

## Riverwalk Inn unlikely in future plans for waterfront

The aging hotel faces structural challenges

By ETHAN MYERS  
The Astorian

The Astoria Riverwalk Inn is unlikely to be part of future plans for the waterfront in Uniontown.

During a virtual public meeting hosted by the Port of Astoria and the city on Wednesday night, Walker Macy, a consulting firm, outlined the concepts for a waterfront master plan from Pier 1 to the Astoria Bridge. Mike Zilis, a principal and a landscape architect at the firm, said the hotel has too many structural and maintenance concerns to fit within their vision.

“Our recommendation to the Port is they think about a replacement,” he said. “It doesn’t have to happen in the next couple years but, again, the amount of rehab and money that would have to go into this building to really bring it up to good standards — today’s standards — is just excessive.”

“And always being over the water, the Port will continue to fight the marine environment. So we’re suggesting long term, the building get replaced.”

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### WATERFRONT MASTER PLAN

View slides of the potential redevelopment options at: [https://www.astoria.or.us/Astoria\\_Waterfront\\_Master\\_Plan.aspx](https://www.astoria.or.us/Astoria_Waterfront_Master_Plan.aspx)

## Vote count narrows on food tax

Automatic recount is possible

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
The Astorian

CANNON BEACH — A food tax that has divided the community is hanging by a thread.

The margin narrowed significantly since Tuesday night’s vote count. The ballot measure was passing by 23 votes on election night. Now the measure is holding on by two votes — 369 to 367 — according to an update released by Clatsop County on Thursday.

A gap that narrow — 50.14% to 49.86% — would trigger an automatic recount.

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Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

After a four-story hotel was approved in 2018, the city adopted new height limits and other restrictions on development along the riverfront.

## Riverfront hotel project prompts more code changes

City wants clarity after state sides with developer on permit extension

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
The Astorian

At City Hall, the meaning of a small section of Astoria’s development code seemed clear until the state ruled in favor of a developer on a permit extension for a riverfront hotel.

It might come down to a few simple, sticky words: “may” versus “must” and the phrase “in lieu of.”

So now city leaders are tweaking the code. They say they want to be able to address future legal challenges, but this isn’t the first time the developer behind the hotel project has played an unwitting role in changing city standards.

Distaste for Mark Hollander’s proposed Fairfield Inn and Suites — a four-story, 66-room Marriott-brand hotel at the base of Second Street approved in 2018 — influenced new height limits and other restrictions on development along the riverfront. In April 2020, citing economic hardship during the coronavirus pandemic, Hollander requested a one-year extension on his permits. The City Council denied the request, arguing Hollander had done nothing to advance the project and questioning his claim that the pandemic was the reason for the delay.

The state Land Use Board of Appeals sided with Hollander in a September ruling and challenged how the city applied the code.

Astoria has chosen to appeal the



Rainwater rolls off the old Ship Inn restaurant, where a Fairfield Inn and Suites is planned.

*ASTORIA HAS CHOSEN TO APPEAL THE STATE’S RULING BECAUSE, AS MAYOR BRUCE JONES HAS SAID, ‘WE BELIEVE THAT THE CITY’S PREROGATIVE TO INTERPRET ITS OWN CODE REASONABLY OUGHT TO BE UPHELD.’*

state’s ruling because, as Mayor Bruce Jones has said, “we believe that the city’s prerogative to interpret its own code reasonably ought to be upheld.”

In its read of the code, the appeals board argued the city could only consider economic conditions that existed at the time of Hollander’s request for a permit extension.

According to city planners and City Attorney Blair Henningsgaard,

the code asks applicants to show why economic conditions prevented them from making an effort to proceed with a project.

The code says an applicant can show effort by submitting permit applications to relevant agencies or setting up contracts to deal with site-specific issues, among other steps.

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## Poll finds widespread support for school mask mandates

Vaccine mandate more divisive

By NICOLE BALES  
The Bulletin

Despite some vocal opposition, there is widespread support for K-12 school mask mandates to deter the spread of the coronavirus, according to a survey by the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center.

The survey showed that 70% of Oregonians support mask mandates in schools, while 23% are



Oregon Values and Beliefs Center

*‘WE’RE TALKING ABOUT PEOPLE’S LIVES HERE, AND THAT DOESN’T SEEM TO BE THE MAIN FOCUS.’*

Donna Casey | mother of a senior at Summit High School in Bend

opposed and the rest are unsure. Support among people without school-age children is 72%, while support among parents of school-age children is 65%.

Gov. Kate Brown announced a mask mandate for K-12 schools in July to slow the spread of the virus.

People living in urban areas are more likely than people living in rural areas to support mask mandates in schools, according to the survey. The majority of Oregonians do not believe wear-

ing masks jeopardize children’s health and safety, learning capacity, potential or outcomes, teachers’ instructional effectiveness and children’s and families’ freedom.

Amatory Vogel, the associate executive director of the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center, called the data “surprising.”

People opposed to the governor’s mask mandate have interrupted school board meetings throughout the state, and even some superintendents and school boards

have challenged the mandate.

“To see that many people support it was kind of surprising,” she said.

Jim Fields, a Deschutes County resident and grandparent of two kindergartners, characterized opposition to the mask mandate as a divisive political lever. He said he supports the mask mandate, especially since it means his grandchildren can stay in school.

“It doesn’t seem like mask wearing bothers them at all,” Fields

said. “The most important thing for I think both of them is that socialization that school gives them.”

The Oregon Values and Beliefs Center is an independent, non-partisan organization. The center’s online survey, conducted from Oct. 8 to Oct. 18, was sent to 1,403 residents. The margin of error is between 1.6 to 2.6 percentage points.

The survey also gauged Oregonians’ support of vaccine mandates for children 12 years and older, which significantly fewer people favor.

About 57% of Oregonians support vaccine mandates for children 12 and older, while 33% are opposed and the rest are unsure.

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