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ONE DOLLAR

## Astoria looks at permits for Airbnb-type rental housing

An attempt to curb illegal operations

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
*The Daily Astorian*

People looking to offer Airbnb-type rentals based out of houses and apartments in Astoria may be required get a permit in the future.

The Astoria City Council discussed new, stricter requirements for rental operations during a work session Wednesday. A proposal detailing a permit structure and amendments to city code could be in front of the council to discuss — and vote on — sometime in the next three months.

A draft permit process staff presented Wednesday builds on Astoria's minimal requirements for homestay lodging and represents an attempt to curb illegal rentals — an issue cities across the country have struggled with since the rise of vacation rental advertising platforms like Airbnb and VRBO.

**'THIS ISN'T THE LAST BITE OF THE APPLE, BUT IT PROVIDES US WITH THE ABILITY TO START PUTTING SOMETHING IN WRITING NOW.'**

Brett Estes | city manager of Astoria

"This isn't the last bite of the apple, but it provides us with the ability to start putting something in writing now," City Manager Brett Estes said.

Astoria does not allow vacation rentals — where an entire house is rented out — in residential neighborhoods, but does allow a short-term rental option referred to as homestay lodging. The city asks people setting up homestay lodging in their house or apartment to file a business license with the city, submit lodging taxes to the Finance Department and meet off-street parking requirements. The homes also must be owner-occupied with an owner on site when guests or renters are present.

A permit for homestay lodging would apply across the city's zones and require people to submit more information, making it easier for staff and police to track rentals, address issues as they come up and ensure an operation is in compliance, Estes and City Planner Nancy Ferber said.

A permit may not be able to cut back on people who rent out illegally, Estes said, but "if there's a little bit of a hammer to say if you sign up and you don't have the permit, there is a penalty associated with it. ... Word will get out, 'Hey you really need to go through the city process to avoid any of these issues.'"

### 'Changes daily'

City councilors disagree about the degree to which Airbnb-type rental practices and homestay lodging reduce available housing or impact the economy. They do worry about the overall effect on the community and the illegal operations that bypass city requirements such as paying the lodging tax.

Right now, city staff have compliance information on only 15 hosts, but are working to investigate other rental operations to determine who is and who isn't following the rules. The Finance Department saw \$9,900 in lodging tax collected from the

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## Tug escorts needed if oil tanker traffic increases



Coast Guard  
The Argent Cosmos, 557-foot tanker loaded with ethanol and glycol, ran aground in January near Skamokawa, Wash. A recent report by the Washington Department of Ecology pointed to river mile 39, near Skamokawa and the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge, as the most dangerous spot on the Lower Columbia River for transiting ships.

## Study finds risk of oil spills low, but concerning

By EDWARD STRATTON  
*The Daily Astorian*

The risk of oil spills on the Columbia River is very low, a new study into vessel traffic and safety has found, but more tethered tug escorts might be needed if new marine terminals increase tanker traffic.

Less than 5 percent of the 1,400 vessels on the lower stretch of the river each year carry bulk oil as cargo, equating to more than 470 one-way trips. Most of the oil traffic carried refined products upriver to terminals in Oregon and Washington state.

The study, issued to the Washington Legislature in November, identified five proposed bulk terminals creating a potential of up to 1,379 additional one-way trips, mostly by tankers. Most of the terminal projects are in Washington state, including coal in Longview, methanol in Kalama and calcium carbonate in Woodland. A methanol refinery has been pitched for Port Westward near Clatskanie.

Opposition has grown fierce against a proposed oil-by-rail terminal by oil giant Tesoro Corp. and transportation firm Savage Cos. at the Port of Vancouver. The terminal could receive up



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About half of bulk oil-carrying vessels on the Columbia River were articulated tug barges. The barges include a notch in the bow, into which a tug hooks to propel and navigate.

to 300,000 barrels and send out one ship per day bound for West Coast refineries.

The last major oil spill on the Columbia River was March 1984, when the SS Mobil Oil grounded on Warrior Rock near St. Helens, spilling 200,000 gallons of heavy fuel oil. Rudder failure and improper maintenance were determined as the cause.

After the Exxon Valdez struck Alaska's Bligh Reef in 1989 and spilled 11 million gallons of oil into Prince Wil-

liam Sound, the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 gave shippers 25 years to phase out single-hulled vessels. Tankers now have an outer hull and an inner, redundant layer in case of a failure.

The risk of oil spills is very low, said Brian Kirk of the Department of Ecology. But his department found that, in 2006 figures, a large spill could cost Washington state \$10.8 billion and 165,147 jobs.

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## Medical data analyst to run for county commission seat

### Davis ran for school board in Astoria in May

By JACK HEFFERNAN  
*The Daily Astorian*

An Astoria medical data analyst has announced his candidacy to replace Clatsop County Board of Commissioners Chairman Scott Lee in the May elections.

Andrew Davis will be running for Lee's District 1 seat, which covers much of western Astoria as well as Warrenton and Hammond. Lee announced last year that he



Andrew Davis

would not seek re-election.

Davis, 40, first became involved in politics while he was living in his hometown of Bloomington, Indiana, about 10 years ago, citing his disenchantment with former Presi-

dent George W. Bush's administration. He served two years on the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability — a citizen committee under the city's economic development department — and worked part time for a community access television channel.

A delegate for the Democratic Party of Oregon, Davis will spend much of the next few weeks advocating for Measure 101. The measure, up for a vote in January, will determine whether health insurance premium taxes approved by the state Legislature to finance Medicaid will be upheld.

Davis moved with his wife to Astoria in February 2015

after spending three years in South Korea as a teacher. He worked as a data analyst at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, the county's mental health contractor, for a little more than a year before leaving last year in the midst of rapid staff turnover at the agency.

"I think the environment there was not entirely healthy for a little while," Davis said. "There were lots of disputes between labor and management about what direction they wanted to take the shop, and I didn't feel particularly happy there at the time."

He then joined Greater Oregon Behavioral Health Inc. as

an analyst studying where to best allocate money for medical resources. The agency oversees Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare. He said he has established productive relationships with current leadership at the mental health agency and even helped train new employees who assumed his old position.

"I don't foresee any difficulty with me working with them," he said.

Should he win the election, Davis may need to recuse himself from some decisions involving behavioral health contracts.

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