



Astorian

New Grocery Outlet would complicate intersection



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Access is an issue for a new Grocery Outlet proposed off Marine Drive.

Project planned on odd-shaped property

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Astorian

Developers who want to build a Grocery Outlet in Astoria face a public airing of the project on Thursday, but the discount chain is already experiencing pushback from some in the community.

Concerns range from the traffic impacts to the project's proximity to the Astoria Co-op, which is set to open a new grocery in the Mill Pond neighborhood by the end of the year.

Neither are concerns the city's Design Review Committee can address at the hearing on Thursday. Retail is considered an outright use at the property, and city staff have recommended approval of the project.

The only sticking points are the

strange shape of the lots where Grocery Outlet wants to build and a problematic "Y"-shaped intersection nearby.

The state is required to improve the intersection at Marine Drive and Commercial Street near 21st Street as part of a lawsuit brought against the Oregon Department of Transportation by disability advocates.

The Grocery Outlet project, if it passes design muster Thursday, would speed up the timeline to improve the intersection. But the owner of City Lumber believes a reconfiguration of the intersection could mean the end of his business off Commercial Street.

Triangular block

Developers have proposed a

one-story, 16,000 square foot Grocery Outlet on properties off Marine Drive between 21st and 23rd streets that were formerly the homes of TP Freight and NAPA Auto Parts.

Grocery Outlet would take up most of a triangular block formed by Marine Drive and an orphan section of Commercial Street. The back of the store would face 23rd Street and the new co-op building.

Astoria has been resistant to chain stores — the Design Review Committee, following recommendations by staff, denied a permit from Dollar General in 2017 over questions about the store's design — but Grocery Outlet might be harder to shoot down.

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Astoria man detained by ICE a second time

Legal trouble after new drunken-driving charge

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

After Ruben Vera Perez was detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents outside the Clatsop County Courthouse last December, many in the community pulled together to hold a vigil and raise money to help him and his family.

Perez, who is from Mexico but has lived in the United States for more than a decade, was trying to resolve a drunken-driving charge in Circuit Court before he was detained.



Ruben Vera Perez

An immigration judge found in February that Perez could be eligible for asylum. With the help of donations, he was released on bond from a federal detention facility in Tacoma, Washington, and welcomed home with a celebration at the Astoria Masonic Hall.

Over the past few months, though, hope and relief turned to disappointment.

"It's heartbreaking," Maria Perez, his wife, said.

Perez was arrested in May for drunken driving and other charges after he allegedly hit a parked car with his pickup truck while leaving the Warrenton Mini Mart on his way to work at Fred Meyer.

He missed his Circuit Court date in June, so a warrant was issued for his arrest. A judge also revoked his diversion on the previous drunken-driving charge, and a second warrant was issued, after he failed to show up for a hearing in July.

Maria Perez sent a letter to the district attorney explaining her husband had been detained by ICE again in late June.

She declined to go into further detail about her husband's immigration status when contacted by The Astorian.

"All I have to say is he's a good husband and a hardworking family man," she said in a text message.

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Hammond man starts new family business

An eye for tiny homes

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

Chuck Bergerson, a local contractor and business owner, never planned on retiring. He is still pursuing opportunities at the age of 83. His new business? Building tiny homes.



"I like doing it, why should I retire?" he asked. "I do have lots of ideas. (They) wake me up in the middle of the night."

Bergerson said when you love what you do, you can work a lot harder and a lot longer.

He has always been in the business of building, he said. His newest venture, NW Cabin Co., is a partnership with his children to build tiny homes.

Bergerson said he and his kids will construct the tiny homes. His wife, Charlotte, will help with the interior and exterior design. For all other services, they will hire local



Nicole Bales/The Astorian

Chuck Bergerson in front of a tiny house.

businesses.

Bergerson is in the finishing stages of his first tiny home. He and his wife walked around the home and discussed what could be done differently to improve the prototype. They also rattled off all the different ways to customize the 288-square-foot structure to fit anyone's needs.

Tiny homes can be a nice

transition for elderly people who want to begin downgrading, he said, and also for newly married couples who want a small mortgage.

He said that after couples pay off the tiny home or begin to start a family, they can easily add rooms or a porch. Everything can be built and customized according to the

homebuyers' needs.

"It's kind of a trendy thing happening now," Bergerson said.

Charlotte Bergerson doubts her husband will ever retire. "He always has a bee in his bonnet, it's not going to stop," she said. "He's an idea guy."

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EO Media purchases the Bend Bulletin

A \$3.65M bid at auction

By PHIL WRIGHT
EO Media Group

The auction lasted 15 minutes Monday and ended with EO Media Group buying the Bend Bulletin.

The \$3.65 million winning bid also covered the price for the Bulletin's sister weekly, the Redmond Spokesman.

EO Media Group beat two out-of-state competitors, Adams Publishing Group out of Greeneville, Tennessee, and Rhode Island Suburban Newspapers Inc., which did not send a representative to the auction in Portland but made almost \$68,000 on the sale.

Heidi Wright, EO Media Group's chief operating officer, said the company appreciates the opportunity to continue Oregon ownership of The Bulletin and Redmond Spokesman.

"It's reassuring for the future of community newspapers when a small independent company like EO Media Group can prevail, even when going up against the big companies that are buying up newspapers nonstop around the country," she said.

Western Communications, the Bulletin's parent company, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in January and is selling all of its assets. EO Media Group bought two of those assets in June at auction — The Observer in La Grande and the Baker City Herald. The Bulletin and Spokesman acquisitions bring the company's total number of newspapers and journals to 14, including The Astorian.

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