

OPINION



the Astorian

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OUR VIEW

A working waterfront and living wage jobs

The Port of Astoria and the city are partnering on a waterfront master plan to shape redevelopment between Pier 1 and the Astoria Bridge in Uniontown.

Of the five overarching goals, two stand out:

- Strengthen Astoria's working waterfront with a mix of uses and ongoing private investment.
- Support living wage jobs.

While the coronavirus pandemic interrupted many public policy discussions on the North Coast, we hope economic development moves toward the top of the list during the recovery.

Our region's allure as a tourist destination creates opportunity, but we risk becoming overly reliant on visitors to sustain our economy. Many jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector do not pay enough to adequately cover the cost of living.

The Port's property has the best potential to help drive the region's economy. Along with the waterfront in Uniontown and the East Mooring Basin in Uppertown, the Astoria Regional Airport, the Airport Industrial Park and the Skipanon Peninsula in Warrenton offer canvases for new ventures.

The final outline of the waterfront master plan, released by the Port and the city at a virtual public meeting in December, is balanced and achievable. Walker Macy, the consulting firm working on the concept, organized the hodgepodge between Marine Drive and the Columbia River into an inviting layout.

We urge policymakers to prior-



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

The Port of Astoria and the city hope to redevelop the waterfront in Uniontown.

itize the maritime industrial portion of the master plan, building on the seafood processing operations of Bornstein Seafoods and Da Yang Seafood. The outline identifies manufacturing and assembly, an industrial incubator and shipping as options for the west edge.

To the east, the master plan mentions supportive mixed-use buildings that could attract light manufacturing and a business incubator.

We recognize the economic challenges of standing up new maritime industrial projects. The Port and the city could collaborate with private developers, using infrastructure and

urban renewal money as leverage.

Our concern is the working waterfront elements of the master plan will get brushed aside and the public focus will concentrate on new hotels and preserving views. Too much of the conversation around the city's Riverfront Vision Plan was consumed with restricting development.

Two years ago, the City Council amended the Bridge Vista section of the Riverfront Vision Plan to toughen building height and scale limits and make it harder for projects like the proposed four-story Fairfield Inn & Suites at Second

Street to advance.

But city councilors wisely added plan districts for the Port's West Mooring Basin and the Astoria Warehousing property being redeveloped by Fort George Brewery.

The idea was the Port and the brewery could create master plans to bypass development restrictions in Bridge Vista and have more freedom to pursue industrial and mixed-use projects.

The waterfront master plan is sort of a hybrid, since the city agreed to partner with the Port.

Most of the public feedback so far has been positive. We expect sharper knives will come out of the drawer when developers step forward with blueprints for a 60-to-90-room hotel to replace the Astoria Riverwalk Inn or building footprints that would obstruct view corridors.

Will Isom, the Port's executive director, and City Manager Brett Estes should be commended for setting this stage after years of inertia. Financial disarray, poor management, infighting and cronyism at the Port made such a partnership with the city unthinkable a few years ago.

Progress at the Port could also complement Uniontown Reborn, the city's ambition to remake the historic western gateway.

Some elements of the waterfront master plan could take years to complete or may never happen. But we believe the exercise can serve as an example for other redevelopment projects if the emphasis is on a working waterfront and living wage jobs.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fair shake

I guess I consider myself a conservative now. I thought I was a liberal when John F. Kennedy was in office, but the new definition of liberal does not seem to fit the things that Kennedy and others, like Martin Luther King Jr., stood for, and I therefore no longer feel that the political left is doing the country any good.

I liked President Donald Trump and what he attempted to do for America, and the American worker and the economy.

All that being said, I am writing this letter to urge all Oregonians to vote for Betsy Johnson for Oregon governor. Whatever your political affiliation may be, you can count on Johnson to support you, as an Oregon citizen.

Many in the political arena simply ignore anyone who is not of their party or mindset. Johnson is an Oregonian through and through, and will always champion fairness, regardless of what your personal political views are.

She knows the problems and virtues of Oregon and Oregonians, and will work tirelessly to see that all Oregonians get a fair shake. I believe that Johnson is just what Oregon needs in their next governor.

I am so glad she has decided to enter this political race, and I hope you will join me in voting for Johnson for governor.

DAVID GRAVES
Astoria

Beep beep

Ex-senator Betsy Johnson was never a Democrat, any more than Wile E. Coyote was ever a roadrunner.

On every issue, she has represented the interests of the rich against the poor; the corporations against the environment, and against the class-action lawsuits which won settlements from corporations in court; and most of all, in favor of timber interests against the taxpayers, who own most of the timber.

The reason why is simple: She herself is a timber heiress. Masquerading as a Democrat all those years was necessary, because her constituents were an ever-increasing Democratic majority. She appeared at all the local to-dos, waved the flag and kissed the babies.

And the disguise enabled her to help kill, at the last moment, very good Democratic bills in favor of cap and trade and legal aid, to mention just a couple. Now she wants to be our governor. Folks, we'd



LETTERS WELCOME

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to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil. Send via email to editor@dailyastorian.com, online at bit.ly/astorianletters, in person at 949 Exchange St. in Astoria or mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR., 97103.

By making that one cut, the United States would have funds to address things most on the right are arguing we can't afford, like feeding hungry children and seniors, housing the homeless and helping seniors afford their medicines!

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimates 131,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. Imagine a portion of that \$384 billion being used to solve that problem! There are also multiple studies suggesting potential return on investments for providing these supports for the "least among us" will serve to reduce those costs in the long run.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, who preached a gospel of love, of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger and other radical leftist ideals like these, I ask everyone to think about how you want your tax dollars spent.

Choose between spending this nation's vast wealth to help our own people, or spending it to kill children in far off countries.

It's truly that simple!

BILL GRAFFIUS
Gearhart

be better served by the coyote.

JOSEPH WEBB
Astoria

Choose

As Congress performs their political theater regarding Build Back Better, Americans need to keep these facts in mind:

According to multiple credible sources, if we cut this nation's \$768 billion defense budget in half we will still be spending billions more than all of our perceived global enemies combined.

Depending on which study you choose to believe, we literally spend more on "defense" than the next seven to 11 top-spending nations combined. Many of those countries are our allies who share our defense goals!