

The Port Goes On

by Michael McElwee,
Port Executive Director



Michael McElwee

With financial support from Oregon Legislature, the Port is now fully engaged in preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), an important and lengthy step on the road to

replacement of the Hood River Bridge. This effort is the highest priority of the Port Commission and a key focus of staff. But the Port is a complex operation and it must pursue many simultaneous efforts to achieve other important community goals. Perhaps not since the development of the waterfront itself in the '60s, or the purchase of the bridge in the '50s, has the Port worked on so many projects with significant potential community benefit at once. There are three worth highlighting:

Lower Mill— This 8-acre industrial site was acquired in 2012. An additional three acres was added in 2016. Major steps have been taken to ready the site for development: the portion that was the mill's log pond required removal and stockpiling of substantial wood waste and debris. An undersized water supply line required installation of a new pipe the length of Stadelman Drive. A small, isolated wetland required appropriate mitigation. Significant business interest in the property has resulted. The Port has executed an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Neal Creek Forest Products, an interesting twist that could return a portion of the site to its history in the timber industry.

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Bridge replacement efforts advance to essential environmental impact studies

Two conceptual renderings of the preferred bridge design are specified in the SR-35 Columbia River Crossing "Type, Size & Location" study issued in October, 2011. The top image shows a segmental box girder structure as viewed from the Oregon shore, while the inset displays a view from the bicycle and pedestrian path on the bridge.



Key components of the Port's bridge replacement efforts are currently underway. The Port secured the services of WSP USA as the lead agency to perform environmental engineering services and develop the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

The \$3.15 million contract is funded by the \$5 million appropriation from the 2017 Oregon Transportation Funding Package, to conduct Final Environmental Impact studies related to replacement of the bridge. The largest single contract to be funded by this appropriation, this environmental engineering contract is to obtain a Record of Decision (ROD) through a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Once the ROD is obtained, the project has the federal environmental clearances to proceed with permits, financing and construction.

The vast scope of work includes project management over a 30-month period as the team prepares a Supplemental Draft EIS after evaluation of the Draft EIS that was completed in

2003, and works with agencies and the public for comments and input prior to development of a Final EIS. A public information plan includes outreach and involvement, events, stakeholder interviews, environmental research and reports, engineering/design work to 10% completion (meaning conceptual in nature), as well as transportation tasks such as tolling/revenue study coordination and analysis.

Technical reports will cover topics such as air quality, energy and greenhouse gases, fish and wildlife impacts, geology and soils, hazardous material, land use, noise, traffic, water quality, vegetation and wetlands, as well as social and economic considerations.

Engineering services involve coordination with transportation agencies, land surveys, geotechnical studies, hydraulics, bathymetric surveys of water depth, erosion control, storm-water, roadway geometry, civil engineering and architectural concepts.

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Waterfront Parking Plan first-year implementation reviewed

The Port's new waterfront parking management plan created a major change on the Hood River Waterfront this past summer, and results show it was successful in increasing parking turnover in congested parking areas during peak summer months. The new parking plan began in early June to more effectively

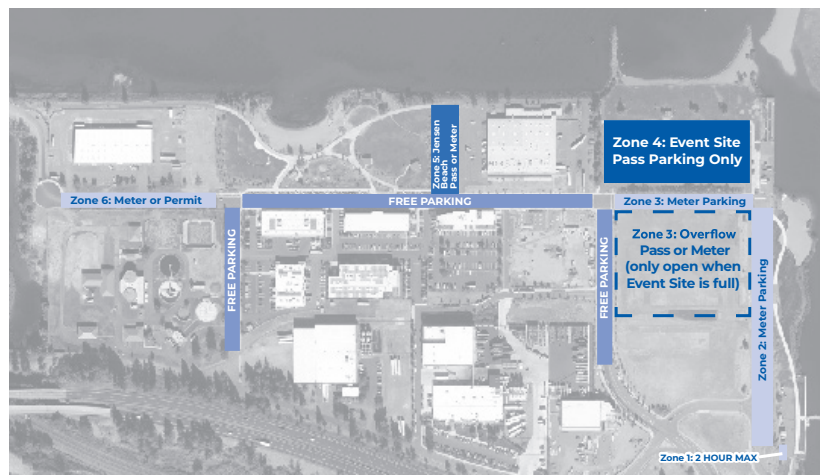
manage limited parking on Port-owned streets, encourage off-street parking for longer visits, and generate new revenue for parks.

After an extensive public information campaign touting the "Park for Parks" slogan, the Port shared comprehensive information on new parking kiosks

and fee schedules, parking pay-station locations and methods of payment. Parking zone signage was installed in late May, and parking enforcement personnel trained in early June. Port parking kiosks and schedules differ slightly from the City of Hood River's paid parking program. The Port's Waterfront parking plan accepts only credit or debit card payments that correspond with vehicle license plate numbers and collects parking fees from 9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. seven days a week, including holidays. Payments may also be made on the free to download "Way To Park" app, which sends alerts and can be used remotely to extend time.

As with any new parking program, implementation was not seamless.

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Bridge users “Breezing” By more than ever

When the toll for the Hood River - White Salmon Interstate Bridge increased on February 1, BreezeBy account holder benefits increased dramatically. Prepaying tolls electronically previously saved 20% for two-axle vehicles (80¢ toll instead of \$1). When the February 1 tolling structure raised that toll to \$2 cash, and \$1 for BreezeBy, electronic toll customers began receiving 50% discounts on tolls.

The Port of Hood River promoted BreezeBy benefits via an extensive public information campaign early this year, and results have been significant. Since January 1, a total of 5,427 new BreezeBy accounts have been created, bringing the total of active BreezeBy accounts to 14,152. Through October 2018, there have been nearly 2.6 million bridge toll transactions made with BreezeBy.

In early 2019, the Port of Cascade Locks plans to adopt the BreezeBy system for its Bridge of the Gods tolling, meaning Columbia Gorge residents will be able to manage and use online accounts to pay tolls at both bridge structures.

BreezeBy customers that have set up online access for their accounts can now use the mobile app, available for free download at the app stores for iPhones and Android devices, to manage their accounts on the go. Just search for “BreezeBy.”

Mann presents at international symposium

John Mann, Port facilities manager, joined Paul Bandlow of Stafford Bandlow Engineering to present at the Biennial Symposium for Heavy Movable Structures on October 22 in Orlando, FL. The title of the report was “Unique Solutions to Interesting Problems,” covering issues and solutions to the Hood River - White Salmon Bridge’s lift span control system operations.

Daryl Stafford joins Port



Daryl became Waterfront & Marina Manager last spring, and there was no shortage of activities and events to keep her busy throughout the summer. Daryl is a longtime Gorge sailing and watersport enthusiast, entrepreneur, and administrative professional. She worked nearly 18 years

at local watersports shop, Big Winds, and more recently ran JS Boat with her husband, manufacturing inflatable rafts that house scuba tanks.

Stafford is responsible for daily operations of Port-owned waterfront properties and the Hood River Marina, as well as ongoing and long-term planning for facilities and amenities improvements, policy, and budget planning. Stafford will be the point of contact for waterfront concessions, schools, event producers, tenants, and guests. She is available by phone at (541) 386-0972 or by email at waterfront@portofhoodriver.com.

Port interns assist on varied projects

Activity at the Port office continues to build, and the Port of Hood River has created opportunities to engage youth as paid interns to learn and assist with Port projects. This year, the agency engaged three summer interns and a school-year intern. Here’s a little about each.



Aidan Liddiard served as Land Development Intern, assisting Anne Medenbach, Development and Property Manager, in evaluating the feasibility of a wetland bank in Hood River County and other wetland mitigation measures. Liddiard is a junior at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma.



Melissa Manzo Andres serves as an Administration Intern. She recently graduated from Hood River Valley High School (HRVHS) and is now attending Columbia Gorge Community College. Melissa works to provide administrative support throughout the office.



Connor Truax interned at the Port as Video Production Intern, creating public information videos under the guidance of Communications & Special Projects Manager Genevieve Scholl. Connor now attends film school at Whittier College in California.



Jose Santillan, a student at HRVHS, is focusing his efforts on research and concept planning for a solar array on the Port’s shop facility building, plus a solar charging station at the Port office building parking lot.

Hood River Bridge replacement project open house scheduled

The Port of Hood River will host a public Open House on Monday, December 10th from 6-8 p.m. at the Riverview Room at the Best Western Plus Hood River Inn as part of the Hood River Bridge Replacement Project. Attendees will have the opportunity to talk to project staff to learn about and provide comment on the project purpose, need statement and range of alternatives analyzed in prior studies. The event will be catered. For more information contact Kevin Greenwood, Project Director, at (541) 436-0797.

Summer Waterfront Activity 2018

5 Events at Marina Beach

6 Events at Nichols Basin

Stretching from The Hook to the Hood River Marina, the Hood River Waterfront is a mecca for watersport and recreation use. Increasing popularity and activity growth places increasing demands on the Port’s recreational sites, and brings more challenges and expectations for managing and maintaining them. New sports are emerging, old sports are making a comeback, businesses continue to develop, and overall visitation numbers continue to climb throughout various waterfront areas. Here’s a look at 2018 summer waterfront activity in numbers.

90

Hood River Canoe Club Members



12

Waterfront Concessions



47%

Increase over 2017 in time for sheriff shore patrols

6

Events at Event Site



22%

Increase over 2017 in time for sheriff water patrols



72

applicants on waitlist for Marina slips



74

Cruise Ship stops

23%

Event Site Parking (revenue) increase over 2017



Bridge Replacement *continued from page 1*

Permit applications for geotechnical investigations will also be prepared to eight jurisdictions.

Other tasks in the considerable scope of work include development of a bridge permit pre-application for bridge project initiation, a long-range multi-modal travel forecast summary, and a construction cost estimate commensurate with the level of design.

The study area is defined as the existing bridge and its connections at the I-84/Exit 64 interchanges and Washington SR-14 bridge approach intersection, as well as the three new bridge alignments and approach connections identified in the Draft EIS. These alternatives will be re-analyzed and technical evaluations of each option will be provided. WSP will work with the preferred design alternative from the Draft EIS and further studied in the Bridge Type, Size & Location Study (TS&L).

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a federal law signed by President Nixon in 1970 requiring that government actions (primarily capital projects) assess the impact of the activity on the environment. There are three levels of review starting with a Categorical Exclusion (CatEx) when there would be no significant impacts on the environment. An Environmental Assessment (EA) is issued if it is unknown whether the impacts would be significant. The highest level of action is an EIS, required when the project is expected to have significant impacts and/or public controversy. NEPA requires public involvement on projects that may have an environmental impact.

A bridge location just west of the existing structure rose as the preferred alternative. Earlier recommendations will be re-evaluated in the Final Environmental Impact Study.

Each federal agency has slightly different criteria for NEPA evaluations based upon the mission of the agency. The Port of Hood River met with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Washington and Oregon departments of transportation (DOTs) on September 24 to discuss their participation as the lead federal agency for NEPA. Based upon the likelihood that a replacement bridge will need federal grants, FHWA agreed to serve as the lead federal agency.

The process to select the consultant for the FEIS began early this year when the Commission engaged the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) to prepare and facilitate the consultant selection process. The bi-state Request for Proposal Evaluation Committee (EC) convened to evaluate, score and interview respondents, and through a very competitive process, WSP was selected as most qualified for the project. The EC was composed of members from the Port of Hood River, Port of Klickitat, City of Hood River, Oregon and Washington DOTs. Once the proposal was accepted, six weeks of negotiations ensued, a scope of work was defined, and the final contract was approved by the Port Commission on July 31.

WSP recommends formation of a committee that would include members from both states to review draft

studies, provide a feedback loop to communities, and review and comment on any changes to the preferred alternative (PA) as agreed to in prior studies. Washington communities have agreed to participate but there is also strong interest in beginning discussions on post-NEPA issues related to ownership, financing and management of the replacement bridge.

“It’s most important now that the region focus on this next critical phase to complete the Final EIS,” said Kevin Greenwood, Bridge Replacement Director. “The Port has acknowledged that it may not be the sole owner of a future replacement bridge, but we are at least 18 months away from becoming informed enough to consider those options.” Like Hood River County, bridge replacement is Klickitat County’s number one transportation priority, having ranked the project number one in their respective transportation plans.

With the FEIS contract in place, a Record of Decision (ROD) should conclude in late 2020 or early 2021. Combined current efforts will move feasibility of bridge replacement closer to conclusion, and with successful results, will pave the way to proceed to future steps in the process, including permitting, design, engineering and construction of a new bridge. ●

These alternatives will be re-analyzed and technical evaluations of each option will be provided.

Parking *continued from page 1*

Parking is enforced by officers scanning license plate numbers to check payments. Some glitches involved patrons entering incorrect license plate numbers or issues with parking enforcement handheld devices. The Port worked with providers Duncan Solutions, CivicSmart, and Cale America to resolve issues and saw a marked decrease in ticket disputes during the later months of the summer. Look-up functions for parking fines and disputes are available at portofhoodriver.com – just click the link “PARKING.”

With higher rates of turnover, more parking spaces were generally available to the public in high-demand locations during peak times, and a new revenue stream was developed for ongoing maintenance, operations and improvements on Port-owned recreation areas and open spaces.

Gross receipts from June-October were approximately \$58,971, with a total of 19,464 transactions. By far the busiest location was at the east end of Portway Avenue, where the kiosk serves angled parking on east Portway and the Event Site overflow parking on Lot 1. That kiosk had 2,973 transactions for the year with a total of \$10,804 collected. A close second was the other east Portway kiosk, located just to the west with \$8,738.26 in total payments. At press time, the Way to Park app was showing limited adoption, with only 309 transactions processed via the

app totaling \$854.24 for the whole summer. Receipts do not include penalties, which average around \$150 per day combined.

Peak season rates in high use areas was 1.75/hour with 4-hour maximums, and in lower use areas 1.00/hour with 8-hour maximums.

“Port-owned parks, open spaces, and ramps were built primarily with grant funding but it’s rare to find grant funding for ongoing operation and maintenance,” explained Genevieve Scholl, Port Communications & Special Projects Manager. “Now that the parks are built and in use, it’s important for them to be self-sustaining. Paid parking is one way to achieve that. The expectation is that there will be positive future benefits by not only better managing parking, but by also generating revenue to operate and improve the Port’s parks.”

The Waterfront Parking Plan also addresses truck/trailer parking on west Portway Ave. between 8th Street and The Hook. This area, designated as “Zone 6,” limits parking of passenger vehicles due to the high use for truck trailer parking and associated concerns. Parking agreements have been made with trucking companies to pay monthly fees to continue to utilize the area.

Parking on City-owned streets remained free this past summer, however, the City installed 3-hour maximum parking signs on Portway in front of Waterfront Park. ●



Ken Jernstedt Airfield—The ongoing success of WAAAM and new aviation business activities have more than justified recent facility upgrades. They include the runway shift in 2012 and upgrades to the south Ramp in 2016. New commercial hangars are planned for the south side. A \$1.6 million Connect Oregon VI grant will allow installation of utilities and other infrastructure on the North Ramp. This will mean an opportunity to relocate the Fixed Base Operator FBO building, a long-standing goal, and provide a much more effective platform for both technology companies and emergency services operations, particularly fire-fighting and search & rescue operations.

Lot #1—The largest undeveloped portion of the waterfront presents a unique opportunity to achieve numerous community goals including jobs, pedestrian linkages, quality design and construction, recreational access and others. However, the streets, utilities and public

amenities to support the build-out of Lot #1 are sorely lacking and associated costs are high. In conjunction with the City of Hood River, the Port is preparing a “Public Infrastructure Framework Plan” that will describe the type and cost of the needed infrastructure and other public amenities to allow Lot #1 to achieve its future potential as the capstone property on the waterfront.

These major projects, plus many smaller ones, present numerous opportunities for inter-agency cooperation and collaboration. We are grateful for the support we have received at the local, state, and federal levels. **The Port Commission always seeks public input and participation in these and all our efforts. Come to the bi-monthly Commission meetings, attend open houses, visit our web site (portofhoodriver.com) for updates, join advisory committees, and let Port staff and Commission know your questions and your thoughts.** The Port (beat) goes on. ●



Get a BreezeBy Pass and Save 50% on Bridge Tolls

PORT MEETINGS

Regular Port Commission meetings are held on the **1st and 3rd Tuesday** of each month in its **Boardroom at Marina Center Building** (1000 E. Port Marina Drive). The Port welcomes your questions, comments and suggestions.

PORT DIRECTORY

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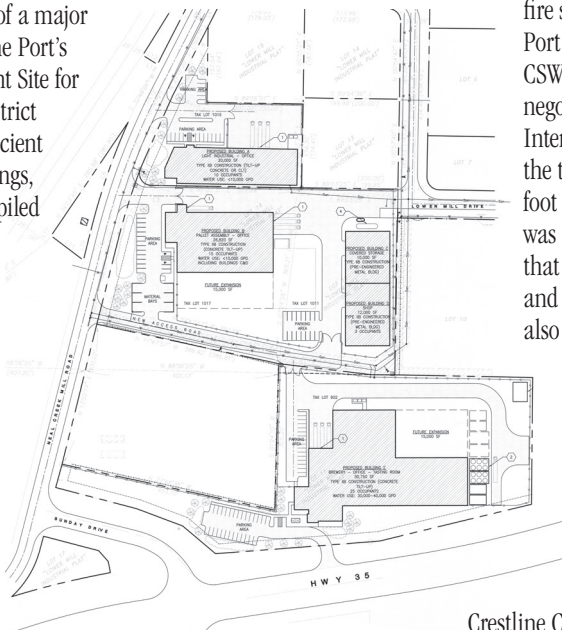
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Lower Mill Site now shovel-ready

The recent completion of a major waterline expansion at the Port's Lower Mill Redevelopment Site for Crystal Springs Water District (CSWD) will ensure sufficient fire flow for future buildings, and the removal of stockpiled materials and grading at the largest of four available lots brings the Port closer to its project goals for the site. After successfully cleaning up the brownfield, the former Lower Hanel Mill site will soon return to productive use by the private sector with the creation four shovel-ready, buildable M-1 industrial-zoned lots off Highway 35 in Odell.



The redevelopment of the 12-acre Lower Mill site was delayed last year due to the discovery of water pressures too low to meet fire code and building department

fire suppression requirements. The Port spent 18 months working with CSWD to resolve the issue. Following negotiations and execution of an Intergovernmental Agreement between the two special districts, a 1,350 linear foot installation of 10” watermain was installed by the Port for CSWD that not only brings water pressure and flows up to required levels, but also completes a CSWD Master Plan project, enhancing water pressure for the entire CSWD system including future tenants at Lower Mill Industrial Park.

The project involved not only CSWD but also Stadelman Fruit LLC, who provided a necessary easement for line placement.

Crestline Construction LLC completed the work on schedule and under budget.

“We appreciate all the cooperation throughout the project between adjacent landowners, the contractor, and Crystal Springs,” said Anne Medenbach, development and property manager for the Port.

The Port recently issued an Intent to Award a contract for the removal and hauling of 20,000 cubic yards of stockpiled dirt from the Lower Mill site. The stockpile was a result of wood and soil material excavated and tested in the 2016 clean-up phase of the Lower Mill project. Clean-up of the site was funded in part by a grant from the Oregon Brownfield Cleanup program in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency, State Department of Environmental Quality, and Business Oregon. No hazardous or contaminated materials were detected during the process, and utilities were installed to each lot that same year.

Overcoming the delays of this past year means the Port is now able to add the four Lower Mill sites to local industrial site inventory, and sell those sites with development leading to the creation of more local manufacturing jobs. ●

Lower Mill Site lots for sale

For information about the lots located at 3289 Neal Creek Mill Road in Odell **contact Anne Medenbach** at 541-386-5116 or amendenbach@portofhoodriver.com