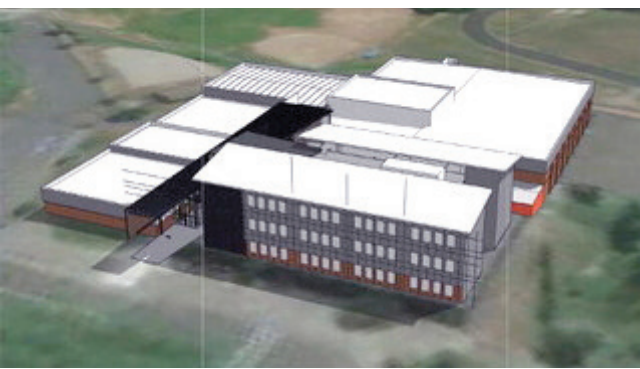


A LOOK FORWARD AT 2020

PROJECTS
IN 2020 AND
BEYOND:

- Columbia River Maritime Museum pond opens
- Waldorf affordable housing project construction continues
- Fundraising for the Astoria Nordic Heritage Park
- Construction begins on Astoria schools remodel
- New Seaside school campus construction finishes
- Fort George canning facility expansion in former Astoria Warehousing location
- Hilton hotel construction on Astoria's South Slope
- Peter Pan Market reopens with new owners
- “Goonies” turns 35
- Liberty Theatre continues renovations



Looking back and forward with Astoria’s mayors of the decade

The Astorian sat down with Astoria’s three mayors from 2010 through 2019 and asked them what they’ve seen change in the city, what the biggest issues were when they served and what’s next for Astoria.



WILLIS VAN DUSEN

Astoria mayor for 24 years, retired in 2015

The first part of this decade there were a number of construction projects that I’m very proud of and I think the community is proud of also. The first one that comes to mind is the Garden of Surging Waves and how we developed that and told the American history story. ... And we also built the new, know when I say “we” I don’t just mean me and the city, Columbia Memorial Hospital and Astoria School District and Recology — built an amazing athletic facility for the community — over \$10 million — without using any taxpayer dollars. ... We also did the City Hall remodel. City Hall used to be a bank building. Other very important aspects of the early part of this decade was the bicentennial. In 2011, we became the only U.S. settlement west of the Rockies that can say we’ve been here for 200 years. And that was a tremendous accomplishment. And it really brought focus to Astoria and that we were older than Portland, we were older than San Francisco.

Going into the next decade, we have to improve our transportation. That has to be number one. We have to have better, safer highways and streets, and there’s ways to do it and you need money to do some of them. A bypass would be awesome. ... The homelessness situation is a problem nationwide. I have great confidence in Mayor Jones. ... There is a way to improve housing in Astoria and that is to expand the urban growth boundary. ... But we are bulging at the seams and it’s time to expand it in areas where we could build some housing.

I like the term better “we ain’t quaint” and it’s the same thing as pretty to gritty. ... I think the developments around our river and around Astoria have done a good job of not making it pretty. There are some communities that have made like our riverwalk, they try to make it something like something it’s not. It looks like Astoria. It has the history there. I don’t think we want to be known as pretty. We want to be known as diversified, and we want to be known as a great history and good shepherds of the assets we have here. Gritty to pretty? At one time we might have said we went from pretty to gritty. Gritty is not all bad.



ARLINE LaMEAR

Astoria mayor 2015-2018

During the time that I was on the city council and also as mayor, there were a lot of changes in Astoria. One of the largest or the biggest changes, I think, was in our hospital that (not) just grew but has grown by leaps and bounds. I would say that that’s had a tremendous impact on the town.

I think one of the biggest issues that I faced and that will continue to be faced in the future is our riverfront. The riverfront is just sacred to so many people. Some people don’t want anything done to it. Others want development because they own property there. And so it’s a very difficult and delicate balancing act to try to bring those two groups together.

It’s wonderful to see some of these rundown places that you thought would have to be torn down have been spruced up and the city is looking much better than it did when I first arrived here.

BRUCE JONES

Astoria mayor 2019-present

I’ve lived in Astoria since 2011. Since the time that I’ve been here, I’ve seen tourism continue to grow. On weekends, especially in the summer, you see more and more people from out of town which has enabled a lot of small businesses to thrive, more restaurants are open. It allows for continued investment in amenities like the Liberty Theatre. I think the quality of life overall for residents in Astoria has increased during the time that I’ve lived here and it continues to increase even though there are some drawbacks, specifically traffic and the cost of housing.

So maintaining our unique quality of life and making sure our story is always a place that people want to visit because it is different. That’s what I hear from visitors all the time. I asked people on the Riverwalk why they came to visit for the weekend and they say, “you guys are unique. You have a unique quality here that we can’t find anywhere else.” So I think it’s really important to preserve that.

VISIT DAILYASTORIAN.COM FOR EXTENDED VIDEO INTERVIEWS WITH EACH MAYOR

TIMELINE : 2010-2019



2010

- Harry Flavel dies
- Oregon Film Museum opens
- Downtown Safeway plaza caves in
- Waterfront inferno consumes Cannery Café and 28 other businesses
- “Goonies” turns 25



2011

- SeaPort ends airline service to Astoria
- Rep. David Wu resigns
- Astoria bicentennial celebration; Reba McEntire performs
- Star of the Sea school closes



2012

- Flavel mansion is opened
- Astoria Builder’s Supply closes



2013

- Barbey Maritime Center completed
- Astoria City Council visits Waldorf, Germany, for sister city celebration
- Paulson Pavilion completed at Liberty Theatre



2014

- Garden of Surging Waves opens
- City Manager Paul Benoit leaves
- City Planner Rosemary Johnson retires after 35 years
- Jordan Poyer drafted to Philadelphia Eagles
- CMH Field opens



2015

- Mayor Willis Van Dusen retires after 24 years
- Arline LaMear sworn in as mayor
- Astoria Warming Center opens
- Astoria column is repainted
- “Goonies” turns 30
- Judge Philip Nelson retires
- Astoria Bridge turns 50
- John Warren stadium torn down



2016

- Coast mourns death of Seaside Police Sgt. Jason Goodding
- Astoria Ford moves to Warrenton
- Astoria has first Pride celebration
- Dawn McIntosh elected county Circuit Court Judge
- Astoria grad Alexis Mather wins Miss Oregon
- Jennifer Crockett is new Liberty Theatre executive director
- Astoria Senior Center renovated



2017

- Lindstrom’s Danish Maid Bakery closes
- J.C. Penny’s closes
- Ship Inn closes
- KMUN hires Graham Nystrom as general manager
- Dave Gasser retires after 35 years of coaching baseball



2018

- Skip Hauke retires as chamber director
- Astoria Warehousing closes
- Geoff Spalding is new Astoria police chief
- Bond Street opens for two-way traffic after more than 10 years
- Mary Louise Flavel dies



2019

- Bruce Jones sworn in as new Astoria mayor
- Dan Crutchfield new Astoria fire chief
- #TimberUnity forms in response to House Bill 2020
- Thiel’s Music closes
- Peter Pan Market closes
- Judge Paula Brownhill retires
- Will Isom named new Port director
- New Astoria Co+op location opens

We asked readers about issues Astoria is facing in 2020. Here’s what they had to say.

Two different questions. NIMBYism regarding fear of waterfront development is an embarrassment. Homelessness and lack of services and conveniences for the homeless will be an ongoing issue. The housing shortage will also be with us for a long time. The Port of Astoria is a shadow of what it was in the last century. It’s perverse that it’s barely used for commercial trade any more. The railroad connection needs to be fixed.

Traffic. The Astoria bypass needs to be review again. The congestion is daily and the summer months are backing up from Alderbrook area to Warrenton. Talking with some tourists, they aren’t stopping in Astoria. They are heading to 101 going west and south or Washington, west and north.

Workforce housing is most pressing, followed closely by the lack of sufficient social services (mental health, drug and alcohol, etc). The biggest change has been the ongoing transformation from a extraction economy to one based on tourism and services, while we continue to try not to lose the identity that makes this place unique.

A more balanced and calming share of political views.

Influx of homeless people and increase of traffic on our roads. Protecting the riverfront. Tourism.

Finding new customers for log exports.

Obstruction of river views. Last decade potholes.

Keeping Astoria’s small town historical feel as well as homelessness.

Enticing family wage jobs outside the tourist industry. The biggest changes were a blessing and a curse. In the past ten years we’ve seen some wonderful restaurants, galleries and improvements to historical buildings. The downside is that we are starting to lose some of the gritty that made this town special. Working people can no longer afford to live here.

Continue upgrading downtown buildings as has been happening this past decade.

Availability of family wage jobs.

Bringing new business to downtown.

Allowing so much construction along the Columbia as to let the tourists enjoy the view, while the locals cannot. Why does the state have an incredible view that blocks an entire block on the river side.

Economy based on tourism is worrisome. First thing to go when there is a downturn or recession. Loss of middle class jobs. Gentrification. We’re losing our “starving” artists & working class, and gaining homelessness, an alcohol and pot fueled tourist industry, and prosperity for some.

The biggest issue is homelessness: helping those who are homeless by circumstances and making Astoria uncomfortable for those who are homeless by choice. The biggest changes is the growth in tourism, which overall has been good for the community.

They are the same: The rise of the homeless community and continued urban and waterfront blight. There have been some wonderful restorations, renovations and redevelopment projects. However, we each completion, there seems to be new problem added to the backlog.

Income inequality, which leads some to homelessness and others to increased judgment against those with less stable income.

Destroying river views from the Riverwalk as part of the Urban Core Plan which will be heard by our City Council on Monday Jan. 6, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Affordable workforce housing and the homeless situation.

Homelessness for 2020. I think the biggest changes in the last decade were an influx of new people moving into the area, who now claim to know what Astoria is and should be, an explosion of tourism, and homelessness.

Family wage jobs, and family affordable housing.

How to pay for decaying infrastructure. Becoming “Pottersville” with brewery, distillery or pot shop on every corner.

I think the biggest issue facing Astoria in the next year is how it chooses to develop. Our history, grit and tenacity defines us. We could down this character in national chain hotels and stores that are in any strip mall USA. I would say the biggest change is the proliferation of homelessness. This is, of course, part of a national problem. When you can’t walk on the riverwalk without tripping over encampments, we have a problem in our little river city.

Growth from out of state.

Fix the downtown! Fill the “Estes” hole that is a blight on the city center.

I think the largest issue is the homeless population. Human waste on the sidewalks and people sleeping in doorways are not attractive to tourists, or anyone else. I have only been here 3 years, but among the biggest changes are that out-of-town developers are buying property and raising rents that local businesses can’t afford.

Complete loss of affordable shopping that would draw people downtown.

Affordable housing. I had to move to WA to find a house I could afford to rent (still work in Astoria).

Love the revitalization of downtown. Need facilities for homeless population, need to prevent filth

Affordable housing and the surge in tourism causing traffic issues.

Too many “studies” with few solutions. We upgrade schools, but have homeless children.

Corruption at the Port of Astoria. Loss of log shipments and business at the port.

Population growth.

Affordable housing. Increased homeless.

Homelessness vs. enabling, excessiveness will impact tourism. Securing a tourist-based industry.

Lack of land use and traffic.

2020: Homelessness, addiction, Astorians affording housing. Past decade... Much the same.

You have to get the homeless off the riverwalk and out of downtown.

1. Affordable housing. 2. The cost of rent without industries to support or warrant the price hikes.

Affordable housing now and sustainable growth then.

The lack of housing that matches median income. Its pretty sad to not afford to buy where you grew up.

Astoria is getting too fancy too fast. We are losing our blue collar attitude. Not enough gritty.

2020, the homeless camping, using downtown streets as a toilets.



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