

IN BRIEF

Astoria Middle School track closes for project

The Astoria Middle School track will be closed for school and public use starting Wednesday to begin resurfacing and improvement work.

The project is part of the school district's facility bond that was approved by voters in 2018.

The school district will announce an expected opening date at a later time.

Lumber truck rolls over on Highway 30

A lumber truck rolled over on the side of U.S. Highway 30 while traveling east of Astoria on Tuesday.

Emergency responders took the driver to Columbia Memorial Hospital, Knappa Fire Chief Kurt Donaldson said.

One lane was closed and traffic was diverted through Burnside while the truck and lumber were removed. The entire load of wood was spilled, Donaldson said.

Seaside fined for wastewater violations

SEASIDE — The state has assessed nearly \$13,000 in civil penalties against the city for wastewater violations.

According to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, the city discharged untreated sewage into the Neawanna River and adjacent wetlands five times in 2021, with spills ranging from 900 gallons in early January to more than 10,000 gallons in mid-November.

The state assessed a \$9,750 civil penalty for the violations. An additional \$3,150 civil penalty was issued for sewage overflows on Avenue D and on Pine Street in January 2021.

State seeks applications for commercial fisheries permit board

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is seeking 19 new members for its Commercial Fisheries Permit Review Board.

The board evaluates denials and transfers of commercial fishery permits for a variety of fisheries. Applicants must hold a valid commercial fishing permit for the fishery they are applying for.

Members have three-year terms, and may serve up to two terms.

The open positions and applications are available on the department's website and are due on April 25.

Interested candidates should submit their application to Jeannine.c.smith@odfw.oregon.gov or mail to Jeannine Smith, ODFW Licensing, 4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE, Salem, OR., 97302 or fax to 503-947-6117.

— The Astorian

Pacific County reaches vaccination milestone against virus

LONG BEACH, Wash. — Pacific County hit a vaccination milestone on March 26, as more than 60% of residents were considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

— Chinook Observer

DEATHS

April 1, 2022

SHAUCK, Pamela J., 92, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

March 31, 2022

GRIFFIN, Michael Dennis, 63, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

HUNTINGTON, Susan LaRee, 68, of Warrenton, died in Warrenton. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

March 30, 2022

BOLING, Margaret May, 93, of Gresham, formerly of Astoria, died in Gresham. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

MEMORIALS

Saturday, April 9

LEONHARDT, Viola — Celebration of life from noon to 3 p.m., Suomi Hall (United Finnish Kaleva Brothers & Sisters, Astoria Lodge No. 2), 244 W. Marine Drive.

ON THE RECORD

Theft

• Clayton C. Huffman, 31, of Astoria, was arrested on Sunday at Walmart in Warrenton for second-degree theft and third-degree criminal mischief. He was also trespassed from the location.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY

Astoria City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

Oregon Transportation Commission OKs spending plan for federal money

By PETER WONG
Oregon Capital Bureau

The Oregon Transportation Commission has approved how it should spend \$412 million in federal flexible funds to help people and goods move around safely and with less damage to the environment.

In a vote Wednesday, the commission added a new pilot project to help people without cars to get around — particularly in low income and minority households — but also restored \$50 million to complete two big highway projects.

Both projects were authorized but not fully funded by the 2017 Legislature in its state package. They are the Bend North corridor, which involves multiple improvements on U.S. Highway 97 and U.S. Highway 20, and the Aurora-Donald interchange on Interstate 5 just south of Wilsonville and the Willamette River.

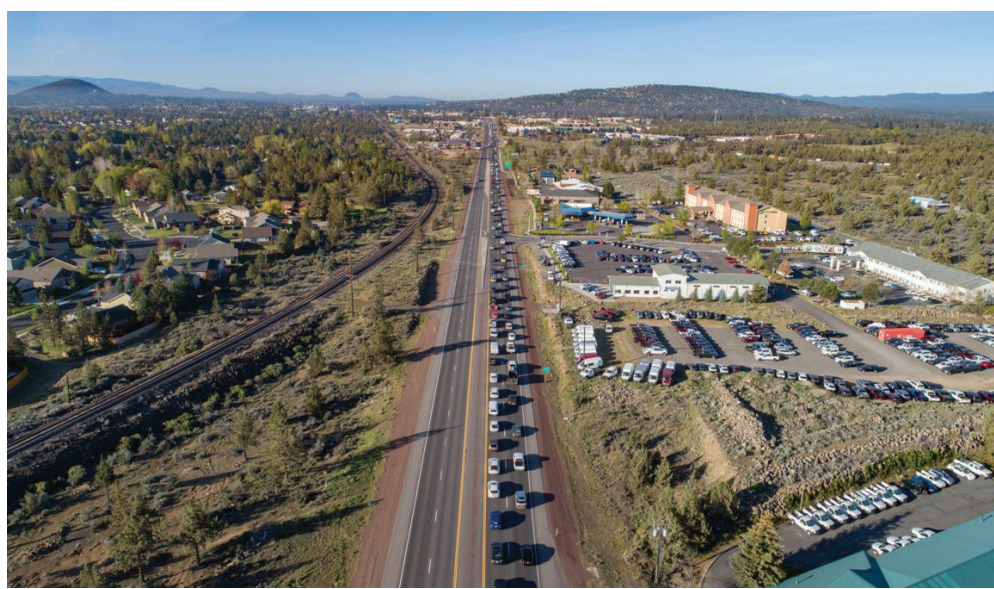
Oregon will get at least \$1.2 billion for transportation over six years from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which President Joe Biden signed in November. The law earmarks most of the other \$800 million for specific purposes, such as bridge repairs and electric vehicle infrastructure. Another \$200 million goes directly to transit agencies such as TriMet. The law also directs federal money to broadband expansion, water and sewer lines, electrical grid upgrades and other programs outside the Oregon Department of Transportation.

The next step for the commission is to approve specific projects funded from the various pots of money it just created, some of them as soon as its next meeting in May.

Though no public comment was taken at the meeting Wednesday, the commission heard from people and organizations at several previous meetings and open houses — all online — and received numerous written statements.

Critics: Too much for highways

After the commission vote, the Oregon Environmental Council criticized the \$50



Robert L. Townsend

The Bend North corridor project is among the state's transportation funding priorities.

million allocation to highway enhancements, something the commission had tentatively decided against in March, even though the bulk of the flexible funds will go to purposes other than highway construction.

"The OTC adopted a final 'scenario' for the flexible funds that does recognize a need for greater investment in public and active transportation," a statement from the council said.

"However, the scenario does not go far enough to fulfill deep community needs. It also still allocates \$50 million to the 'enhance highways' category of spending, underlining the missed chance for OTC to use these one-time federal funds to make ground on sorely needed climate-forward community investments."

But state Department of Transportation officials say the extra money is needed for the state's share of two projects that the Legislature authorized in 2017 but did not fully fund.

The Bend North project involves two traffic roundabouts and multiple-use paths on Highway 20, plus a realignment of Highway 97, for a total cost of \$133.4 million. A federal grant of \$60.4 million will be supplemented by \$73 million from ODOT. The Highway 20 work is scheduled to start this fall; the Highway 97 work in about a year.

The Aurora-Donald inter-

change involves its reconstruction. Work started on the first phase in February. The eventual price tag is pegged at more than \$70 million, some of which also comes from a federal grant.

While advocacy groups criticized the amount for highway enhancements as too much, commissioners sought to add money for the proposed pilot project for innovative mobility, intended to focus on helping people without their own cars to get around. The commission increased the proposed amount from federal funds from \$5 million to \$10 million, to be matched from state sources yet to be specified.

Specific allocations

Below is the complete list of how the commission allocated the flexible funds. Many of them were unchanged from an initial proposal back in March:

- Access for people with disabilities: \$95 million for ramps and other work on state highways, as required by a 2017 settlement of a lawsuit involving the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Fix-It: \$75 million for a long list of projects to repair highways and make them safer.
- Highway enhancements: \$50 million for the Bend North corridor and the Interstate 5 Aurora-Donald interchange.
- Great Streets: \$50 million for a new program of

pedestrian and other upgrades to state highways that double as main streets through communities.

• Safe Routes to School: \$30 million for an existing program to enable safe access by students to schools.

• Matching fund: \$40 million for Oregon to tap when it seeks a share of \$100 billion in competitive federal grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Among the potential big projects: A replacement bridge across the Columbia River between Portland and Vancouver, Washington, and widening of I-5 at the Rose Quarter interchange in Portland.

• Operations and maintenance: \$40 million for ODOT to help keep the agency running.

• Greenhouse-gas reductions: \$15 million for ODOT to help local governments cut transportation emissions through community planning.

• Mobility pilot project: \$10 million for ODOT to award grants to organizations to promote car-free transportation for people who often have few alternatives, such as low-income and minority households.

• Workforce: \$7 million for ODOT to encourage growth of small businesses and develop a construction workforce to counter projected labor shortages.

The Oregon Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

Waterfront: 'It's been a long time coming'

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Moving forward

In order to achieve several elements of the waterfront master plan, the Port is looking to the city to make code amendments. The necessary changes would include adjustments to restrictions on height and uses.

City Manager Brett Estes indicated that the city's community development staff are prepared to work on the amendments and will likely

partner with a consultant. The process would have to clear a number of hurdles before being approved.

The Port may also seek funding from the city through the Astor West Urban Renewal District.

During the decadelong debate over the city's Riverfront Vision Plan, which guides land use along the river from Uniontown to Alderbrook, the city heard public concerns about new development that could block views or reduce

access to the river. Potential code changes that involve height and uses in Uniontown will likely receive close public scrutiny. Frank Spence, the president of the Port Commission, views the collaboration on the plan as a milestone for the Port and the city.

"It's been a long time coming," Spence said. "...We — meaning the Port and the city — are committed to implementing (the plan). We have the right commission and administration to make it move

forward."

If the plan gets adopted, the Port will work toward completing simpler, more feasible projects first while analyzing the longer-term possibilities.

"I, for sure, think it's a milestone, but in saying that, I don't want it to seem like we reached the end or something because it's really one of the first steps you need to take in order to achieve some of the goals that the Port has," Isom said. "For me, it's another check mark as we move this thing forward."

Police chief: Spalding praised for his leadership

Continued from Page A1

"I'm looking for someone who's a good listener," Estes said. "Someone who works well in the community."

Spalding, 65, joined the police department as interim chief in 2017 after already retiring twice during his four decades in law enforcement. The role was supposed to be temporary, but after several months, he agreed to take on the position permanently.

Spalding has helped guide the city's homelessness solutions task force. He has also led the City Council in taking steps to address chronic behavioral issues by a small number of people who account for a disproportionate share of 911 calls.

During his last meeting as

chairman of the homelessness solutions task force on Thursday, Spalding was praised for his leadership.

"In some communities, I think some organizations would question having the chief of police leading a group like this," Mayor Bruce Jones said. "But this group has always fully supported the chief because they know he's kept that analytical and methodical and even-handed approach. Not biased in one way or the other, just doing what's best for our community, considering all perspectives."

"So we've been very fortunate to have Chief Spalding and I just want to personally thank him."

Monica Steele, the assistant Clatsop County manager, highlighted Spalding's knowl-

edge, communication and professionalism.

"He works so hard for the city of Astoria," she said. "But what I appreciate as a county staff person is that coordinated effort that he tries to do with all of the city law enforcement and the county law enforcement, so that way, when we are trying to figure out solutions, we can all try and be working together so

that it's not confusing."

Mike Davis, the deputy director of Helping Hands Reentry Outreach Centers, also thanked Spalding for his efforts and collaborative approach.

"As someone who sits across multiple counties, I continue to lift up Clatsop County as the model of collaboration," Davis said.

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