



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Dale Barrett looks over a map of the Fort Pointe housing development in Warrenton.

## Housing: Many apartments are already fully reserved before they are even open

Continued from Page 1A

“The fact that they’ve had what we call a reapplication conference tells me that they have a significant amount of interest,” he said.

Fort Pointe, which is financed by Texas-based 210 Development Group, had tentative approval a decade ago for 300 lots, Barrett said. “Because the economy was starting to go bad, we got extensions to that, but they eventually ran out.”

Barrett said the development will add about 50 homes a year, based on the market. He anticipates tentative approval in late summer or early fall, with construction through the winter.

### Houses galore

On the Clatsop Plains between Sunset Lake and U.S. Highway 101, developer Harry Henke has an 87-lot subdivision he is calling Reed Ranch, also known as Westlake Village. Henke, who’s worked on the Astoria Business Park and housing projects in Seaside, said road construction on Reed Ranch begins this month.

Urling said he received an application for a 74-unit subdivision called Roosevelt being planned by Warrenton Fiber and North River Homes south of the Clatsop County Sheriff’s Office and the Nygaard family’s previous development, Forrest Rim, which has mostly been built out.

Developer Dick Krueger, who has faced multiple hurdles to proposed apartment complexes in and around Astoria, is moving forward with a 35-house subdivision at a Lewis and Clark site scheduled to break ground next month.

### Apartments

Urling said there are apartment complexes in the works, including Forte Point.

Krueger, who previously developed the Yacht Club and Mill Pond apartment complexes in Astoria, but who has faced resistance in subsequent projects, is planning more than 60 units called the Pacific Rim Apartment on a plot of land just east of Clatsop Community Action’s Regional Food Bank.

“I told him our best chance of getting approval for hous-



The housing development project would add 150 homes and a similar number of apartment units in Warrenton.



Utility construction continues on the northern extension of the Juniper Ridge subdivision in Warrenton.

ing is in Warrenton,” Barrett, a manager for Krueger on the project, said. “Warrenton is welcoming him with open arms, and we felt we could get him under construction.”

Urling said developer Jason Palmberg is planning another apartment complex of a similar size to Krueger’s off of U.S. Highway 101 business near T.J.’s Auto Repair. Palmberg said the increase in apartments is simply a response to the need.

“The demand for housing is really high,” he said, adding many apartments are fully reserved before they ever open.

While other developers have focused on the periphery of cities, hotel developer and operator Antoine Simmons is planning the 37-unit Skipanon River Apartments at the northwest corner of First Street and Skipanon Drive. Another 32-unit apartment complex is being planned by developer Joe Barnes near the U.S. Coast Guard Exchange in Astoria.

Simmons said he was partially motivated to build near downtown Warrenton by the city’s openness to development and a recent decision to

amend zoning rules and allow multifamily housing as a conditional use in commercial areas.

“I’ve been looking and looking and looking for a place to build apartments, because there’s such a pent-up demand,” Simmons said. “There’s nothing available in Seaside, there’s nothing available in Astoria.”

### Cheap land

Development has focused on high ground in and around Warrenton, where developers say they’ve found a more welcoming environment and more buildable land outside of wetlands, which can be prohibitively expensive to mitigate and develop.

Will Caplinger, Clatsop County’s planning manager, reported 170 lots in the works outside city limits. He said developers are often looking for raw and inexpensive lands to develop, along with a location close to city utilities they can hook into. In most cases, that has been Warrenton.

Gil Gramson, a longtime developer in the area and a former Warrenton mayor and city manager, said much of

the future regional development around Warrenton will be focused around Ridge Road and south of the Astoria Regional Airport. “Then in the county, the rest is going to be down on the plains where Harry Henke is building,” he said.

Gramson is beginning utility work on the northern extension of the Juniper Ridge subdivision, which he said has added 125 homes to Warrenton since it started in the 2000s.

The Fort Pointe development also sits atop a sandy ridge Barrett said was created by historical sand accretion and a change in hydrology caused by the installation of the Columbia River jetty system in the early 20th century. Of the 300 acres the project partnership owns, he said, only 70 will be used, reserving the rest for conservation.

### Affordable development

The price of houses and rent on apartments coming online will mostly be dictated by the market, which has seen significant increases in demand over the past several years. Developers say that creating more affordable workforce housing will only be feasible with government support.

“It’s tough,” Simmons said. “Unless it’s Section 8 and they’re subsidized or the government’s paying part of the rent, it’s going to be difficult.”

Innovative Housing Inc., a Portland nonprofit that refurbishes old buildings into workforce housing, is in its second 90-day due diligence period on Astoria’s former Waldorf Hotel, where it plans to create 40 one-bedroom and studio units for people earning 50 to 60 percent of the region’s median income. The nonprofit depends on government grants, tax credits and other means to help finance build-outs.

Gramson said he doesn’t know the answer to creating workforce housing, other than local assistance to ease the cost of construction and permitting.

“The housing authority has to come up with plans,” Gramson said. “There’s no incentive really for builders to be in that market, because the cost of building is going up so fast.”

## Taxes: Governor wants to ‘set the table’ for a tax overhaul in 2019

Continued from Page 1A

care providers and insurers, Courtney, Kotek and Brown say that they’ll push for cost containment to make up the difference.

“... We have worked for months with legislators in both parties, business leaders, and labor leaders, to identify ways to reduce state spending, contain costs going forward, and finally reform our revenue system,” Brown, Courtney and Kotek said in a joint statement Thursday morning. “While we are moving forward on several major cost containment measures, it has become clear that the Legislature will not have the necessary support to achieve structural revenue reforms this session.”

Those cost containment strategies won’t include proposed cutbacks to the Public Employees Retirement System, a sticking point for many Republicans.

Some Democrats had hoped to achieve structural changes to state taxes on business, shifting the basis from income to sales.

But this week there were already indications those ambitions may not come to fruition.

Lawmakers were considering alternatives, such as increasing the existing corporate income tax, which could raise \$530 million for the next budget, and narrowing eligibility for a pass through tax break, which would shore up nearly \$200 million in the next two years.

Brown said she didn’t think that a proposal to increase the corporate income tax had “traction” in the Oregon House.

And Republicans are already up in arms about the other proposal, which Senate Minority Leader Ted Ferrioli, R-John Day, dubbed a “tax heist.”

### ‘Set the table’

Brown said she wanted to “set the table” for a tax overhaul in 2019. She blamed the rancorous Measure 97 fight last year for the impasse.

Measure 97, backed by union groups, would have taxed certain corporations with annual Oregon sales of more than \$25 million.

“It is really clear to me, as I mentioned, that it takes a full legislative session to vet structural changes to Oregon’s revenue situation,” Brown told reporters Thursday. “I think I would have liked to (have had) a process leading up to that. Ballot Measure 97 and the battle over that prohibited that table or that level of collaboration.”

A rematch over business taxes is already shaping up for the November 2018 ballot.

The state’s largest teachers’ union, the Oregon Education Association, is backing a ballot measure that would create a gross receipts tax on businesses with annual sales of more than \$3 million.

House Majority Leader Jennifer Williamson, D-Portland, contended Republicans were to blame.

Democrats in both the House and Senate are one vote shy of the three-fifths majority required to pass revenue-raising measures, mean-



AP file photo

Gov. Kate Brown speaks to media representatives in Salem in January.

ing that if all Democrats were to vote in favor of revenue reform, they’d still need one Republican on board.

“Unfortunately, Republicans have chosen to stand in the way rather than work collaboratively in order to solve the biggest problems facing our state,” Williamson said in a statement. She argued her caucus had floated proposals to reduce costs, address the state’s “broken” revenue system and stabilize education funding.

### ‘Good faith’

House Minority Leader Mike McLane, R-Powell Butte, shot back, arguing that Republicans had worked “in good faith.”

“We said before the session began that we would be open to raising revenue if Democrats were willing to engage in a serious effort to grow the economy and control costs,” McLane said in a prepared statement. “The Democrats were not willing to do that. House Democrats failed to produce this session the budget changes needed to support our communities.”

Hanna Vaandering, president of the Oregon Education Association, accused both Republicans and Oregon businesses of obstruction in a statement.

“We met with the business community nearly 10 times and not once did they bring forward a long-term, sustainable solution for our students,” Vaandering said. “They said it would be easy to find common ground, but instead have spent months obstructing.”

But Vaandering also said the Legislature had “ample time” to pass a bigger revenue package before the final gavel falls later this summer.

Business leaders such as a Brighter Oregon, a coalition of businesses and business groups including the Portland Business Alliance, were adamant that their support for new revenue was contingent on curtailing the state’s costs, which the state now appears poised to do out of necessity.

Jim Green, head of the Oregon School Boards Association, called Thursday’s announcement “disappointing.”

“Now there will be a lot of finger-pointing on both sides, but ultimately this is a failure by our elected state leaders to put aside their differences and do what is needed,” Green said in a statement. “Instead of a solution, what we are left with is a short-term patch.”

*The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.*

## Deur: ‘Oregon is changing. We want parks to be relevant to everybody’

Continued from Page 1A

He’s also a founding member of the fundraising group Friends of Haystack Rock Awareness Program, the Ecola Creek Forest Reserve initiative, as well as other environmental groups and movements in Cannon Beach.

### Changing Oregon

Parks and Recreation Department Associate Director Chris Havel said that, while

all of the commissioners share a deep love of Oregon and the desire to improve the parks system within, Deur is notable for his background as a historian and anthropologist.

“In Doug’s case, his strong credentials as a historian fits in well with the department mission, with his experience with national registry, local museums, and with his role in the state through recreation and history,” Havel said. “I think people who are naturally

drawn to that will find the commission a welcoming place.

State parks have many challenges before them. While on the commission, Deur hopes to address how to bolster infrastructure better to accommodate the influx of traffic at heavily used parks, such as Oswald West and Ecola State Park, as well as look for ways to improve beach access points with small land acquisitions.

But most notably, he wants to use his background to tell

the stories of all Oregonians and their relationship to the parks system.

“We need to tell these stories so we don’t forget that these parks still mean something to Native Americans. Different communities have different stories associated with the parks that relate to their histories,” he said.

One of the most encompassing challenges is to figure out how to keep parks relevant for a culturally and demo-

graphically changing Oregon, Havel said.

Most of the growth and development of state parks happened between the 1950s and 1970s, Havel said. Since then, the demographic and cultural landscape of Oregon has changed, leading to usage changes such as an increase in day trips rather than overnight camping.

“In the last five years, we’ve had increasing visitation every year. We’ve found

it’s many of the same people visiting more often, maybe not as diversified as it could be,” Havel said. “We won’t know if we are serving every Oregon city until we ask better questions.”

Deur hopes his background in cultural studies can help bridge this gap to encourage more park access for more people, he said.

“Oregon is changing. We want parks to be relevant to everybody,” Deur said.