

Child care center: County is considered a child care desert

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"I can't have rooms not running for a year and still pay my very high commercial rent costs," she said.

The change in license and the reduction in the number of children served comes with fewer restrictions on operations.

The day care nearly closed last year after the state notified Giliga that her license would not be renewed due to too many noncompliance findings and other complaints. One of the state's findings was that there was not enough staff for the number of children.

State Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, worked with the state and Shooting Stars on a resolution and the center remained open under a temporary license.

The change in Shooting Stars' operations later this month is separate from any requirements by the state under that agreement. Giliga said she reached the deci-

sion to downsize and change licenses in consultation with the state.

While Giliga knows the news is frustrating to some of the families Shooting Stars serves and some will need to look elsewhere for child care, she feels positive about downsizing. She has the support of the state and Northwest Regional Child Care Resource and Referral, she said.

Giliga hopes to open several other smaller versions of Shooting Stars in the future. But she wants to operate this first iteration for at least a month before making any decisions about expanding.

News of the changes at Shooting Stars and the closure of the Gearhart day care prompted a discussion at an Astoria City Council work session Thursday about how city resources might be used to fill the gap.

Clatsop County is considered a child care desert, meaning there are not enough slots available for young children

who need care.

Astoria's Parks and Recreation Department is looking at ways it can expand offerings and use underutilized space, said Jonah Dart-McLean, the department's acting director.

In light of changes at Shooting Stars, the department raised its cap on after-school programs at the Astoria Recreation Center, from 45 children to 60.

While there continues to be consistent calls and waitlists at Lil' Sprouts Academy, the city-run child care center, Dart-McLean has not seen a major influx of children into the city's after-school programs because of changes at Shooting Stars.

"We were surprised that we didn't get as much initial outreach as we would expect," he said.

But he theorizes that many parents had begun searching for other child care options last year when Shooting Stars first faced a threat of closure.

Edward Stratton contributed to this report.



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Art projects from children hang on the walls at Shooting Stars Child Development Center last year.

Parking: Councilors appeared reassured that there is enough parking

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The downtown association surveyed 15 major employers downtown, including Fort George Brewery, Mo's Restaurant and Buoy Beer Co. Fort George employees did not find parking an issue, and not many Mo's employees responded, lending toward a lack of concern.

Parking was more constrained for workers on the west side, including Buoy Beer, which lost much of its employee parking when Fresenius Kidney Care's new dialysis center began construction nearby. Many public parking spaces are located on the south side of Marine Drive, a difficult crossing for pedestrians.

On-street surveys of 57 visitors during peak tourist season in August found parking was not a factor in coming downtown for nearly 80% of respondents, while nearly 70% parked within three blocks of their destination. Online surveys of 289 people in August found 86% of people were able to park within three blocks of their location.

The report concluded that parking in Astoria is more available, less expensive and closer than perceived by most and compared to other tourist destinations. Giving some perspective, Heath noted the entire downtown district is about the same size as the combined parking lots for Costco and Walmart in Warrenton.

"Thus, if you need to walk two or three blocks, that is approximately the same distance you're going to be walking from the parking lot to the box store in our neighboring communities," she said.

City councilors appeared reassured that, despite some people's perceptions, there appears to be enough parking.

"Probably the day's going to come when we have to do something else about parking, but right now it seems like we can find a place to park," City Councilor Roger Rocka said.

Mayor Bruce Jones said it was nice to have a written analysis to refute some comments about the perceived lack of parking.

"It's an unrealistic expectation that you can just pull up downtown right in front of the store you want to go to and find a spot right there," Jones said. "Because if you could, I mean, then that business is going out of

business."

The study still found some opportunities to preserve parking, with most of the city's leased and private lots at capacity or unavailable to the public.

The study recommended keeping time limits on parking, parking restrictions for employees and business owners near their businesses and a parking enforcement officer. It recommended preserving some parking amid future development around Heritage Square at 12th and Exchange streets, asking the state to enhance pedestrian crossings on Marine Drive and educating merchants in keeping open spaces for customers.

The city doesn't have the population or demand to warrant something like a 100-spot parking garage, which could cost \$2 million, Heath said. But she recommended the city look at worker shuttles from a nearby park and ride during busy seasons. She also called for more education about public transit, including Sunset Empire Transportation District's Route 10 bus, which circles Astoria hourly.

Jones wondered how likely the state Department of Transportation was to enhance the crosswalk at Marine Drive and Sixth Street, a goal in the city's transportation system plan. City Manager Brett Estes said it hasn't been funded but is a priority.

PacifiCorp: Utility's first request since 2013

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a rate decrease of more than \$49 million through savings from cross-state purchases of renewable energy and other efforts, meaning rates would ultimately go up by 1.6% next year, the utility said in a filing. It estimates the average impact on a customer consuming 900 kilowatt-hours per month would be \$4.03.

"The modest request in this case demonstrates PacifiCorp's prudent and efficient management of its costs that has allowed the company to stay out of general rate cases beyond its commitment made in its last general rate case (in 2013) ... all while adhering to the core principle of providing sustainable energy solutions in the form of safe, reliable and affordable service for customers," Etta Lockey, the utility's vice president of regulation, wrote in her testimony on the rate case.

The utility, often criticized for how much energy it sources from fossil fuel like coal and natural gas, hopes to increase its renewable portfolio by 11,000 megawatts over the next 20 years while decreasing coal generation by 4,500 MW. It plans to retire 16 of its 24 coal generators by 2030, and 20 by 2038. The rate case includes the early shutdown of a 395 MW generator at the Cholla coal plant in northern Arizona.

In 2018, PacifiCorp gained approval for a \$3 billion Energy Vision 2020 initiative, which will add more than 1 gigawatts of wind power capacity in Wyoming and repower 900 MW of wind facilities there and in Washington state. The projects are expected

to increase the amount of owned and contracted wind capacity in PacifiCorp's network by 60%. The plan also includes more than 500 miles of new transmission lines from Wyoming to Utah.

"Our customers in Oregon are looking for a cleaner portfolio," said Spencer Hall, a spokesman for Pacific Power. "There's a price associated with that."

PacifiCorp's argument cites other investments to reduce its environmental impact, such as the installation of fish passage at its hydroelectric dams along the Lewis River near Mount St. Helens, emissions reduction equipment on several coal plants and the conversion of another plant from coal to natural gas. The utility also cites programs to incentivize conversion of street lighting to LED and investments in customer service like smart meters that allow people to better monitor power usage, and the utility to more quickly identify outages.

The utility also cited the increased cost of adapting to wildfire risk. PG&E,

California's largest electricity provider, filed for bankruptcy protection after admitting its power lines likely started the Camp Fire, which burned 150,000 acres and killed 85 people in 2018. The Delta Fire in 2018 burned 60,000 acres, costing PacifiCorp \$36 mil-

lion to rebuild two damaged transmission lines.

Kandi Young, a spokeswoman for the Public Utility Commission, said staff will establish a schedule for hearings and gather information from PacifiCorp before making a recommendation to the commission.

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UnWined

An intimate wine tasting event previewing wine that will be available at the 2020 Astoria Warrenton Crab, Seafood and Wine Festival.

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Providence's North Coast cardiology team invites you to celebrate your healthy heart.

We're proud to welcome Gary Greenberg, M.D. to Providence's cardiology team. From left to right: Gary Greenberg, M.D.; Zach Caverley, PA-C; Robert Morse, D.O.; and Masud Ahmad, M.D.

Join us as we celebrate National Heart Month with these fun and free heart-healthy offerings.

- ♥ Women's Healthy Heart Tea

Join Providence Seaside registered dietitian, **Beth Schwenk, RD, LD** to learn heart-smart eating habits. Light luncheon provided.
12:15 p.m., Friday, Feb. 14
Providence Seaside Hospital, Education Room A, 725 S. Wahanna Road
- ♥ Know Your Numbers

Knowing your numbers is important for heart health. This heart health screening will help you identify your blood pressure, pulse, height, weight and body mass index (BMI).
1-4 p.m., Friday, Feb. 28
Providence Seaside Clinic, Suite 101, 725 S. Wahanna Road
- ♥ Heart Talk and Walk

Providence cardiologist, **Robert Morse, D.O.**, and **Zach Caverley, PA-C** invite you to join them for a presentation on heart health followed by a walk on the prom.
10 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 29
Best Western Plus Ocean View Resort, 414 N. Prom

Providence.org/northcoast

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County Commissioner

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Campaign Kick-off!!!

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Enjoy live music and light refreshments!!
Family friendly event, everyone welcome!!