

# Hotel: Developers describe it as ‘boutique, with luxury amenities’

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In their conditional use application, the hotel developers proposed a solution: valet parking. This would allow them to tightly pack up to 30 cars in a parking lot across from the hotel. The lot had previously been used by processing plant employees.

The intention is not to gouge guests with valet parking costs, Turner said. Instead, the valet parking option “was a very creative solution to what we knew was a big problem.”

The hotel will likely charge a small parking fee for the service. Developers are still examining other options, including purchasing a lot

farther away, but they hoped that including valet parking would be enough to get the project approved by the Planning Commission.

Commission President Sean Fitzpatrick said this kind of valet parking is untested in Astoria.

“I’m not saying we shouldn’t allow it or shouldn’t consider it,” he said. “I’m saying we don’t know how it would work.”

But newly appointed Commissioner Patrick Corcoran said this kind of parking is an approach that, depending on how it works out, may become a model to address parking problems elsewhere in the city.

Other details about the hotel have not been publicly released. Even the name has not been decided on yet,

Turner said.

Developers describe the hotel as “boutique, with luxury amenities.” Renovating the processing plant to create a hotel will not increase the footprint of the original building, nor its height. Since the building is not historic, renovation details will be handled directly by city staff and will not undergo a public design review.

The hotel falls under the Urban Core, the final piece of the city’s Riverfront Vision Plan, which guides development along the river. But the Planning Commission is in the middle of developing codes and guidelines for the area. The hotel project was evaluated under existing codes.

As a condition of approval, developers will need to improve the section of the Astoria Riverwalk that runs in front of the building. Processing plant operations and frequent forklift traffic resulted in extreme wear and tear along the popular riverfront trail.

Word of the hotel project first broke publicly last October, around the same time the city was considering another hotel proposal — a new four-story Marriott-brand hotel by developer Hollander Hospitality at the base of Second Street. That project, the Fairfield Inn and Suites, went through several redesigns, multiple hearings, multiple denials and multiple appeals before it was approved in December by the City

Council in a 3-2 vote.

The Fairfield project became a campaign issue in city elections and a source of controversy in the community. A crowd usually turned up at every meeting to speak against the project.

The hotel proposed by the Adrift and Buoy developers met with a very different reaction. Initial news of their plans drew praise from residents, who pointed to the track record of the people involved to improve old buildings, involve the community and provide well-paying jobs.

At the Planning Commission hearing Tuesday, despite concerns about parking, no one spoke against the project.

# Drilling: Governor made it an issue during her campaign

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Oregon’s first moratorium on drilling took effect in 1989 after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska’s Prince William Sound. Since then, state legislators have renewed it every decade, said Brian Doherty, a Portland attorney who lobbies at the Capitol for the petroleum association.

Senate Bill 256 — sponsored by three coastal legislators — would make the moratorium permanent.

The chief sponsors, state Sen. Arnie Roblan, Rep. David Gomberg and Rep. David Brock Smith, modeled the legislation after a law in California. Washington has no moratorium on oil and gas drilling, despite Gov. Jay Inslee’s opposition to exploration off that state’s shore.

During a hearing Tuesday in the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, Roblan, the committee’s chairman, said the committee could send the legislation to a Senate vote soon.

There was no opposition to the proposal during the hearing.

Oregon’s oil and gas reserves off the coast would meet nationwide demand for about a week, according to an estimate by Oceana, a marine conservation organization.

The Oregon Coast is not seen as a promising place to find large quantities of oil and gas, said Bob Tippee, editor of Oil & Gas Jour-



California State Lands Commission

A drilling platform sits off the coast of California.

nal. For most companies, the cost of drilling would likely outweigh the potential for production, he said.

“I suspect most operators would find the risk excessive in relation to the potential reward,” he said.

Nevertheless, the proposal by the Trump administration has fueled debate over the moratorium.

Gov. Kate Brown made it an issue during her re-election campaign last year. In October, she issued an executive order continuing Oregon’s ban for the rest of her term, which ends in 2022.

“Oregon has been a consistent leader in environmental justice and stewardship, and legislative action is imperative in solidifying a prosperous future for our coast,” said Jason Miner, the governor’s natural resources policy manager, at the Senate hearing Tuesday. “Our marine fisheries, iconic scenery and pristine environment are true embodiments of what makes the Oregon Coast worth defending.”

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# Measles: ‘I think we gave into fear right away because of having such a young child’

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Two confirmed cases of measles in Hawaii were in unvaccinated children who traveled to the Big Island from Washington state, a Hawaii public health official said.

The viral illness is highly contagious and can remain in the air for up to two hours. Some 90 percent of people exposed to measles will get it, said Clark County public health director Alan Melnick. “We have an exquisitely contagious disease, that can be really severe and we have a prevention for it that’s cheap, incredibly effective and incredibly safe,” he said. “We wouldn’t be dealing with this if we had vaccination rates up.”

So far, 31 of the 35 confirmed patients in Clark County had not been vaccinated against measles. And the region has been identified by health experts as an anti-vaccination hot spot. Clark County’s vaccination rate is 78 percent, well below the 94 percent level necessary to protect people who can’t get vaccinated for medical reasons.

Melnick blames misinformation shared on social media for the

area’s lower than normal rates.

“What keeps me up at night is worrying that we’re going to have a child die from this, something that’s completely preventable,” he said.

That’s a worry shared by many parents, especially those with newborn infants. The vaccine is generally not given to children younger than 1.

Vancouver resident Megan Jasurta hasn’t felt comfortable leaving the house with her son, 11-week-old Tristan.

“He’s on house arrest,” she said. Jasurta’s other two kids, who are 3 and 6, are both up to date on their shots, but she still has them wash their hands when they come home and change into new clothes before seeing Tristan.

“I think we gave into the fear right away because of having such a young child,” she said.

For now, her family is avoiding crowded areas and even decided to delay their daughter’s birthday party. She knows some people in her community choose not to vaccinate their kids, and she says it’s not worth putting her family at risk.

Noelle Crombie of The Oregonian contributed to this report.

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