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Port of Newport Harbor News

Exploring the Possibilities:

Advisors will help envision a post-Rogue South Beach

A team of analysts is laser-focused on the former Rogue Brewery facility after submitting the winning proposal to perform a feasibility study on the now vacant site in South Beach.

Soderstrom Architects assembled a team that includes BST Associates (economic specialists), ZCS (civil and structural engineering specialists), and Laminar Flow Engineering (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing). Their proposal was considered and approved at the Port of Newport Commission meeting in September at a cost of $61,500.

"Instead of putting a sign up for lease, we decided that this is an opportunity," explained Executive Director Paula Miranda. "The objective here is to determine the most economically viable, legally permissible, physically possible, and market-supported use," she added.

After issuing a request for proposals, the Port received five different submissions, with one as costly as $200,000. A committee from port management reviewed and rated the proposals and Soderstrom garnered their recommendation.

In their submission, Soderstrom outlined how they would tackle the question of what the best use for the former Rogue facility would be.

"Our approach begins with the existing facility, understanding its condition, systems, configuration, opportunities, and constraints to establish what can be preserved, adapted, or transformed," they wrote.



Photo by David Little

"We will then test those possibilities against market demand, financial viability, regulatory requirements, and Port and community goals to identify the right fit between the asset, the market, and Newport's future."

Miranda expects that readying the facility for its next use will require some investment and a thoughtful report on how to best use the facility will help in the effort to obtain funding for that work.

"I think we have the opportunity to go to the EDA (Economic Development Agency) with a feasibility study that is well thought through and say, 'here is what has been studied and we want to revitalize this building' and ask for a grant to do that," she explained.

For now, the Port is accessing a different grant program to help offset the cost of this feasibility study. Business Oregon will fund 75 percent of the study cost, leaving the Port to cover the balance.

Turning the Rogue property back into a money generator is important for the Port's financial picture. The sudden closure and the bankruptcy proceedings that kept the Port out of the facility for a period of time have had an impact on cash flow.

"As a result, the Port is unable to complete certain capital improvements at this time," the executive director said. "We still haven't received the funds from the bankruptcy plus, without Rogue, we don't have that income, which was close to a half million dollars per year. That means we must put some Port projects on hold until we get more cash flow."

In Soderstrom, the Port found a consultant with experience and ties to the region. Newport resident Dan Van Calcar is the principal in charge of overseeing the project. The company has worked extensively here, including projects on behalf of Pacific Maritime Heritage Center, Yaquina Bay Yacht Club, Yaquina Bay Lighthouse Interpretive Center, and the Oregon Coast Community College's Toledo Trades Building.

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POSTAL CUSTOMER

The Port's Role in Shaping Coastal Prosperity

By Paula Miranda, Executive Director

Although the Port of Newport is a vital asset on the Oregon Coast, the Port's mission extends far beyond its docks and facilities. I am pleased to say that the Port is an important part of policy discussions and collaborative networks that help shape the future of our community, our region, and maritime opportunities along the West Coast.

As an organization, economic development is an important part of our mission. Many decisions made at the Port ripple outward, influencing jobs, commerce, and community well-being. That's why the Port's participation in key associations, both national and local, is not just a matter of networking, but a commitment to shaping policies and partnerships that strengthen the region.

We are active in two organizations with national implications. The Association of Pacific Ports and the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association bring together maritime leaders on the West Coast to address shared challenges, like infrastructure funding, fair policies, and environmental stewardship. Through my work with these organizations, I make sure Newport's voice is heard in conversations about port modernization, infrastructure funding, and national policies, including sustainable practices that keep the Pacific coast competitive.

Regionally, the Port is a proud member of the Oregon Public Ports Association and the Special Districts Association of Oregon, working alongside other public ports and districts to address shared challenges. These alliances foster a unified voice when engaging with state policymakers,



ensuring that Oregon's ports remain competitive and resilient.

Closer to home, the Port collaborates with the Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County and the Yaquina Bay Economic Foundation, working hand-in-hand to attract new industries and support existing businesses. Whether it's collaborating on workforce development initiatives or discussing diversity in the local economy, the Port wants to play its part in a healthy, vibrant Lincoln County economy.

I am also fortunate to serve on the Oregon Sea Grant Council, a statewide network focused on coastal research and education. By participating in this council, we support scientific studies that inform sustainable fishing practices, climate adaptation strategies, and marine ecosystem protection, all of which are critically important for both economic and environmental health.

There are many other local entities and organizations doing great work in our communities. We happily collaborate with Lincoln County, the City of Newport and the Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce, joining them in their efforts to promote tourism, advocate for infrastructure improvements, and workforce development, all while supporting small businesses. By engaging with these local leaders, my staff and I are able to stay firmly connected to the community, ensuring that Port operations complement and enhance the region's economic landscape.

When I reflect on our relationships and how they impact not only our operations, but the success of our region, it reminds me that a port's strength isn't just in its docks and cranes. Our real strength is in the partnerships that keep us all moving forward.

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Port of Newport At-A-Glance

Port Commission

- *Gil Sylvia, President*
- *Kelley Retherford, Vice President*
- *Patrick Ruddiman, Secretary/Treasurer*
- *Bob Dziak, Commissioner*
- *Larry Osborne, Commissioner*

Management

- *Paula Miranda, Executive Director*
- *Aaron Bretz, Deputy Director/ Director of Operations*
- *Mark Brown, Director of Finance*

Port Facilities

- *North Commercial Marina*
- *International Terminal*
- *RV Parks (South Beach)*
- *Recreational Marina (South Beach)*
- *NOAA Facilities*
- *Properties leased to OSU, Aquarium*

A Vision for the Future:

Consultants take a deep dive into the Newport International Terminal

ECOnorthwest and KPFF Consulting Engineers have teamed up to determine the "highest and best use analysis" for the Port of Newport International Terminal this fall.

Portland's ECOnorthwest submitted the winning proposal in response to a call for proposals made this summer to further the Port's use of the terminal. Port officials recommended ECOnorthwest, which includes consulting services from KPFF, to the Port Commission for approval at the September board meeting. The contract was approved at the proposed $44,000.



Photo by David Little

"We have been struggling to get more users for the site," Executive Director Paula Miranda explained the Port Commission. "The site is supposed to be multi-use. We have no intent to stop having fishermen use that site. We would like to get more cargo, but we need to figure out what is feasible out there. What type of stuff should we go after?"

In recent years, the Port received interest from two firms in the forestry industry to utilize NIT for moving logs. In each instance, the lack of the necessary equipment stalled future plans, prompting the port to invest in two log handlers. While those two firms are no longer in the picture, the consultants will evaluate how the Port can attract other forestry firms.

In their proposal, the firm said they seek to answer the questions:

- What can NIT competitively accommodate?
- Who has a reason to use it?
- What prevents them from doing so today?
- Where should you focus limited capital and business-development resources to convert opportunity into activity?

"The central question is therefore not simply what uses are theoretically possible at NIT, but which uses have a compelling reason to locate or operate here rather than somewhere else," the submission indicated.

Both Miranda and Deputy Director Aaron Bretz expressed confidence in the two firms that will look closely at NIT.

"This group is more than qualified," Miranda said. "I've worked with ECOnorthwest many times at the ports I've worked with. They have been in business forever and worked with lots of ports."

Bretz noted that KPFF has experience at the Port of Newport, working in an engineering capacity at the NOAA pier, NIT, and the commercial marina.

Over the next few months, a four-person team will focus on NIT to deliver an implementation plan that will tell the Port what physical improvements are needed to maximize use and other key considerations to successfully market the property to new users.

Once a plan is delivered, the Port of Newport will share the recommendations with Port District residents.

A new approach to Port Dock 7 rebuild

With the project's current price tag at $46 million, the Port's most recent attempt to secure $36 million in grant money for the reconstruction of Port Dock 7 has come to a disappointing conclusion. In October, the Port was notified that the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation denied the request. Last year, during a debrief with the Maritime Administration, the Port was informed the project received high ratings by the PIDP (Port Infrastructure Development Program) review committee but was still denied.

This was the fourth time the port had applied for the grant, delaying the project while trying to secure the necessary funding.

"We can keep asking every year with a higher amount as the prices go up, but it is becoming clear that in these current times, we aren't going to get a grant of that size," Executive Director Paula Miranda said.

Forced to re-think the project, Miranda said that breaking the project up into smaller phases may be the only solution.

"If we phase this out into smaller stages, we may have a better opportunity because we can also apply for grants from the small port grant program," she said, referencing the funds set aside within the Department of Transportation for smaller ports. Those grants are capped at $11.25 million.

"We are a small port going after a large grant and, when we do that, we are competing against the large ports," she added.

Miranda and staff have already begun the process of determining how to phase the project in a way that will be most effective and least disruptive to commercial marina users.

"Overall, the project will end up costing more because contractors have to mobilize multiple times and it will require more engineering work and more planning," Miranda said, adding, "but at this point, I don't think we have any choice."

SEA LIONS: A challenge for marina management

They are a hallmark of the Newport bayfront, providing a free wildlife attraction that is loved by many, but the resident California sea lions are anything but free for the Port of Newport.

Enjoyed by tourists and locals alike, hundreds of these all-male pinnipeds jockey for space on the floating platforms located at Port Dock 1. Those platforms were rebuilt and now maintained by the Newport Sea Lion Docks Foundation, a tax-exempt nonprofit organization.

Unfortunately, some sea lions prefer a different resting spot, finding their way to Port Dock 5 and Port Dock 7, where fishing vessels are moored and crew members must work. Not surprisingly, a gathering of mammals that weigh, according to NOAA, as much as 700 pounds each, can take a toll on the docks.

Kody Robinson, Port Harbormaster, says the damage to docks from sea lions is an on-going issue.

"You start working on one area that they have damaged, and then they move to another area and they are there continuously enough to begin the damage in that area," he explained. Damage to the dock structure, electric pedestals knocked out of place, hose bibbs ripped from their moorings and other damages are a regular occurrence.

"Just to repair a pair of triangles with through rods (which stabilize the dock) costs roughly $3,000 and we have four pairs that we need to replace. The problem is that we can get one done and, in less than six months, the sea lions will have worked the dock so hard, they will again need to be adjusted or replaced," Robinson added.

An additional concern is always safety, since people have been bitten and dogs have been grabbed by sea lions. That's why NOAA cautions that people should not get within 50 feet of sea lions.

Mike Brown, Marine Mammal Program Lead at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, is part of a team that uses cameras, drones, and other technology to take random surveys of marine mammals all along the Oregon Coast.

While there has been an increase overall in sea lion population, the number of California sea lions within Newport's harbor has been fairly steady. The last reported survey was in March of 2025, which documented 388 along the jetty area and 149 near the bayfront. Brown said those numbers are pretty typical, except for in 2021, when the survey documented a much larger number.

"In March of 2021, we had 1,179 on the jetty and 134 on the bayfront on that same day," he reported, noting that those figures were the largest going back to 1985. He had no explanation for why that year was an outlier, except to note that figures for sea lions on the Columbia River were also exceptionally large that year as well.

For their part, Port of Newport employees must undertake what NOAA refers to as "non-lethal deterrence" methods to move nuisance pinnipeds when they are impeding work on docks and vessels.

In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Port is allowed to employ a number of deterrents, including noisemakers, pyrotechnics, non-toxic and water soluble paint ball guns, and some physical barriers. Most have been ineffective.

Brown said he has seen some success with using sprinklers to deter sea lions, but agrees that success is often limited.

"Most things work for a little while but these animals are super smart. It might work for a couple of weeks, but they figure out it won't hurt them and bust through again," he said.

Federal legislators in the Pacific Northwest are looking at options to amend the Marine Mammal Protect Act to allow for the removal of pinnipeds under very limited circumstances. The bipartisan bill, HR 9621, was proposed by Washington legislators in response to concerns about the salmon population.

