

The struggles of developing along busy Highway 101

Wendy's and Panda Express pose unique traffic headaches

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

New construction along Highway 101 can be a mixed bag.

Arguably, it's the best place for large commercial developments, but everything that goes in has the potential to disrupt traffic patterns and contribute to collisions.

With a Wendy's fast-food restaurant set to break ground, a farm store proposed off Marlin Avenue and more high-tech and commercial projects headed to the North Coast Business Park, it's a busy time for city planners.

And city rules that have been in place for decades don't always have the teeth or depth needed to govern every situation.

On Nov. 8, city commissioners and planning commissioners held a joint meeting

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A developer wants to build a 19,000-square-foot farm and garden supply store along Highway 101 behind Les Schwab.

Proponents of Tractor Supply Co. say city has too many rules

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

Developers of a farm and garden store off Highway 101 found themselves at odds with the city last week.

Trondheim Acres LLC, a partnership between Wes Giesbicht and Warrenton Fiber Co., owns the 16.5-acre property behind Les Schwab. The company seeks approval on a 2.7-acre portion of the site that would house the 19,000-square-foot Tractor Supply Co. store and become an anchor for the rest of the vacant land. Tractor Supply is a national retail chain based in Tennessee. The closest store to Warrenton is in Kelso, Wash.

"There are a number of fatal flaws with their application," Community Development Director Kevin Cronin told Planning Commissioners Nov. 8. "Right now, it's a recommended denial."

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Company's housing solution is 'bold'

Some decry Pacific Seafood's proposal

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

A severe housing shortage has led to a creative solution by one large employer, but some residents contend Pacific Seafoods' idea stinks.

"For the life of me, we cannot find enough units to house our workers," said Mike Miliucci, the company's special projects attorney tasked with solving the problem. "Pacific Seafood is not really interested in entering the housing market ... but we're trying to solve an issue for our business."

The company has 92 full-time workers today, but needs 260 to 280 to run at full capacity, said Hiram Cho, the company's production and staff manager.

Seafood processing is seasonal and many of Pacific's employees are temporary, transient and unskilled. The company proposes turning the former Pacific Fabricators' metal shop, which it owns, into an employee-only dormitory with an on-site house manager, cook and house rules.

Much of the area along the Columbia River is designated water-dependent industrial shorelands. Both the state and city must be convinced that allowing a bunkhouse for employees of water-dependent industries is a good idea.

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Warrenton's Thanksgiving feast

Residents are invited to a Community Day of Thanks from noon to 3 p.m. Thanksgiving Day at Warrenton Community Center, 170 S.W. Third St.

It's the eighth year the group Thankful Hearts has offered the free community Thanksgiving meal.

"We have received so many positive comments from community members over the past seven years who are thankful we are here for them," said Dianne Burkhart who, along with other family and friends, has organized the event since 2011.

"This year we will be working alongside the VFW Auxiliary, who

we will pass the reins onto for the coming years," she said.

The group served just over 200 meals its first year. Last year, more than 300 attended.

Home delivery is available from Knappa to Seaside for those who can't make it to the center. To sign up for home delivery, call Carl Burkhart by Wednesday at 503-861-1355 and leave your name, address, phone number and the number of meals needed.

If you'd like to volunteer to help prep on Wednesday or to serve in the kitchen or dining room on Thursday, call Dianne Burkhart at 503-739-0661.