

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Jim Knight  
503-741-3337  
jknight@portofastoria.com

**DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS**

Matt McGrath  
503-741-3336  
mmcgrath@portofastoria.com

**FINANCE DIRECTOR**

Will Isom  
503-741-3332  
wisom@portofastoria.com

**ASSISTANT PROPERTY MANAGER**

Lori Agalzoff  
503-741-3339  
lagalzoff@portofastoria.com

**AIRPORT MANAGER**

Gary Kobes  
503-741-3338 Office  
314-409-8392 Cell  
gkobes@portofastoria.com

**CRUISE MARKETING**

Bruce Conner  
503-741-3300  
bruce@portofastoria.com

**EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**

Judy Fattori  
503-741-3330  
jfarfan@portofastoria.com

**TERMINAL SERVICES MANAGER**

Susan Transue  
503-741-3342  
stransue@portofastoria.com

**FINANCE MANAGER**

Jim Grey  
503-741-3335  
jgrey@portofastoria.com

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE SPECIALIST**

Erin McDonnell  
503-741-3333  
emcdonnell@portofastoria.com

**MARINA MANAGER**

Janice Burk  
503-791-7730  
marina@portofastoria.com

**MAINTENANCE FOREMAN**

503-791-2251  
maintenance@portofastoria.com

**FRONT DESK / ADMIN**

503-741-3300  
admin@portofastoria.com

**A/R SPECIALIST**

Kate Fleischmann  
503-741-3341  
kfleischmann@portofastoria.com

**BOATYARD MANAGER**

Steve Barkemeyer  
503-791-7731  
boatyard@portofastoria.com

**SENIOR PATROLMAN**

Rick Yelton  
503-468-8516  
ryelton@portofastoria.com

# Strategic Planning: The Port's true navigation device

Port of Astoria staff and Director of the Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District are coordinating efforts with the goal of creating a comprehensive draft of a 5-Year strategic plan



The Port is proud to announce that we are embarking upon a new 5-Year Strategic Plan. The planning and development process started in 2018 and has been progressing throughout the year. Port Staff along with

Mary McArthur, Director of COLPAC (Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District) has been coordinating our efforts through a series of public meetings, held during our Commission meetings. During these meetings, we have been discussing important components of the Strategic Plan with the goal of creating a comprehensive DRAFT of the 5-Year Strategic Plan. This will replace an existing strategic plan that was completed in 2010.

It is the Port's intention to finish the Draft Plan in the next month and then take the important next steps in communicating this plan to our community through presentations to the public in meetings at our County's various City Council meetings, County and Port Commission meetings and at other public meetings that will allow us the greatest possible public input and feedback. This feedback will be critical in obtaining questions, information and reactions from our citizens and stakeholders, feedback that will help us shape the final draft of our 5-year plan.

## Why have a 5-year Strategic Plan?

Many of you are aware that a new staff took over management of the Port about 3 ½ years ago. During this time, we have seen a sea change in administrative leadership: a new Executive Director, a new Finance Director, a new Finance and Human Resource Manager, a new Operations Director, a new Airport Manager, a new Terminal Services Manager, a new Environmental Compliance Supervisor and several other new, critically important administrative staff. With our combined efforts and commitment to radically improve the Port, we have made great strides. However, the accomplishments that we have made, and we are proud of them, pale to the enormity of what yet needs to be accomplished.

While the last four required audits clearly demonstrate that we now have good control over the management of our resources - and that we have made great strides in the financial

turnaround of day-to-day financial affairs of the Port - we still have roughly about \$100 million in deferred maintenance of our infrastructure. While our relationships with the community, tenants, customers, and our stakeholders have greatly improved, we still have much to do but only limited resources to make considerable impacts. It is our intent that a new 5-year Strategic Plan will help guide the Port to our greatest success possible.

Much has changed at the Port in the last few years. Our tenants have expanded their operations, created new jobs, and new tenants have found new homes on Port property. Log exports have not only stabilized but are showing new signs of expansion into new markets. In fact, this year, Astoria Forest Products was recognized by Clatsop Economic Development Resources as a leader in economic impact to the local economy. The cruise industry is growing rapidly with approximately 50,000 passengers expected to visit Astoria and surrounding communities annually. The seafood processing industry remains strong and they are exploring the expansion of their facilities. If it were not for the difficulties in finding qualified labor for their operations, their volumes would also show significant increases. The regional airport, which is an underutilized but incredible asset, is growing with new tenants. The primary tenants, in particular Lektro, have made substantial inroads to increasing good, family-wage jobs for the benefit of our community. Our West Marina still maintains a lengthy waiting list for new spaces, while we continue to dredge the Marina and repair our docks.

What is most encouraging is the potential development of new Public (Port) - Private Partnerships. The Port's financial capacity for development is very limited, State and Federal grant opportunities are diminishing or non-existent and even further, when taxpayer's appetites for additional taxation is already stretched. The Port must look for new creative ways to protect and improve the Port's assets while

capturing new development opportunities. The properties at the airport, the central waterfront, shipping terminals, and East Mooring Basin are all facilities that require the injection of substantial sums of capital, to not only repair the infrastructure, but also to increase our revenue and job-creation opportunities, which is the core of the Port's mission to the community.

This new Strategic Plan addresses our strengths, weaknesses, and challenges. More importantly, this plan will help position us towards capturing our best opportunities, not just for the Port but for the entire County. The Strategic Plan sets in motion, through the support and endorsement of an elected Commission, our community, our tenants, customers, and stakeholders, the future direction of the Port of Astoria. This plan calls out the need for the Port to listen closely to our community's input and ideas and to seek opportunities for partnerships with other local governments. Through this plan we

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commit to be an economic development engine for our community, for generations to come. Careful planning will provide us the direction and foresight necessary to help us reach our goals.

We look forward to meeting with our communities in Clatsop County, presenting our thoughts and carefully listening to your input so that we can finalize our strategies for the creation of a great, Port of Astoria Strategic Plan.

If you're interested in reviewing and commenting on the Draft Strategic Plan, then check out our website at: portofastoria.com We encourage community feedback and look forward to hearing your ideas to make this region competitive in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.



**Location:** 10 Pier 1 Building, Suite 308, Astoria, Oregon

**Mailing:** 10 Pier One, Suite 308, Astoria, OR 97103

**Office:** 503-741-3300 Toll free in Oregon: 800-860-4093

**Marina/Fuel Dock:** 503-325-8279 or cell 503-791-7730

**Boat yard:** 503-325-8279 or cell 503-791-7731

**Security/After Hours Emergencies:** 503-791-7735

**Email:** admin@portofastoria.com

## PORT OF ASTORIA COMMISSIONERS

**Frank Spence, President**

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