



Wade Mathews removes equipment from a hazardous materials emergency response vehicle while wearing a protective suit during a demonstration in Astoria.

Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Hazmat team ready to respond

State fire marshal's office holds Astoria demonstration

By COLIN MURPHEY
The Daily Astorian

Representatives from the state fire marshal's office paid a visit to Astoria on Tuesday to demonstrate to city councilors and the media the resources that could be called into play in a hazardous materials emergency.

While rare, according to Astoria Fire Department Lt. Wade Mathews, hazardous materials emergencies do happen in Clatsop County and require specialized equipment and emergency responders trained in how to deal with them.

The regional team in Astoria is one of 13 in Oregon, which in 1989 became the first state to create a statewide Regional Hazardous Materials Emergency Response system.

CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW: The protective suits worn by hazmat technicians are designed to prevent contamination. Wade Mathews receives some help getting into a protective suit during a hazardous materials emergency demonstration by the state fire marshal's office at the Astoria Fire Department. Mathews, far right, talks to Astoria City Councilor Joan Herman, far left, and Councilor Roger Rocka about the county's hazardous materials emergency response capabilities.



Warehouse, Port seek special rules

Plan districts would guide development

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Astoria Warehousing and the Port of Astoria are asking for alternative city codes to guide future development at property they own along the riverfront.

At a Planning Commission meeting Tuesday, city staff suggested allowing Astoria Warehousing to create a plan district within the Bridge Vista section of the city's Riverfront Vision Plan, which outlines how development unfolds. The plan district would not be constrained by the same codes that apply to the rest of Bridge Vista, which stretches from Portway Street to Second Street.

Jim Knight, the Port's executive director, asked that the Port also be allowed to create a plan district.

The Planning Commission was discussing changes to Bridge Vista, including further limitations on building heights.

Though lauded by people who had opposed controversial plans by Hollander Hospitality to build a four-story Marriott-brand hotel at the base of Second Street, the possibility of new building height limits and other code amendments worried property owners.

The restrictions could hamper their ability to develop, they said, asking for more flexibility.

With a plan district, the property owner would have to come up with a master plan. The plan would include development standards specific to the district. The plan would need to go through a public hearing process and be approved by both the Planning Commission and the City Council.

"This is a standard planning tool that is used elsewhere," Rosemary Johnson, a city planning consultant, told the commissioners.

The city allowed a plan district for the Port's East Mooring Basin, which falls under the Civic Greenway section of the Riverfront Vision Plan.

The Astoria Warehousing site is about 12 acres, with 5 acres on land and 7 acres over the river. The buildings are low, long and very large. All are factors that add up to an "extreme hardship" if anyone wanted to redevelop the site under the current and proposed rules for Bridge Vista, Johnson said.

Most of the planning commissioners indicated they would be interested in considering the two plan districts. Commissioner Daryl Moore, however, had some reservations.

"I think we have an opportunity to implement a vision for the entire Bridge Vista area and, hopefully, that vision was designed in an appropriate fashion that we can just get it done, or amended," he said.

But Commissioner Jennifer Cameron-Lattek countered that the plan districts do "seem like useful tools to deal with some particular situations."

A discussion about whether to allow the plan districts will continue at a Planning Commission meeting on May 28. At the same meeting, commissioners will also continue to discuss the size of the buildings that will be allowed in Bridge Vista.

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Port finance committee nears recommendations

Agency balances maintenance needs

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The finance committee appointed to improve the Port of Astoria is preparing a list of recommendations to more closely audit the agency's operations and assets.

The committee, comprised of local professionals in banking, lending and economic development, was formed to help the Port manage more than \$20 million in estimated maintenance

needs on the central waterfront.

The draft recommendations, reviewed Tuesday, will be finalized next month and presented to the Port Commission.

The recommendations will help shape a strategic plan being created by Mary McArthur, executive director of the Columbia Pacific Economic Development District. The strategic plan is a requirement for the Port to get more financing from the state.

The focus of the recommendations is on a more

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The Port of Astoria has struggled financially.

