

# Hangar: Projected to cost \$1 million

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Life Flight's new lease is expected to generate \$19,000 a year for the Port. The service also accounts for 10 percent of jet fuel sales at the airport and will be obligated to buy it at \$1.30 per gallon, earning the Port another \$13,000 annually. Combined with the added revenue from freeing up the executive hangar Life Flight leases, the Port expects to make \$32,000 annually from the agreement.

Since voters rejected a

bond measure in May 2017 to fund Life Flight's relocation, the Port has been negotiating with the service on a new spot. Life Flight received a \$665,000 ConnectOregon state infrastructure grant that, along with its \$285,000 match, will pay for the construction of the hangar.

The two sides settled on Life Flight's existing location near the airport terminal building. The location was not the preferred site during the debate over the bond measure because of potential traffic and noise

conflicts with nearby aviators, the Coast Guard's Air Station Astoria and the Columbia River Bar Pilots.

Gary Kobes, the airport manager for the Port, said reaching a final solution meant the Port agreed to take on responsibility if there are any environmental issues that pop up during construction. So far, only light contamination on a small section of soil has been found, he said.

Jim Knight, the Port's executive director, said the agency still needs to make sev-

eral changes to nearby leases before finalizing the lease with Life Flight, such as moving a nearby storage area for Reser's Fine Foods.

The Port Commission also voted Tuesday to accept a \$300,000 grant from the Federal Aviation Administration that will pay the agency back for \$266,220 it spent on 1.5 acres of wetland mitigation credits from Warrenton Fiber at the headwaters of the John Day River to offset the environmental impacts of a taxiway relocation.



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

**Voters in Warrenton will be asked to approve a \$38.5 million bond for school improvements in November.**

## Bond: Request will go before Warrenton voters

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erty tax burden in the school district is projected to be \$2.68 per \$1,000 of assessed value through 2049 if the bond passes.

The facilities committee had initially recommended a \$32.4 million bond to buy the campus and build the middle school. But the costs of preparing the preferred campus site and constructing a new middle school came back higher than expected, Jeffery said. If the bond passes in November, the district will also receive a \$4 million matching grant from the state.

Tom Rogozinski, principal of Warrenton Grade School for six years, said enrollment was around 573 when he started but is now approaching 800. The school is now one of the most populous K-8 campuses in the state. The school district has been converting every usable space inside the building into classrooms and offices, while adding several portables outside.

"Our building is set up for 541 students," he said. "We can put portables everywhere, but we don't get more bathrooms, we don't get more gym space, we don't get more cafeteria space. And I think that really has been resonant for our staff over the past few years."

Members of the facilities committee touted the need for a new campus. Pam Ackley, a Warrenton city commissioner and local real estate agent, said it is esti-

imated that the region needs 350 new homes in the next five years to accommodate growth.

Len Mossman, a police officer and former school board member who was recently reappointed to fill a vacancy, said that each portable is another building to secure, and that kids are not as safe as they would be in a main building.

School board member Dalan Moss said the new campus gives the school district a higher level of purpose.

"The portables are an expensive Band-Aid for the growth problem," he said.

The bond will help the school district invest in staff and provide students with a modern educational experience, said Debbie Morrow, the school board chairwoman.

"This bond represents long-term thinking ... for how we will manage our schools and collective resources," she said.

County voters will consider several bond measures in November. The Astoria School District is asking voters for \$70 million to rebuild much of Astoria Middle School, along with security improvements and modernization at its other campuses. Clatsop County is seeking \$20 million to move the county jail from Astoria to the former North Coast Youth Correctional Facility in Warrenton. Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District is asking for \$20 million to expand a recreation center in Seaside.

## Center: Cox plans data center in Warrenton

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ifornia, grew up in Astoria and graduated from Clatskanie High School. He earned a business degree at Clatsop Community College before transferring to the University of Oregon, where he earned dual degrees in marketing and finance.

He founded a nationwide internet service provider called Global Frontiers Inc. in 1997 and a web-hosting company called Web Hosting Pros in 2004. Last year, he founded Agile Design to facilitate opening a new data center.

Cox was on a recent visit to the North Coast for the holidays when he realized what a

good location it would be for the project. Data centers have been rapidly moving to the Pacific Northwest and other areas that offer less-expensive rates for power and water. The North Coast Business Park is also part of a state-approved enterprise zone that could provide a three- to five-year property tax break for new development, although nobody so far has taken advantage of the incentive.

Cox was also drawn by the North Coast's proximity to undersea fiber-optic cables that help create the backbone of the global internet, he said. The Northwest Open Access Network, a fiber-optic cable operator created by public utility

districts in Washington state, recently announced plans to extend a land line through Astoria and Warrenton, citing the interest of an undisclosed, large-scale new customer wanting a connection.

Many of the employees to start the North Coast Data and Technology Center would need to be hired from outside the region, Cox said, but he envisions a training program at the college helping supply future workers.

The property at the North Coast Business Park will meet his company's needs for the next 20 years, he said. The business is poised to continue growing as more devices connect to the internet.

Jim Knight, executive director of the Port of Astoria, helped shepherd Cox's proposal. He called it an amazing opportunity for the community and the Port.

"This will be a primary driver of a new form of enterprise in our community," he said Tuesday during a Port Commission meeting. "We are entering the tech world."

The plant will need a backup energy source, he said, which could end up being a woody biomass plant potentially located at the Port's Airport Industrial Park. In addition, there is an opportunity for the Port to get into the business of managing fiber-optic cables, Knight said.

## Planning: Commission will take at least 10 months

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to "lay the framework for moving forward," City Manager Brett Estes said.

The Urban Core is an area where planning consultant Rosemary Johnson believes there is potential for new development. Tuesday's meeting covered the history of development in the area and discussed what exists there today.

Matt Hastie, of Angelo Planning Group, ran through a number of questions the Planning Commission will need to consider over the coming months. For example: Does the com-

mission want to restrict what kind of buildings and businesses can set up shop over the water? If there will be restrictions, how does the city want to address things that already exist along the waterfront?

The goal is to establish guidelines that find a balance between flexibility and clarity, Hastie said. Easy to administer, devoid of ambiguity.

Planning commissioners had few questions, though Commissioner Jan Mitchell gave Hastie a list of items she needed to better understand, echoing questions and concerns voiced elsewhere. These

included the Port of Astoria's plans along the waterfront, the economics of building over the water, and what the costs would be to create and sustain a parking district, among other issues.

Elizabeth Menetrey, who is program director at Coast Community Radio and who served on the early Riverfront Vision Plan committee, referred to recent plans to build a four-story hotel farther west along the waterfront, in the Bridge Vista section. That project, while allowed under city code, was in opposition to an overall city goal of main-

taining sweeping, open vistas along the water's edge in that area, she said.

For the Urban Core, the Planning Commission has an opportunity to "make a nebulous vision firm."

"I think here you have a chance to be a little conservative in what we allow," she said.

A town hall meeting on Sept. 13 will give the community a chance to learn more about the Urban Core and weigh in with suggestions. A location for the town hall meeting has not been set, but will be finalized soon, Estes said.

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