

# Advance Astoria

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Advance Astoria: 5 Year Economic Development Strategy

*What are we trying to achieve with this project?*

The City of Astoria is creating its first Five Year Economic Development Strategy. Economic development for Astoria is built around three themes: diversification, wealth creation, and resiliency. The project includes technical assistance with creating an Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA) and developing an inventory of key business sectors to grow, expand, retain, and attract, create a clusters or “batch” strategy of traded sector or knowledge-based industries, an entrepreneurial/economic gardening strategy to support startup and first phase businesses, a review of current technical assistance and financial tools, and an overall action plan to achieve each strategy. Finally, Astoria needs to find consensus around defining a sustainable path for future job growth, what is acceptable for leveraging public investments, and the types of businesses it wants to support and grow.

*What is the backdrop for why we’re doing this strategy?*

The City of Astoria has historically benefited from the natural resources industries that have dominated the economic and cultural landscape of Oregon coastal communities, including fish processing, forestry, and marine industries. In the last decade, Astoria has become a destination town on the Oregon Coast for tourism: Astor Column, Lewis & Clark National Historic Park, Downtown Astoria, and various other year round events and attractions. Astoria needs to diversify its economy to supplement the tourism and natural resource based economies. To some extent, Astoria has done this with key investments from the City and State. The craft brewing/fermentation sector has boomed with four breweries, another under construction, and a startup ciderworks. Related to the beverage industry is a strong “foodie culture” with restaurants, bakeries, small batch producers, culinary arts and tourism, new commercial kitchens, and a growing community capacity to support this sector.

*How has the City helped businesses in the past?*

The City has offered technical and financial assistance to some businesses, and makes referrals to partners such as the Clatsop Economic Development Resources (Small Business Development Center affiliate). However, the City does not have a coordinated strategy to support these industries as well as other high growth industries that could expand the labor market, attract more private capital, and provide more living wage job and workforce development opportunities. Although the opportunity-based approach of the past has delivered results (such as Fort George, Astor Hotel, and Red Building), a smarter strategy around the types of businesses that will produce the best jobs is a better best practice for cities like Astoria.

*What is the relationship of the strategy to the City’s Comprehensive Plan?*

The City of Astoria has an updated land inventory for commercial and industrial lands, and the Comprehensive Plan policies and objectives for Goal 9 (Economic Development) are not without merit, but are generic statements with little strategic value. As a result, a new “Economic Opportunities Analysis” - which is a cornerstone of any strategy - is needed to take a fresh look at the next wave of economic development in a global and regional context and a strategic approach to growing specific business sectors. With an EOA as a baseline, the City needs a five year action plan to guide its asset management and investment portfolio to drive more private investment, including traditional commercial real estate, equity and debt participation, startup capital, angel investing, and venture capital.

*What are some of the types of projects and partnerships the strategy will consider?*

Despite being a small town, the City of Astoria has a long history and proven record on executing complex, public-private partnerships. The CMH Field, Mill Pond Neighborhood, Liberty Theater, and Fort George Brewery expansion are all success stories and an impressive legacy of projects to build on for a new strategy. The City is considering a number of new projects to drive job creation, but needs partnerships to make them happen. Some examples include: incubator site for startups, supporting peer coalitions for certain business sectors, partnering with Port of Astoria on attracting new industries, and encouraging more private research and development among existing institutional partners such as CMH, CCC, and OSU Seafood Lab.

*Who are the project stakeholders?*

The project stakeholders identified to date include, but are not limited to the following:

- Astoria Downtown Historic District Association (Main Street Organization)
- Astoria Sunday Market (Entrepreneur Hub)
- Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce
- Clatsop Community College
- Clatsop Economic Development Resources (SBDC/Regional Partner)
- Columbia Memorial Hospital/Cancer Center (Largest Private Employer/Research & Development)
- OSU Seafood Lab and Extension Service (Research & Development)
- Columbia Pacific Economic Development District (3 County EDA District)
- Craft 3 (CDFI)
- Lower Columbia Hispanic Council
- Pacific Power
- Port of Astoria
- Astoria School District (Employment Fair)
- Various City Boards, Commissions, and Departments

*What is the project timeline?*

September – December 2016:

Project Initiation, Data Collection, and Technical Analysis

January – March 2017:

Community Engagement, Review Draft Concepts

April – June 2017:

Draft Action Plan, Review & Adoption Process

*How do I get involved and stay informed?* Here are 10 simple ways to stay involved:

- 1) Check out the project website by going to the City of Astoria homepage under “Current Projects.”
- 2) Attend a community open house,
- 3) Fill out a survey
- 4) Attend a community presentation or event like a “Chamber Breakfast” or Sunday Market,
- 5) Attend a Planning Commission meeting
- 6) Send comments to [kcronin@astoria.or.us](mailto:kcronin@astoria.or.us)
- 7) Talk to your City Councilor or attend a “Meet the Mayor” event
- 8) Attend an advisory committee meeting and provide public comment
- 9) Check out a “pop up shop” in your neighborhood
- 10) Follow the City of Astoria on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter!