



Construction workers build the interior of a housing complex in Warrenton in 2018.

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

New study examines county's housing crunch

Zeroes in on higher density and vacation rentals

By **BRENNA VISSER**
The Daily Astorian

Clatsop County should do more to support diverse housing at higher densities and control vacation rentals to address an affordable housing shortage.

The recommendations are the product of a nearly yearlong, countywide study that was commissioned by the county and five cities.

On Wednesday, Johnson Economics and Angelo Planning Group presented a draft of the final report to the county Board of Commissioners, which outlined several suggestions on how local governments could adapt codes, zoning requirements and other regulations to encourage affordable housing.

The good news is, on a countywide basis, there seems to be enough buildable residential land and existing housing to meet the needs of residents.

In fact, there are about 1 1/2 houses for each household.

"If the housing is technically here, what is the housing being used for to where people feel like there is a housing crunch in the county?" said Brendan Buckley, a project manager for Johnson Economics.

It's because the housing supply is not being used to serve the needs of resi-



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

The Mill Pond neighborhood in Astoria is the only area in the county with minimum density standards.

dents, according to the report.

One of the unique issues, Buckley said, is how little physical space there is for some communities to expand.

More than 11,800 acres of potentially buildable land exist, with most of it clustered in the northern part of the county. But significant constraints exist within Astoria, which has a lot of federally owned land within the urban growth boundary that can't technically be developed, and

Warrenton, which has wetlands that could drive up the cost of construction.

"It's fairly unique to see that," he said. "Most communities across the state have some way to grow ... What does it mean to grow when you really can't grow out?"

Although there is plenty of unincorporated land, these areas have limited

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'YOU CANNOT BUILD AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR 80% OF (THE AREA MEDIUM INCOME) AND BELOW WITHOUT SOME KIND OF PUBLIC SUBSIDY.'

Matt Hastie, project manager with Angelo Planning Group

School leaders back new education money

Lawmakers discussing the Student Success Act

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Daily Astorian

The Student Success Act being debated at the state Legislature could add another \$1.4 million a year to the Astoria School District's budget, Superintendent Craig Hoppes said Wednesday.

House Bill 2019, introduced last month by the Joint Committee on Student Success, calls for an additional \$2 billion in K-12 funding per biennium starting in July to improve behavioral support, mental health and early learning opportunities. The money would likely come from a tax on businesses' gross receipts above \$150,000.

In laying out the school district's approach to creating a budget for the 2019-20 school year, Hoppes called the Student Success Act the best opportunity for new funding in his 22 years with the district.

"It could have a really significant impact in our district," he said.

School board members on Wednesday passed two resolutions supporting the push by state education leaders for more education funding. Much of that money depends on the success of the legislation, which is intended to improve the state's dismal graduation rates, increase the percentage of third-graders reading proficiently and reduce absenteeism.

Oregon has consistently funded education well below state recommendations for what school districts need to be successful, known as the Quality Education Model. Teachers have planned a walkout May 8 to protest chronically lackluster education funding.

Legislators are still hashing out how the gross receipts tax would work. The tax would likely start at gross receipts above \$150,000 and include modified versions that allow some deduction for labor or other costs.

At least 20 percent of the money would go toward early learning. About 30 percent would go toward statewide initiatives like universal free meals and bullying prevention.

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Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Class sizes have reached as high as 29 on average at Astoria Middle School.

Appeals court upholds nonunanimous juries

Oregon the last state to allow the practice

By **CONRAD WILSON**
Oregon Public Broadcasting

In a ruling Wednesday, the Oregon Court of Appeals upheld the state's unique nonunanimous jury law.

The case stemmed from the 2017 conviction of Olan Williams, an African American man. Williams was convicted of sodomy by a jury in Multnomah County. The verdict was split, with 10 jurors voting to convict and

'THE ONLY THING NONUNANIMOUS JURIES DO IS REDUCE HUNG JURIES. AND THE ONLY THING UNANIMOUS JURIES DO IS INCREASE HUNG JURIES. EACH IS TRUE REGARDLESS OF RACE.'

Josh Marquis, former Clatsop County district attorney

two dissenting. One of the dissenting jurors was an African American woman.

Effectively, Williams argued he was denied a jury of his peers. In his appeal, he said the nonunanimous provision of the Oregon Constitution violated the Equal Protection Clause of the

14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The appeals court ruled it couldn't review the case.

"We may only review the denial of a motion for a new trial if 'the motion is based upon juror misconduct or newly discovered evidence,'" Judge Darleen

Ortega wrote in the five-page opinion. "Therefore, defendant's constitutional challenge to the nonunanimous jury provision as applied to his criminal case is not reviewable on appeal."

Williams wanted the court to grant him a new trial, but require the jury to

reach a unanimous verdict, effectively overturning the state's nonunanimous jury law.

Marc Brown is Williams' attorney and the chief deputy defender with the state's Office of Public Defense Services.

"For the law, it doesn't mean much in that it did not really blaze new ground," Brown said. "For Mr. Williams, it means we'll continue our appeal at the Oregon Supreme Court and potentially for certiorari at the U.S. Supreme Court."

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