



265 Strand Street, St. Helens, OR 97051
Phone: (503) 397-6272 Fax: (503) 397-4016
www.sthelensoregon.gov

Greetings Council,

We are pleased to present this semiannual Building Division report. This report will highlight some of the milestones we have crossed in this last term and look at what to expect in the next term and provide permit statistics.

Building Program

With a new year and new council, this section is to provide a history and summary explanation of the City's Building Codes Program.

St. Helens began regulating buildings for fire safety in 1909. In 1956 the council passed ordinance no. 1423 regulating the construction, additions, and alterations of buildings. The adopted building code was written into the ordinance. This model was typical throughout Oregon and most of the country, whereas each municipality or district created and adopted their own building codes. This led to an unpredictable regulatory environment throughout Oregon. By the early 1970s, the Portland metro area had 53 different local codes, while 20 Oregon counties had none. In 1973, the Oregon Legislative Assembly passed SB 73 which required the state to adopt a uniform, statewide building code to govern construction in Oregon.

The bill made state building code applicable and uniform throughout Oregon, and municipalities are expressly prohibited from adopting or administering a competing standard without permission from Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS). The state has authority to delegate building code administration and enforcement for a period of four years to counties and local municipalities who meet criteria ORS criteria. Counties provide building inspection services for all cities within their borders that have not assumed administration and enforcement of a building inspection program. DCBS is the service provider in counties that have not assumed a building inspection program. St. Helens program renewal was completed and approved by DCBS in 2022 (see attached). Currently, City of St. Helens Building Division administers and enforces the Structural, Plumbing, and Mechanical codes. Columbia County Land Development Services administers the electrical program within the city limit.

St. Helens building inspection program establishes and maintains minimum standards and policies designed to ensure consistent administration and enforcement of local and state building code.

Workload

The Building Division, which is comprised of 3.4 FTE's, has issued 246 permits from July 1st, 2022, to December 28th, 2022. Within this term 341 Plan Reviews and 987 inspections were performed. Please note, that this does not reflect all the reviews or



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inspections performed by all departments regarding building permits. Please see attached reports for additional information.

Inter-Governmental Agreements

The City's Building Division maintains Inter-Governmental Agreements with Columbia City and Columbia County. With Columbia City, we provide building code administration services to support their program. Once notified of permit application we provide plan review, inspection, and Building Official services at a rate of seventy-five percent of the permit cost. Our IGA with Columbia County is reciprocal in that either party can request plan review or inspection services based on the needs of the requesting jurisdictions. This agreement primarily serves two purposes for St. Helens. The first is that Columbia County employs an A-Level Plumbing Inspector to serve the entire county. This position and the city's ability to request and obtain these services through our IGA, are critical to the services we provide through our Plumbing program. The second is that our agreement allows either party to request resources, to ensure there is no lapse in services. Being a rural community and limited in qualified inspectors and plan reviewers, this agreement provides resources for services for either party in the event of sickness, training, or increased workloads. Both IGA's were renewed earlier this year with minimal updating except that service cost for Columbia County went from \$75/hr to \$80/hr.

Columbia City Permitting Data:

Permits issued = 40
Completed Columbia City Inspections = 168
Completed Columbia City Plan Reviews = 15
Columbia City Other = 0
Total Revenue = 8,771.24

Columbia County Permitting Data:

Columbia County Completed St. Helens Inspection = 18
Columbia County Completed St. Helens Plan Review = 6
St. Helens Completed Columbia County Inspection = 0
St. Helens Completed Columbia County Plan Reviews = 5.5 hrs.
Total Expenditure = 2,910
Total Revenue = 440

Electronic Permit Services

Customer service continues to be a top priority for the Building Division. We believe this is what sets us apart and, in part, adds to the benefits of developing in St. Helens. Under this priority the division has set out to provide electronic permitting



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services to provide better access for people to apply, submit construction documents, and obtain building permits online. To support this, we have established digital plan review tools for staff processing, reviewing, and approving electronic construction documents. This puts our division well ahead of the January 1st, 2025, deadline to implement electronic permitting and plan submittal service required by Oregon HB 2415.

These services are new and while we have implemented all the building blocks for our system, we are continually seeking to improve based on staff and customer feedback. This is a collaborative effort between the Building Division, staff of various departments, and the software vendor. For our customers we have developed documents with instructions for electronic document submittal. For our staff we continue to provide one on one, or team training as needed to gain experience in using these new tools. The vendor continues to provide assistance with tech support and training as needed.

As we move forward, we are looking to update our web page and permit information to better inform and instruct applicants of our new services and submit for our electronic plan review services reimbursement, per the City's ePermitting IGA with DCBS.

Oregon State Building Codes Division Update

The Building Codes Division (BCD) adopts, amends, and interprets specialty codes that make up the Oregon State Building Code. The division delegates authority to the city of St. Helens to administer each code through specialized code programs. This portion of the report is to provide news and updates as they relate to BCD.

In our previous report we discussed BCD had opened enrollment for the Specialized Plumbing Inspector (SPI) course recently. The demand for this certification is great, as it greatly assists municipalities in cross training inspectors. A seat was secured for St. Helens, and classes were scheduled to begin in January of 2023. However, BCD has postponed this class until August of 2023. This certification will further our capacity to serve our community and reduce our dependance on other agencies to provide plumbing inspection services.

In general, the state building codes are updated on a 3-year cycle. October 1st, 2022, the state adopted the 2022 Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC) and the 2022 Oregon Mechanical Specialty Code (OMSC). Under rule the OSSC and OMSC are enforced the same date as adoption. However, due to a postponed publishing date the state moved the enforcement date to April 1st, 2023. The new books became available in mid- December and an order has been placed. BCD will be providing required inspector training in 2023. However, the dates and extent of the certification are not yet determined. The Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) and the Oregon Plumbing



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Specialty Code (OPSC) are in the review by their respective committees. This time is used by the committee to review the proposed amendments and related comments. The anticipated date of adoption is Oct 1st, 2023, and enforcement date of April 1, 2024.

We have been following the HB 2415 Rules Advisory Committee. The purpose of the committee is to consider the bill, public and stakeholder comments and make recommendations to DCBS for administrative rules (OAR's) and statewide application. The committee has administered surveys for various groups including, utility providers, design professionals, and licensing authorities. The results of these surveys have been discussed in meeting. The next meeting is January 4th, 2023.

Projects

Here are some of the projects going on around the city:

St. Helens High School - Primary structural, and trade permits have been issued. While this project went through more than one cycle of plan review, we worked with the project's design and construction teams in authorizing work in phases prior to full permit issuance.

Broad Leaf Arbor Apartments - All 11 building foundations have been placed.

Columbia Hills Retirement – Temp occupancy issued for 2 portions of the building.

Burger King – Grade fill permit has been issued. Building plans under review

CRF&R Admin Building- Interior remodel of existing building

Sand Island – New Cabins and Assembly Structure. Foundations Approved.

922 Cowlitz – Enforcement case from 2019. Abandoned home declared by Council a nuisance and ordered the structure boarded up. New owner is repairing the structure.

12th Street Apartments – Grade fill permit issued. Building Permits under review.

One- and Two-Family Dwellings- N 1st and 2nd Street Homes – Forest Circle – Elk Ridge.

What's Next

Beyond keeping up with daily services, we are planning to work on the following in the first half of 2023:

Continue to improve the electrical permitting services, with updated website and applicant resources.

Provide a draft version of chapter 15 updates for review by city's legal counsel.

Participate in required training for the OSSC and OMSC code adoption.

Submit for our electronic plan review services reimbursement.

Please let me know if you have any comments or questions.

Thank you



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Building Data Request Information

For 07/01/2022 through 12/28/22

www.sthelensoregon.gov

buildingsafety@sthelensoregon.gov

Permit Type	Count	Valuation
Commercial Mechanical	16	
Commercial Plumbing	13	
Commercial Structural - New	4	\$328,189.00
Commercial Structural - Other	34	\$50,199,722.64
Residential Mechanical	85	
Residential Plumbing	41	
Residential Structural - New 1 and 2 Family	10	\$4,118,210.32
Residential Structural - Other	26	\$492,105.56
Residential Structural Non-Classified	1	\$10,000.00

Inspections:	Count
Commercial Mechanical Inspection	60
Commercial Plumbing Inspection	131
Commercial Structural - New Inspection	52
Commercial Structural - Other Inspection	81
Commercial Structural Non-Classified	31
Residential Electrical Inspection	2
Residential Mechanical Inspection	120
Residential Plumbing Inspection	110
Residential Structural - Manufactured Dwelling Inspection	2
Residential Structural - Multi-Family Inspection	144
Residential Structural - New 1 and 2 Family Inspection	138
Residential Structural - Other Inspection	103
Residential Structural Non-Classified	14

Report Description:

Permits Types Included:

Records Types Include: Residential Manufactured Dwelling, Commercial Alarm or Suppression Systems, Residential Electrical Limited Energy, Residential Electrical Renewable Energy, Residential Electrical, Commercial Electrical Limited Energy, Commercial Electrical Renewable Energy, Commercial Electrical, Residential Mechanical, Commercial Mechanical, Residential Plumbing, Commercial Plumbing, Residential Phased Project, Commercial Phased Project, Residential Structural, Commercial Structural, 1 & 2 Family Dwelling, Residential Sign, Commercial Sign

Permits Issued Portion

The First_Issued_Date must fall between the Start and End Dates

Permit Status must not be Void or Withdrawn

Permit must have a applied payment for at least one Building State Surcharge

Categorization Process:

1. Permits are categorized as Commercial and Residential (using b1_per_type)
2. Permits are categorized as Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing and Structural based on the Surcharge fee paid (1 & 2 Fam Dwelling will count in multiple categories)
3. Structural Permits are categorized by Custom Fields Type of Work and Category of Construction

Inspections Portion (Inspection Trips Completed)

The Inspection Completed Date must fall between the Start and End Dates

The Inspection Status must be 'Insp Completed' with a Result of 'Accepted', 'Approved', 'Approved with Conditions' or 'Not Required' OR Inspection Status must be 'Insp Cancelled' with a Result of 'Denied', 'Information Only', 'No Access' 'Not Ready', or 'Partial'

Inspections must have starting numbers between 1000 and 5999 or 6900 and 6999 or 8000 and 8999

Categorization Process:

1. Permits are categorized as Commercial and Residential (using b1_per_type)
2. Permits are categorized as Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing and Structural based the beginning number of the inspection
3. Structural Permits are categorized by Custom Fields Type of Work and Category of Construction



Building Reviews Completed

CITY OF ST. HELENS

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7/1/2022-12/28/2022

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		Bird	Darroux	Davis	De Roia	Dimsho	Elder	Graichen	Hansen	Hicks	Sullivan	Underwood	Total
Commercial	Additional Review	1	2	1		8	2	2					16
	Building Review			2	29					39	9		79
	Fire Review										1		1
	Infrastructure Review						15						15
	Mechanical Review									2			2
	Planning Review					10		21			2		33
	Plumbing Review				1			1	2	1	1		6
	Site Review	8	4								2		14
	Total	9	6	3	30	18	17	24	2	42	15		166
Residential	Additional Review		1			1		1					3

		Bird	Darroux	Davis	De Roia	Dimsho	Elder	Graichen	Hansen	Hicks	Sullivan	Underwood	Total
Residential	Building Review									56	3		59
	Infrastructure Review						26				4		30
	Mechanical Review									2			2
	Planning Review					30		15			3		48
	Plumbing Review									2			2
	Site Review	21	3								4	3	31
	Total	21	4			31	26	16		60	14	3	175
Total		30	10	3	30	49	43	40	2	102	29	3	341