



Port works to improve access to Port-Uniontown District

Consultants explain plans to help organize fishing industry, retail development

By CASSANDRA PROFITA,
The Daily Astorian, Posted
2/07/2007

Consultants working with Astoria's Port and City leaders are trying to untangle the Port-Uniontown District, the section of Astoria that runs west along the Columbia River from the Astoria Bridge to the end of Pier 3.

Their designs aim to improve access to the waterfront and recent developments such as the Cannery Pier Hotel, the Red Building and Bornstein Fish Processing. They include parking arrangements for shoppers, better pedestrian routes for locals and cruise ship passengers, accommodations for public parks and new businesses.

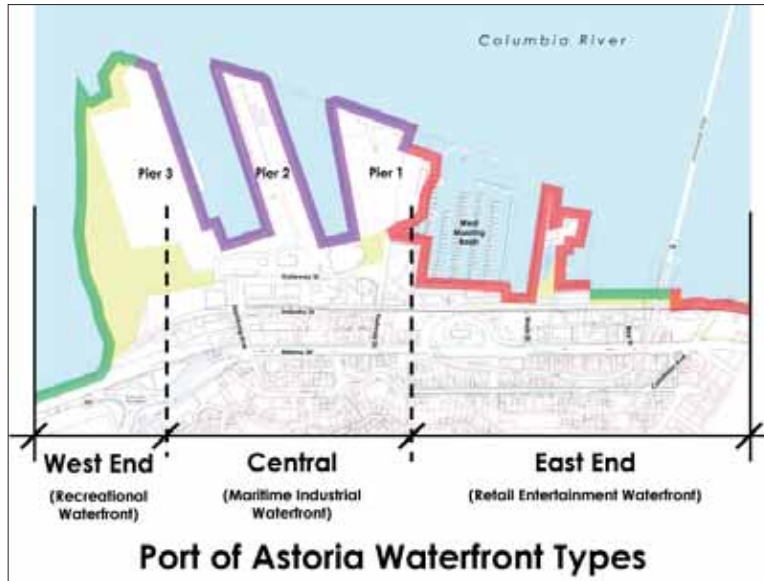
About 30 people gathered at the Holiday Inn Express Tuesday heard a presentation from George Crandall and Don Arambula of Portland's Crandall Arambula city planning group. It was the second of three public meetings on the future of the district, much of which is Port of Astoria property.

The presentation compared the current conditions in the area with the Port of Astoria Master Plan and their two new design concepts. As the consultants explained, their plans should help organize the fishing industry and retail developments in a logical and aesthetically pleasing way.

The roads in place right now make it difficult for cars and trucks and pedestrians to access all of the area's assets, they said. A new road system would "democratize" the transportation system. It would also create a "grand entryway" to the waterfront and improve visibility of new developments.

"We don't want people to have to search for Bornstein's," said Arambula. "We want them to see it when they get there."

Among the proposed changes are relocating Basin Street to improve access from Marine Drive, and



moving Portway Street to the other side of the Portway Tavern to widen access for trucks, and expanding Gateway Avenue to run parallel to the waterfront from the west end of Pier 3 to the Astoria Bridge. In one scenario, the trolley could run down the middle of the "Gateway Street Esplanade."

Expandable parking structures were proposed for the west side of Pier 3 and farther east, near the West Mooring Basin.

One of the new road designs could change the Holiday Inn Express from "not in the district" to "the first place you see," said Arambula.

After the presentation, the audience offered comments and submitted their preferences in writing to Crandall Arambula.

Robert Stang asked the consultants whether it was the city or the port that was "driving" the process of developing the new design.

"You decide," Crandall told him, explaining that the comments from the public would be central to the ultimate design decisions. Crandall said his group was willing to "mix and match" elements from the old designs and the new.

Based on the feedback they receive, the consultants will modify their proposals and create either one or two final options for the district.

Todd Scott, Astoria's community development director, said the final concepts will be presented at a third meeting to be announced at a later date. The new Master Plan will have to be approved by the port and the city, and plans to implement the new designs will follow.

Which entity pays for which changes will depend on property ownership, said Scott, though Urban Renewal funds could help cover improvements that are in the best interest of the public.