontown but is fond of the neighborhood.

Working riverfront

The Riverfront Vision Plan's goals for Neighborhood Greenway include emphasizing the region's natural features and beauty, minimizing the impact of foot traffic on the neighborhood, and encouraging maritime uses that maintain a historic connection to a working riverfront.

Alderbrook was once home to a lumber mill, net lofts and



Alex Pajunas/The Daily Astorian

Neighborhood Greenway, which covers the Alderbrook neighborhood, is the next phase of the city's Riverfront Vision Plan.

other commercial activities in the city's timber and fishing heyday. But today, because of shallow water, relative isolation and restrictive zoning, even maritime uses, such as a marina, would be difficult without dredging or other improvements.

"This area isn't going to lend itself to any kind of development, really," said Rosemary Johnson, a special projects planner for the city.

Apparent consensus

The Astoria Planning Commission will hold a work session on land use in the Neighborhood Greenway on Sept. 1, with a public hearing likely

in October. The City Council could take up the issue in November.

The apparent consensus among residents to keep the zoning in Alderbrook largely intact may give city planners and elected officials a breather from the overheated and divisive debates over development that happened during the Civic Greenway and Bridge Vista phases.

A majority of the City Council believed Civic Greenway and Bridge Vista struck a balance between conservation and development, and imposed building restrictions that did not exist before, but a vocal camp has argued the city has not done

enough to protect scenic views of the river.

The last leg of the Riverfront Vision Plan — the Urban Core, between Second Street and 16th Street — is expected to be intense.

"I was real pleased with the turnout. And I think we got a lot of positive comments," Dave Pearson, the president of the Astoria Planning Commission, said after the town hall on Neighborhood Greenway. "I think they mesh very well with what the city already has on paper as part of the initial vision."

"And, I think with just a little bit of fine tuning, I think we'll be there."

Pump: State's prohibition has been in place since 1951

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Pumped up

Pat Schmidt, a gas attendant at Astoria's Texaco Food Mart, said he's not worried about losing his job if the pumps go self-serve; his supervisors have assured him there would still be plenty for him to do in the store, he said.

The law, Schmidt said, may actually increase business efficiency, on top of its revenue, by allowing employees on duty after 6 p.m. to focus on important tasks, like restocking refrigerators and assisting shoppers, rather than on running outside every few minutes to pump petrol.

And, for gas stations that are just gas stations, where the only employees are gas attendants, jobs would stay very much the same, Bentz said: Attendants would pump when they're around and, if they so choose, let drivers pump when they're not around.

Many out-of-state drivers accustomed to the independence that self-service provides will welcome the change, Singh said.

"A lot of people come from different states and argue with the attendants because they want to pump their own gas. And some people still do," he said. "Sometimes they fight and leave."

Oregon and New Jersey are the only two states that don't allow for self-service dispensing at retail fueling stations. Oregon's prohibition has been in place since 1951.

Is the law the first step toward 24-hour self-service statewide? Bentz doesn't think so, though he believes it would be a better deal for drivers.

"The only people that have said something like that are those that actually want self-service," he said, "and they're hoping that's what happens."

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