

Third bond's a charm

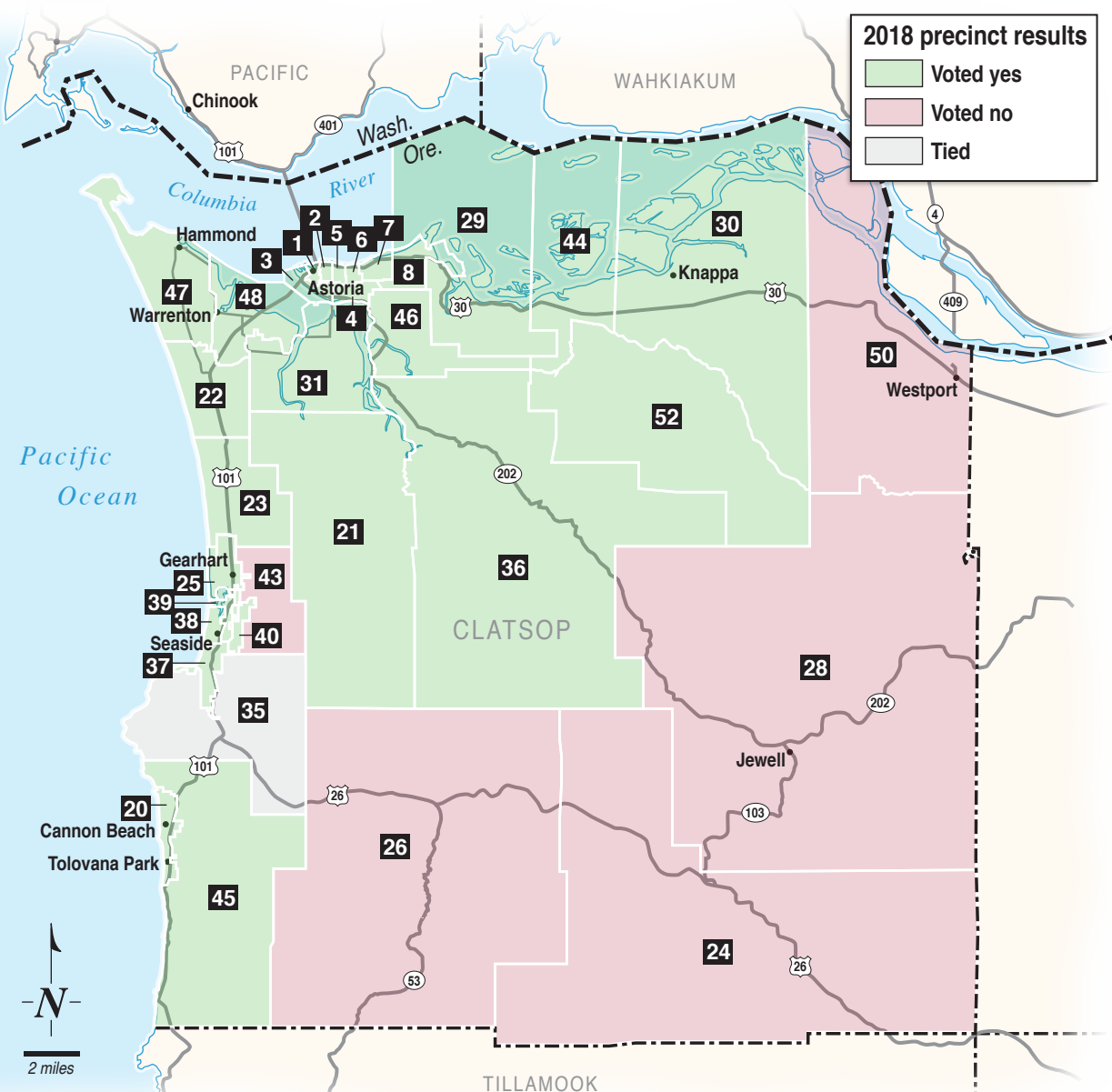
County Jail bond earns broad support on third attempt

Voters passed a \$20 million bond earlier this month to relocate the Clatsop County Jail from downtown Astoria to the now-closed North Coast Youth Correctional Facility in Warrenton. The relocation will expand jail capacity from 60 inmates to

148 with room for future growth. Two previous bonds, in 2002 and 2012, have failed. Only five out of 33 county precincts approved the 2012 bond. This year, only five disapproved.

Vote tally by precinct, 2018 vs. 2012

Precinct/location	2018		2012	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1 Astoria	✓ 272	194	103	150
2 Astoria	✓ 345	320	171	222
3 Astoria	✓ 450	336	157	222
4 Astoria	✓ 235	199	171	253
5 Astoria	✓ 434	332	124	178
6 Astoria	✓ 234	160	✓ 153	141
7 Astoria	✓ 414	307	130	201
8 Astoria	✓ 219	208	79	104
20 Cannon Beach	✓ 424	385	206	252
21 Chadwell	✓ 277	197	133	183
22 N. Clatsop	✓ 320	244	153	207
23 S. Clatsop	✓ 494	427	272	324
24 Elsie	✓ 82	84	25	46
25 Gearhart	✓ 587	397	215	237
26 Hamlet	✓ 93	129	43	57
28 Jewell	✓ 143	146	58	86
29 John Day	✓ 168	130	75	107
30 Knappa	✓ 473	359	190	322
31 Lewis & Clark	✓ 412	326	158	181
35 Necanicum	✓ 113	113	57	74
36 Olney	✓ 181	146	62	130
37 Seaside	✓ 396	323	135	167
38 Seaside	✓ 399	302	✓ 130	128
39 Seaside	✓ 353	293	120	132
40 Seaside	✓ 400	276	✓ 324	279
43 Stanley Acres	✓ 61	67	✓ 46	40
44 Svensen	✓ 239	227	99	159
45 Arch Cape	✓ 89	77	41	53
46 Walluski	✓ 175	156	87	111
47 Warrenton	✓ 991	797	410	459
48 Warrenton	✓ 375	268	133	181
50 Westport	✓ 137	139	✓ 86	78
52 Hillcrest	✓ 194	146	71	151
Total	10,179	8,210	4,417	5,615



Source: Clatsop County

Daily Astorian graphic

Jail: 'Once the revolving door stops, these people can get help'

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the previous attempts lacked proper research and organized promotion.

Discussions of a new jail began a few months before the youth facility closed in 2017. The sheriff's office discussed several options with DLR Group, a Portland-based architecture firm.

The sheriff also consulted a number of people with previous jail bond experience, including engineers and project managers.

"We had so many — different, I guess — styles, people with so many backgrounds that were able to help us do this right," Bergin said. "We really

did our homework."

Helping the sheriff were two of his deputies — Chief Deputy Paul Williams and Lt. Matt Phillips, the jail's commander — and Assistant County Manager Monica Steele. As county employees, they could not advocate for the bond. But they appeared at city council meetings and with private organizations to provide information.

Part of the pitch for a new jail was deputy safety, wider access to mental health and substance abuse treatment.

"I think the mental health issue is big and, just, the huge opiate problem," Bergin said. "Once the revolving door stops, these people can get help."

Recent crime trends were

also difficult to ignore.

The 2017 Oregon Uniform Crime Report ranked the county first in behavioral crimes and crimes against people and fifth in property crimes. In 2012, the county ranked third in the behavioral category and 11th in the people and property slots.

"I think it's just educating people, making sure they know we're not trying to pull the wool over their eyes," Bergin said.

Potential land mines

But the bond campaign still faced a few potential land mines, including two local school bonds that were also on the ballot and at a steeper price.

"I would say the common

theme was that everybody saw the need for the jail. Everybody sort of wonders why the cost was so high," Steele said. "We reiterated that remodeling the (Warrenton) facility would keep the costs down."

Another stumbling block could have been Bergin's letter, co-signed by several other sheriffs throughout the state, supporting state Measure 105, which would have repealed Oregon's sanctuary law.

The measure failed, but Commissioner Scott Lee, the chairman of the county commission, criticized Bergin's decision. The sheriff's letter forced the commissioner to reach out to like-minded progressive groups to assure them

that the jail bond is not related to immigration enforcement, Lee said.

"Folks are really shy about the industrial prison complex," Lee said. "I told everybody, particularly on my side of the fence, that this facility was not going to be used for (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) detainees."

Still, Lee praised Bergin and other county officials, including Circuit Court Judge Cindee Matyas and Commissioner Sarah Nebeker, for publicizing the jail bond.

Moving process

Now, the moving process at the jail begins. County commissioners will decide next year

how to underwrite the bonds and finalize a design.

At some point, the county will need to figure out what to do with the jail building in Astoria. But, for now, the focus remains on the new one.

"While there may be a number of ideas, we're going to continue using the current jail," Steele said. "We're looking at two years at the earliest before we begin to move into the new jail."

The sooner, the better, for law enforcement.

"I think we're going to have a much more positive conversation about public safety in December 2020 than we're having right now," Marquis said.

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