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## OUR VIEWS

### City's vision not yet clear on Maine State Pier

There are plenty of good ideas for what to do with the **Maine State Pier**, as a series of public meetings that proved.

What Portland still lacks, however, is a clear vision for the what the pier could be - or even what less-than-perf acceptable.

The 87-year-old structure was built by the state to accommodate cargo and passengers, connecting a thriving railroad hub.

Now, it is seen as a potential tourist attraction, a revenue-producing development site or a place where the pul water.

While most Portlanders appear comfortable with the idea of a mixed-use development that is compatible with r does not appear to be a consensus forming about what those uses should be, or what "compatible" means. No people are, some choices make others impossible.

Fortunately, Portland is at the beginning of its process, not at the end.

A public design exercise is scheduled for 9 a.m to 1 p.m on April 11, at the Ocean Gateway facility on the water delivered to the City Council on April 29. Then the Council will consider its next steps.

The recent meetings did produce clarity on two points that should guide the process as it goes forward.

As a deep-water berth, the pier is a one-of-a-kind asset for the city that could be wasted with the wrong kind c development.

The pier is also unique because it gives people a chance to get close to the water in what is otherwise a busy u

Those aren't mutually exclusive concepts, but they could come into conflict, and the city's residents and its lear more clearly about where they come down in this and other competitions. All sides can't get everything that th

Still unknown is what the future will hold for Portland's harbor. Any choice made now, such as letting cruise-sh industrial use, should leave room to react to economic conditions.

The **Maine State Pier** is not just another vacant site in the city. It is publicly owned, and so the public, throug can play a big role in steering its development. Residents should not miss the remaining chances to be heard.