

Waterfront: ‘The Port and the working waterfront have been essential to Astoria’s identity’

‘A THRIVING PORT IS GOOD FOR ASTORIA ... WE ARE A HISTORIC WATERFRONT COMMUNITY.’

Bruce Jones | mayor of Astoria

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last couple years, it’s been made even more evident,” Isom said. “It’s been a balancing act.”

The Port has suffered economic hits from the decline in log exports due to trade wars between the U.S. and China and the coronavirus pandemic’s effect on cruise ship visits.

The agency is also struggling with the burdens of deferred maintenance and infrastructure challenges, so it will need outside funding to help take on redevelopment.

“The opportunities are great in this planning area and I think because of that, we’re going to attract a lot of interest,” Isom said. “In attracting that interest, you need to make sure that

as representatives of the public, we’re doing things in a way that are going to benefit the public.

“Those may include direct financing from the Port where we pay for things, it may include going after grants. But also I think a big piece of this will be attracting private dollars into this area because I think with everything this area has going for it, these things are going to pencil out. There’s going to be an opportunity there for developers and investors to come in and be able to make money.”

Urban renewal money

Since the Port and the city have teamed up on the project, Estes mentioned the possibility of the Astor West Urban Renewal District being a funding mechanism. The renewal district

has about \$5.3 million available for improvement projects in Uniontown.

“Our needs are great right now, but there’s a possibility of public and private coming together to pay and develop this ... I’m really looking forward to more private participation,” Frank Spence, the Port Commission’s president, said.

Ultimately, Isom said, the Port’s goals in developing the waterfront master plan go back to the mission of being an economic driver and job creator for the region.

“A thriving port is good for Astoria ... We are a historic waterfront community,” Mayor Bruce Jones said. “The Port and the working waterfront have been essential to Astoria’s identity.”

The Port’s West Mooring Basin is a prime location for redevelopment.

Lydia Ely/The Astorian





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