

CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT
Annexation A.1.25

DATE: January 12, 2026
TO: City Council
FROM: Jacob A. Graichen, AICP, City Planner

APPLICANT: Susan L. A. Stutzman
OWNER: JOHNSON KATHRYN M A & STUTZMAN SUSAN L A

ZONING: Columbia County's R-10
LOCATION: Property south of Sykes Road about 300 feet west of where the BPA lines intersection with Sykes Road, and north of the Morten Lane terminus next to 58990 Morten Lane
PROPOSAL: Annexation of approximately 6.57 acres to the City of St. Helens

SITE INFORMATION / BACKGROUND

The property is undeveloped. There is a ravine with Wetland MC-9 and Riparian Area R-MC-16(a), both that are significant per the city's Development Code in the southern half of the site. The northern half of the site has less extreme topography and includes a 100' wide BPA easement that cuts a swath through several subdivisions on the west side of St. Helens.

The subject property could have access from Sykes Road on the north side and/or from Morten Lane on the south side. Given the ravine, it probably needs access from both sides because building a road through/over the ravine may not be practical. The property includes Tract B of the Meadow View Estates Subdivision, which is the Morten Lane "street plug." Street plugs (e.g., one-foot-deep strips of land at the end of rights-of-way) are typically publicly owned and an old way of reserving/controlling road extensions. If the street plug was owned by another party, the property would not have access to Morten Lane.

Rectangular in shape, though not all abutting properties are within the city's municipal limits, a portion of each of the four sides abuts city limits. The subject property does not abut but is close to the city's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB): along the north side of Sykes Road, the UGB is less than 50 feet away, and along the south side of Sykes Road the UGB is approximately 225 feet away.

PUBLIC HEARING & NOTICE

Public hearing before the Planning Commission for *recommendation to the City Council*: December 9, 2025. Public hearing before the City Council: January 21, 2026.

Notice of this proposal was sent to the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development on October 27, 2025 through their PAPA Online Submittal website.

Notice of this proposal was sent to surrounding property owners within 300 feet of the subject property(ies) on November 7, 2025 via first class mail. Notice was sent to agencies by mail or e-mail on the same date.

Notice was published on November 14, 2025 in the Columbia County Spotlight newspaper.

AGENCY REFERRALS & COMMENTS

Columbia County Public Works: Columbia County Public Works has reviewed the proposed annexation and has no comment on this proposal.

McNulty Water: The property owner should be aware that McNulty PUD has a waterline along the southern frontage of the property in question.

APPLICABLE CRITERIA, ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

SHMC 17.08.040(1) – Quasi-judicial amendment and standards criteria

- (a) A recommendation or a decision to approve, approve with conditions, or to deny an application for a quasi-judicial amendment shall be based on all of the following standards:
 - (i) The applicable comprehensive plan policies and map designation; and that the change will not adversely affect the health, safety, and welfare of the community; and
 - (ii) The applicable Oregon Statewide Planning Goals adopted under ORS Chapter 197, until acknowledgment of the comprehensive plan and ordinances; and
 - (iii) The standards applicable of any provision of this code or other applicable implementing ordinance.
- (b) Consideration may also be given to:
 - (i) Any applicable evidence of change in the neighborhood or community or a mistake or inconsistency in the comprehensive plan or zoning map as it relates to the property which is the subject of the development application.

Discussion: (a)(i) The Comprehensive Plan designation for the subject property is Rural Suburban Unincorporated Residential (RSUR). Applicable designation and zoning district for annexation are discussed later.

There is no known conflict with the general Comprehensive Plan policies identified in Chapter 19.08 SHMC.

Note that SHMC 19.08.030 discusses public services and facilities and includes utility provisions (e.g., water and sewer) as well as services such as police and library. In sum, all services are intertwined; the consent to annexation allows connection to city sewer to support existing and future development on the subject property, and, once annexed, all other city services/facilities. Sewer and water capacity to serve this property is addressed in more detail under SHMC

17.28.030(1) below. By this review process, the proposal complies with this aspect of the Comprehensive Plan.

There is no known conflict with the specific Comprehensive Plan policies identified in Chapter 19.12 SHMC.

There is no known conflict with the addendums to the Comprehensive Plan which includes the Waterfront Prioritization Plan (Ord. No. 3148), the Transportation Systems Plan (Ord. No. 3150), the Corridor Master Plan (Ord. No 3181), the Parks & Trails Master Plan (Ord. No. 3191), the Riverfront Connector Plan (Ord. No. 3241), the Housing Needs Analysis (Ord. No. 3244), and the Economic Opportunities Analysis, Stormwater Master Plan, Wastewater Master Plan, and Water Master Plan (Ord. No. 3308).

However, there are applicable Comprehensive Plan policies and the Housing Needs Analysis applies to the applicable designation and zoning district for annexation. These are discussed further below.

Finally, there is no evidence that this proposal will be contrary to the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

(a)(ii) The City's Comprehensive Plan has been adopted by the State, thus, the applicable Oregon Statewide Planning Goals adopted under ORS Chapter 197 do not need to be analyzed per this section.

(a)(iii) In addition, Section 3 of the City's Charter states that "annexation, delayed or otherwise, to the City of St. Helens, may only be approved by a prior majority vote among the electorate." However, in 2016, the Oregon Legislature passed a bill which resulted in ORS 222.127 which states that a city shall annex the territory without submitting the proposal to the electors if certain criteria are met:

1. Property is within the UGB
2. Property will be subject to the City's Comprehensive Plan
3. Property is contiguous to the City limits or is separated by only a public right of way or body of water
4. Property conforms to all other City requirements

The property is within the St. Helens UGB, is subject to the St. Helens Comprehensive Plan, is contiguous to city limits on all four sides, and conforms with other city requirements. As this proposal meets these criteria, this property will **not** be subject to a majority vote among the electorate.

Other provisions applicable to this proposal are discussed elsewhere herein.

(b) There is no evidence of a change in neighborhood, or mistake or inconstancy in the Comprehensive Plan or Zoning Map.

Finding: The quasi-judicial amendment and standards criteria are met.

SHMC 17.08.060 – Transportation planning rule compliance

(1) Review of Applications for Effect on Transportation Facilities. A proposed comprehensive plan amendment, zone change or land use regulation change, whether initiated by the city or by a private interest, shall be reviewed to determine whether it significantly affects a transportation facility, in accordance with OAR 660-012-0060 (the Transportation Planning Rule (“TPR”)). “Significant” means the proposal would:

- (a) Change the functional classification of an existing or planned transportation facility (exclusive of correction of map errors in an adopted plan);
- (b) Change standards implementing a functional classification system; or
- (c) As measured at the end of the planning period identified in the adopted transportation system plan:
 - (i) Allow land uses or levels of development that would result in types or levels of travel or access that are inconsistent with the functional classification of an existing or planned transportation facility;
 - (ii) Reduce the performance of an existing or planned transportation facility below the minimum acceptable performance standard identified in the TSP; or
 - (iii) Worsen the performance of an existing or planned transportation facility that is otherwise projected to perform below the minimum acceptable performance standard identified in the TSP or comprehensive plan.

(2) Amendments That Affect Transportation Facilities. Comprehensive plan amendments, zone changes or land use regulations that significantly affect a transportation facility shall ensure that allowed land uses are consistent with the function, capacity, and level of service of the facility identified in the TSP. This shall be accomplished by one or a combination of the following:

- (a) Adopting measures that demonstrate allowed land uses are consistent with the planned function, capacity, and performance standards of the transportation facility.
- (b) Amending the TSP or comprehensive plan to provide transportation facilities, improvements or services adequate to support the proposed land uses consistent with the requirements of OAR 660-012-0060.
- (c) Altering land use designations, densities, or design requirements to reduce demand for vehicle travel and meet travel needs through other modes of transportation.
- (d) Amending the TSP to modify the planned function, capacity or performance standards of the transportation facility.

(3) Traffic Impact Analysis. A traffic impact analysis shall be submitted with a plan amendment or zone change application, as applicable, pursuant to Chapter 17.156 SHMC.

Discussion: This section reflects State law regarding the Transportation Planning Rule (TPR): Transportation Planning Rule (TPR), OAR 660, Division 12. The TPR requires that where an amendment to a functional plan, an acknowledged comprehensive plan, or a land use regulation would significantly affect an existing or planned transportation facility, the local government shall put in place measures to assure that allowed land uses are consistent with the identified function, capacity, and performance standards of the facility. **Current zoning of the property is Columbia County’s Single-Family Residential R-10 and the City’s default zoning options are Moderate Residential (R7) or Suburban Residential (R10).**

Generally, when comparing potential land use impact on transportation facilities, the ***reasonable worst case scenario*** for the existing and proposed designation/zone are considered. The potential land uses are very similar for both the City and County for R7 and R10 zoning districts. The City’s zoning is comparable to the County with regards to the possible intensity of uses allowed and potential vehicular trips generated. Thus, this proposal will not affect an existing or planned transportation facility.

There are *special considerations* for zoning properties R5 or AR upon annexation. These are discussed under SHMC 17.28.030(2) below. City R5 and AR zoning allows 5,000 and 4,000 square feet, respectively, for single-family dwellings, while County R-10 zoning requires 10,000 square feet. For purposes of the TPR, this doubles the potential intensity of use of the property. If R5 or AR zoning is considered for all or a portion of the subject property as part of this annexation, a transportation impact analysis would be warranted. No such analysis has been provided to support AR or R5 zoning. However, the city will have the opportunity to require a traffic impact analysis with any future subdivision proposal.

Finding: **Transportation facilities will not be significantly affected by this proposal if the Council agrees with the Commission's R7 zoning recommendation, or R10 zoning. There are potential transportation impacts if R5 and or AR are chosen as zoning districts. We can discuss this is more depth at the hearing if desired.**

SHMC 17.28.030(1) – Annexation criteria

- (a) Adequate public facilities are available to the area and have sufficient capacity to provide service for the proposed annexation area; and
- (b) Comply with comprehensive plan amendment standards and zoning ordinance amendment standards and not be in conflict with applicable comprehensive plan policies and implementing ordinances; and
- (c) Complies with state laws; and
- (d) Abutting roads must meet city standards or property owner will be required to sign and record an irrevocable consent to local improvement district; and
- (e) Property exceeding 10 acres in gross size must show a need on the part of the city for such land if it is designated residential (e.g., less than five years' supply of like designated lands in current city limits).

Discussion: (a) Adequate public facilities.

Water – The site is within the McNulty Water District. The nearest city water is approximately 500 feet away to the west within the Sykes Road right-of-way. The city has an Urban Services Agreement with McNulty (2013 Resolution No. 1634) to determine which water provider is used.

The City's current water capacity is 6 million gallons/day and the peak flow, usually in the summer, is 3 to 4 million gallons/day. Additionally, the city has the capacity of approximately 10 million gallons to meet future demands. Any additional uses that occur on the subject property can be accommodated by the City's municipal water system as infrastructure has substantial capacity available.

McNulty Water noted that they have a water infrastructure on the south side of the property.

Sanitary Sewer – City sanitary sewer is available to the property from Sykes Road where there is an 8" sewer main.

With regards to *capacity*, the City's wastewater treatment plant currently has a daily limit (physically and as permitted by DEQ) to handle over 50,000 pounds of Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and a monthly average limit of 26,862 pounds. This is the "loading" or potency of the wastewater received by the plant. The average daily BOD is well below this at only 1,500 pounds. Sanitary sewer *capacity* is adequate.

With regards to *conveyance*, the city adopted a new **Wastewater Master Plan (WWMP)** in November 2021 that identifies undersized trunk lines already operating at or above capacity that further development of the subject property (e.g., land division creating new parcels) would depend on. The WWMP can be found here:

<https://www.sthelensoregon.gov/engineering/page/public-infrastructure-master-plans>

The city is actively addressing this issue, which could impact future development of the property regardless of its status of being in or outside of city limits. This annexation does not by itself create additional sanitary sewer impact.

Transportation - As described above, transportation facilities will not be significantly affected by this proposal if the Council agrees with the Commission's R7 zoning recommendation, or R10 zoning.

Finding: Adequate public facilities are available to the area and have sufficient capacity to provide service for the proposed annexation area.

(b) Comply with comprehensive plan amendment standards, zoning ordinance amendment standards, Comprehensive Plan policies and implementing ordinances.

The land use of the subject property is entirely vacant. Zoning considerations are discussed under SHMC 17.28.030(2) below.

Finding: There is no known conflict with the Comprehensive Plan and implementing ordinances.

(c) Compliance with state laws.

There are several state laws applicable to annexations. **City annexations of territory must be undertaken consistent with ORS 222.111 to 222.183.**

Pursuant to ORS 222.111(1), a city may only annex territory that is not within another city, and the territory must either be contiguous to the annexing city or be separated from the city only by a body of water or public right-of-way. The subject property is not within another city's jurisdiction and City of St. Helens corporate limits lies on all sides.

Although undertaking an annexation is authorized by state law, the manner in which a city proceeds with annexation is also dictated in the city charter. ORS 222.111(1) references a city's charter as well as other ORS. St. Helens' Charter requirements pertaining to annexations are noted above.

Per ORS 222.111(2) an annexation may be initiated by the owner of real property or the city council. This annexation request was initiated by the property owner. Further, ORS 222.125 requires that all property owners of the subject property to be annexed and at least half of the electors residing on the property consent in writing to the annexation. These documents were submitted with the annexation application.

Per ORS 222.173(1) only statements of consent to annexation which are filed within any one-year period shall be effective, unless a separate written agreement waiving the one-year period or prescribing some other period has been entered into between an owner of land or an elector and the city. The consent to annex filed with the city is dated August 2025.

The owners also signed an Electors Consent document including the one-year waiver, though this annexation is being processed within the first year.

ORS 197.175(1) suggests that all annexations are subject to the statewide planning goals. The statewide planning goals that could technically apply or relate to this proposal are Goals 1, 2, 11 and 12.

- ***Statewide Planning Goal 1: Citizen Involvement.***

Goal 1 requires the development of a citizen involvement program that is widespread, allows two-way communication, provides for citizen involvement through all planning phases, and is understandable, responsive, and funded.

Generally, Goal 1 is satisfied when a local government follows the public involvement procedures set out in the statutes and in its acknowledged comprehensive plan and land use regulations.

The City's Development Code is consistent with State law with regard to notification requirements. Pursuant to SHMC 17.20.080 at least one public hearing before the Planning Commission and City Council is required. Legal notice in a newspaper of general circulation is also required. The city has met these requirements and notified DLCD of the proposal.

- ***Statewide Planning Goal 2: Land Use Planning.***

This goal requires that a land use planning process and policy framework be established as a basis for all decisions and actions relating to the use of land. All local governments and state agencies involved in the land use action must coordinate with each other. City, county, state and federal agency and special districts plans and actions related to land use must be consistent with the comprehensive plans of cities and counties and regional plans adopted under Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) Chapter 268.

Generally, Goal 2 requires that actions related to land use be consistent with acknowledged Comprehensive Plans and coordination with affected governments and agencies and be based on an adequate factual base. The city has an adopted Comprehensive Plan, compliance of this proposal which is addressed herein. Moreover, explanation and proof of coordination with

affected agencies and factual base are described herein, as well, including inventory, needs, etc.

- ***Statewide Planning Goal 11: Public Facilities and Services.***

Goal 11 requires cities and counties to plan and develop a timely, orderly and efficient arrangement of public facilities and services to serve as a framework for urban and rural development. The goal requires that urban and rural development be "guided and supported by types and levels of urban and rural public facilities and services appropriate for, but limited to, the needs and requirements of the urban, urbanizable and rural areas to be served."

The site is within the McNulty Water District. The nearest City water is approximately 500 feet away to the west within the Sykes Road right-of-way. The city has an Urban Services Agreement with McNulty to determine which water provider is used.

City sewer is available from Sykes Road.

Public water and sanitary sewer are key elements for urban density.

- ***Statewide Planning Goal 10: Housing***

Goal 10 requires buildable lands for residential use shall be inventoried and plans shall encourage the availability of adequate numbers of needed housing units at price ranges and rent levels which are commensurate with the financial capabilities of Oregon households and allow for flexibility of housing location, type and density.

This Goal must be addressed as residential lands or any land where needed housing is possible are potentially affected.

This Goal has a couple components: 1) **inventorying** of land for housing need, and 2) **demographic broad spectrum housing availability in both quantity and variety of type.**

Inventorying

St. Helens completed and adopted a Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) and Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI) in 2019 (Ordinance No. 3244). The results of the housing needs analysis indicates that the current St. Helens Urban Growth Boundary is sufficient to accommodate future housing needs, with a small deficiency (8 acres needed) of high-density land for multi-family development. Commercial/Mixed Use land can make up for the high-density land deficiency. Even though there are no guarantees Commercial/Mixed Use lands will be used for residential purposes, the following residential developments on commercial/mixed use lands since the inventorying effort of the HNA are noteworthy:

- St. Helens Place Apartments at 700 Matzen Street. Originally approved by Conditional Use Permit CUP.2.18 in 2018, this 204-unit multidwelling project was completed in 2020.

Zone: General Commercial.

Total acres used: 7.72 out of 7.72 ac.

- Broadleaf Arbor developed by the Northwest Oregon Housing Authority (NOHA) and Community Development Partners at 2250 Gable Road. Originally approved by Conditional Use Permit CUP.3.19, this 239-unit multidwelling project was completed was completed earlier this year. The site has wetlands that are preserved so only a portion of the property is developed.

Zone: General Commercial, GC.

Total acres used: approx. 13.7 ac. out of 16.7 ac.

Based on these two projects alone, the high-density deficiency is resolved. The city's adopted land-wise need for housing is met, and does not need to be considered further for this annexation.

Demographic broad spectrum housing availability in both quantity and variety of type

As explained later in this report, the City Council can consider R10 or R7 zoning, but also R5 and AR. Since the fundamentals of the Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) are met, the city is not compelled to consider R5 or AR over R10 or R7. However, choosing R5 and/or AR would increase the type of housing in this area, as these zonings allow multifamily development (3 or more units per lot/parcel) and attached single-family dwellings, whereas the R10 and R7 zoned don't.

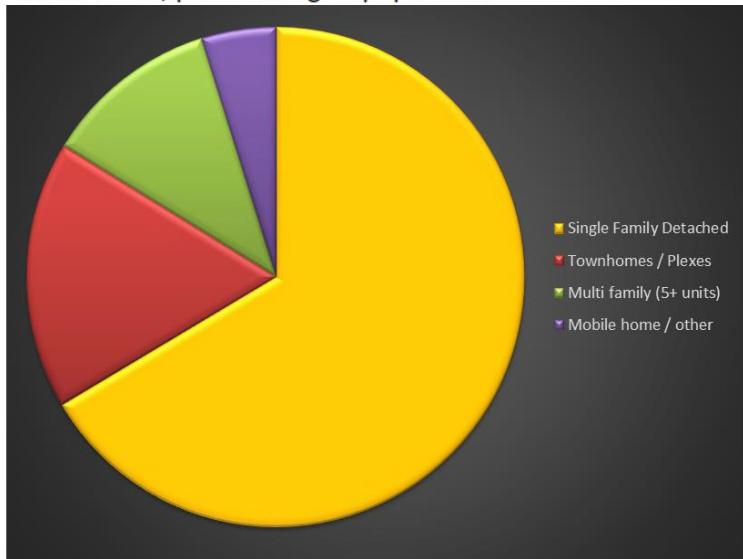
The Commission recommends R7 zoning.

But even if zoned R7 or R10, urban services like water and sewer are necessary for urban density and per SHMC 13.02.020(10), no connection for new service outside city limits for water, sanitary sewer or storm sewer shall be installed unless a signed consent to annex has been received by the planning department. So, this annexation facilitates use for urban services, that without them, would limit the property to large lot development served by individual on-site sanitary sewerage accommodation (e.g., septic systems).

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Land Need (net acres)	
Low Density*	240
Medium Density**	40
High Density	24
Manufactured Home Parks	5
Total	309
Buildable Land Inventory (net acres)	
Low Density	532
Medium Density	93
High Density	16
Manufactured Home Parks	45
Commercial/Mixed Use***	19
Total	705
UGB Land Surplus/Deficit (net acres)	
Low Density*	293
Medium Density**	53
High Density	(8)
Manufactured Home Parks	40
Commercial/Mixed Use	19
Total	397
Adequacy of UGB to meet housing need	
	adequate

* Includes detached units and mobile homes. ** Includes townhomes, plexes and group quarters.



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2013-2017.

Upper Left: Table showing the city's 2019 HNA findings. St. Helens has adequate land across most categories. The high-density deficit of 8 acres can be addressed in the commercial/mixed use land surplus and there are development projects since the HNA adoption that have done so, exceeding 8 acres.

This proposal complies with the **inventorying** component of Goal 10.

Lower Left: This is Exhibit 5 from the city's HNA showing housing mix and tenancy for St. Helens between 2013 and 2017.

The proposal adds options for residential use by facilitating urban density for the >6 acre subject property. Annexation is one of the elements to allow connection to urban services and without city sewer, only large lot development with individual on-site systems would be possible.

This proposal complies with the **broad spectrum housing availability** component of Goal 10.

- **Statewide Planning Goal 12: Transportation.**

Goal 12 requires cities, counties, metropolitan planning organizations, and ODOT to provide and encourage a “safe, convenient and economic transportation system.” This is accomplished through development of Transportation System Plans based on inventories of local, regional and state transportation needs. Goal 12 is implemented through OAR 660, Division 12, also known as the Transportation Planning Rule (“TPR”). The TPR contains numerous requirements governing transportation planning and project development.

Traffic impacts and the city's provisions that address the TPR are explained above. This proposal will not significantly affect an existing or planned transportation facility if zoned R7 or R10. We can discuss R5 and AR zoning in more depth at the hearing if desired.

(d) Abutting roads must meet city standards or property owner will be required to sign and record an irrevocable consent to local improvement district.

The subject property abuts both the south side of Sykes Road on the north side and the end of Morten Lane on the south side. Sykes Road is underdeveloped for urban purposes lacking frontage improvements such as a sidewalk. Morten Lane could potentially be extended into the property.

However, this property not the subject of a current development land use review, which provides the legal nexus and proportionality to require such improvements or right-of-way dedications. As such, no improvements are warranted with this proposal.

(e) Property exceeding 10 acres in gross size must show a need on the part of the city.

The subject property is 6.57 acres.

Finding: The annexation approval criteria are met for this proposal.

SHMC 17.28.030(2) – Annexation criteria

The plan designation and the zoning designation placed on the property shall be the city's zoning district which most closely implements the city's comprehensive plan map designation.

Discussion: The Comprehensive Plan designation is currently Rural Suburban Unincorporated Residential (RSUR). Upon annexation, the subject property's Comprehensive Plan designation shall be Suburban Residential (Incorporated) SR.

The City's zoning options upon annexation are R7, R10, or under *special circumstances*, R5 or AR. See SHMC 19.12.060(2)(c) below for the special circumstances.

Per SHMC 19.12.060 Rural Suburban Unincorporated Residential Goals and Policies:

- (1) Goals. To provide sufficient area for urban development that will accommodate a variety of housing types.

(2) Policies. It is the policy of the city of St. Helens to:

- (a) Work with the county on partition and subdivision applications for these lands to ensure that they are divided in a manner that does not hinder future urbanization.
- (b) Zone the rural suburban-unincorporated residential at R7 or R10 upon annexation to the city unless circumstances listed in subsection (2)(c) of this section exist.
- (c) **Consider zoning lands with the rural suburban-unincorporated residential category for R5 or AR if the following conditions are found:**
 - (i) The parcel is vacant and larger than two acres in size.
 - (ii) The carrying capacity of the public services, including but not limited to streets, sewer, and water, are sufficient for higher density development.
 - (iii) The county and city determine, due to the pattern of development in the city and within the urban growth area, that other lands are more appropriate for these designations.

The parcel is larger than two acres in size and the public services are available. The city may consider if this area warrants higher density than R7 or R10 by looking at the pattern of development in the city and within the Urban Growth Boundary.

Because the property within city limits surrounding the property on all four sides is zoned R7 and the city's housing needs are technically met based on the Housing Needs Analysis as described previously, staff and the Planning Commission recommends R7 zoning.

If R5 or AR considered, the traffic analysis issue described previously in this report would need to be addressed. We can discuss this in more depth at the hearing if desired.

Finding: Assuming the Council agrees with staff and the Planning Commission...

Upon annexation, the subject property's Comprehensive Plan designation shall be Suburban Residential (Incorporated), SR and zoned Moderate Residential, R7.

SHMC 17.112.030 – Established & Developed Area Classification criteria

Per SHMC 17.112.030:

- (1) All land which is annexed to the city shall be classified as an established area or as a developing area on the plan map and on the zoning map.
- (2) The decision shall be based on definition of the areas as set forth in SHMC 17.112.020.

The definitions per SHMC 17.112.020:

- (1) **Established Area.**
 - (a) An "established area" is an area where the land is not classified as buildable land under OAR 660-08-0005;
 - (b) An established area may include some small tracts of vacant land (tracts less than an acre in size) provided the tracts are surrounded by land which is not classified as buildable land; and
 - (c) An area shown on a zone map or overlay map as an established area.
- (2) **Developing Area.** A "developing area" is an area which is included in the city's buildable land inventory under the provisions of OAR except as provided by subsection (1)(b) of this section.

Discussion: OAR 660-008-0005 classifies *buildable land* as:

Residentially designated land within the urban growth boundary, including both vacant and developed land likely to be redeveloped, that is suitable, available and necessary for residential uses. Publicly owned land is generally not considered available for residential uses. Land is generally considered “suitable and available” unless it:

- (a) Is severely constrained by natural hazards as determined under Statewide Planning Goal 7;
- (b) Is subject to natural resource protection measures determined under Statewide Planning Goals 5, 6, 15, 16, 17 or 18;
- (c) Has slopes of 25 percent or greater;
- (d) Is within the 100-year flood plain; or
- (e) Cannot be provided with public facilities.

OAR 660-008-0005 generally defines “Buildable Land” as vacant residential property not constrained by natural hazards or resources, and typically not publicly owned.

There are areas on the property which are subject to natural resource protection measures (locally significant wetlands and riparian areas). However, there is still ample land classified as buildable for it to be deemed “developing.”

Finding: The subject property should be designated as a “developing area.”

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the facts and findings herein, staff and the Planning Commission recommends approval of this annexation and that upon annexation, the subject property have a Comprehensive Plan designation of Suburban Residential (Incorporated) SR and be zoned Moderate Residential, R7, and be designated as “developing.”

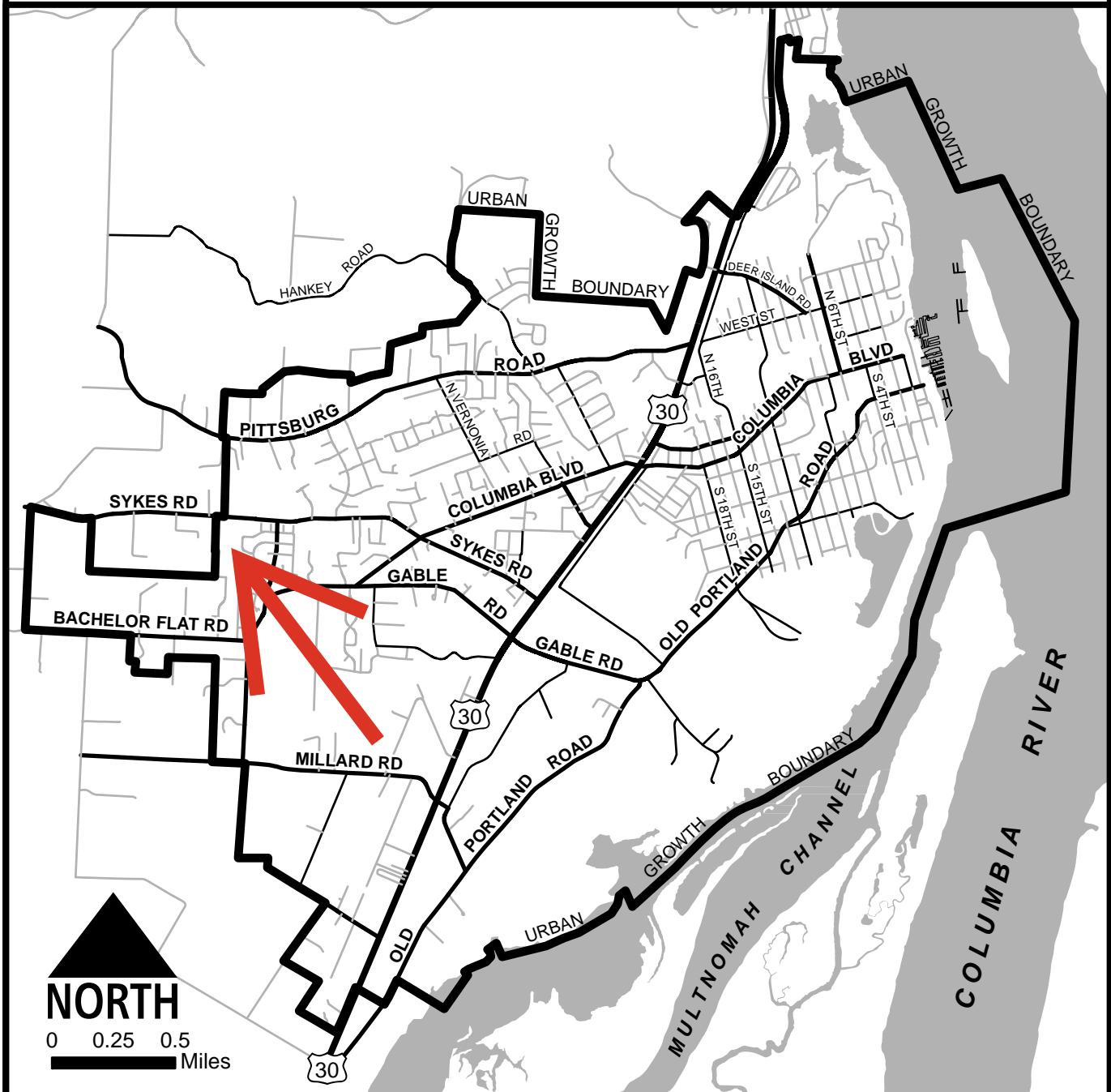
*This annexation will **not** be subject to voter approval subsequent to this land use process.*

Attachment(s): Subject Property Approximate Location Map

- A.1.25 Zoning Map
- A.1.25 Comprehensive Plan Map
- A.1.25 Aerial Map
- Letter from Jared & Jennifer Motherway received Dec. 9, 2025
- A.1.25 34385 Southview Drive Map

SUBJECT PROPERTY

~ Approximate Location ~



City of St. Helens Urban Growth Boundary Area Vicinity

jag/Dec. 2013

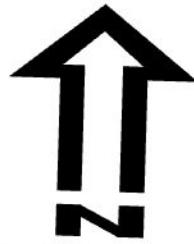
COUNTY RR-2

A.1.25 ZONING

CITY R>

SYKES COUNTY ROAD NO. P-214

COUNTY R-10



0 50 100 200 Feet

COUNTY RR-2

URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY

CITY R>

SUBJECT PROPERTY

COUNTY R-10

GLACIER AVENUE

COUNTY R-10

MORTEN LANE

NOBLE COURT

A.1.25 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SR (INSIDE CITY)

SYKES COUNTY ROAD NO. P-214

AREA OUTSIDE URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY

URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY

SR (INSIDE CITY)

RSUR
(OUTSIDE
CITY)

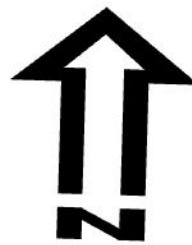
SUBJECT
PROPERTY

RSUR
(OUTSIDE
CITY)

RSUR (OUTSIDE
CITY)

MORTEN
LANE

NOBLE
COURT



0 50 100 200 Feet

GLACIER AVENUE
SR
(INSIDE
CITY)

A.1.25 AERIAL

AERIAL APRIL 2022

This aerial map illustrates the location of the Subject Property, which is highlighted with a red boundary. The property is situated between two "CITY LIMITS" boundaries, indicated by red lines. A "BPA EASEMENT" is shown as a red line with diagonal hatching, spanning the width of the property. The property is labeled "SUBJECT PROPERTY". To the west, a "RAVINE" is indicated by a white line with diagonal hatching. To the east, a "CITY LIMITS" boundary is marked by a red line. The map also shows "MORTEN LANE" and "NOBLE COURT" as residential streets. "GLACIER AVENUE" is a curved road to the east. The "SYKES COUNTY ROAD NO. P-214" is at the top. A scale bar shows distances of 0, 50, 100, and 200 feet. A north arrow is located in the top right corner.

Attention: City Planning Department
265 Strand Street
St. Helens, Oregon 97051

Re: Annexation Application A.1.25 – Public Hearing Testimony
Property Proposed for Annexation: Map No. 4N1W-6D-3100

Our Property: Map No. 4N1W-06C-003000

Shared Private Road: Map No. 4N1W-06C-003201

To the Members of the St. Helens Planning Commission and City Council,

We, Jared and Jennifer Motherway, reside at 34385 Southview Drive, just outside the St. Helens city limits. We are submitting this written testimony in strong opposition to Annexation Application A.1.25, which proposes annexing approximately 6.57 acres (Map No. 4N1W-6D-3100) south of Sykes Road near the BPA line intersection.

We purchased our first home within the City of St. Helens in 2012. As our family grew, we intentionally chose to sell that home and move to a more rural part of the community. We purchased our current home on Southview Drive in January 2017 and later, in 2024, purchased the adjacent property from Dave and Karen Natale (which was previously part of the Morten property, from whom we also purchased our house in 2017). A lot line adjustment was made at that time. These purchases were intentionally made to preserve privacy, maintain the rural nature of the area, and ensure open space for our family.

We are long-term, invested members of the community. Jared has worked for the Columbia River PUD as a lineman for 18 years, maintaining critical infrastructure for local families. Jennifer currently works for the State of Oregon as a Child Welfare Permanency Worker in Columbia County, and previously served 11 years with Columbia River Fire & Rescue as a first responder and Public Information Officer. Our careers reflect a deep commitment to the safety, well-being, and stability of our community.

Our children are active in the St. Helens community, participating in sports and attending St. Helens Middle School and St. Helens High School. Jared himself grew up in this community. We are invested in maintaining a safe, stable environment for both our family and our neighbors.

This neighborhood and our property, including the shared private road (Map No. 4N1W-06C-003201), is valued for its privacy, low traffic, and natural setting. The property proposed for annexation contains several important environmental and infrastructure features:

- Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) transmission lines
- A creek that connects to McNulty Creek
- Wetlands

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- Mature trees and natural buffers

These features are critical for wildlife, drainage, natural habitat preservation, and the privacy that current residents rely on. Urban-style development here would threaten these natural resources and the rural character of our neighborhood.

1. Traffic and Safety Concerns

Morten Lane and Southview Drive are narrow, dead-end roads not designed for increased traffic. Approval of annexation and future residential development would:

- Increase traffic significantly, reducing safety for children
- Introduce construction vehicles and long-term congestion
- Potentially compromise emergency access

Currently, children in this neighborhood use these roads daily to walk home from the bus, ride their bikes, and safely play outdoors. The dead-end nature of the road provides a critical safety buffer for these activities, which would be directly threatened by additional traffic or development.

Given Jennifer's previous experience as a first responder and Public Information Officer for Columbia River Fire & Rescue, as well as Jared's 18 years as a lineman for the Columbia River PUD, we understand the serious safety risks that come with development on rural dead-end roads.

2. Rural Character, Privacy, and Community Expectations

Our family and neighbors chose this area for:

- Privacy and seclusion
- Quiet, low-traffic living
- Space for small-scale farming and recreation
- Safety for children and families
- Protection from urban-style density

Annexation threatens all of these characteristics, altering the very reason families, including ours, moved to this area.

3. Environmental Concerns

The land proposed for annexation includes sensitive environmental features, including BPA lines, a creek, wetlands, and mature tree cover. Development would disrupt ecosystems,

wildlife habitats, and water flow while diminishing open space that residents rely on for privacy and rural character.

4. Precedent for Future Development

Approval would likely encourage additional annexation or subdivision attempts in this otherwise rural area. We are already seeing development pressure; a neighboring property owner has requested roadway easement access, likely intending future development. Annexation sets a precedent that favors developer expansion over community safety, privacy, and rural preservation.

5. Request for Denial

For all of these reasons, traffic and safety concerns, loss of privacy, rural character, environmental constraints, presence of BPA transmission lines, inadequate infrastructure, and future development pressures, we respectfully request that the Planning Commission and City Council deny Annexation Application A.1.25.

Approval would jeopardize:

- The peace, safety, and privacy that current residents rely on
- The safe environment for children currently growing up here and for future generations
- The natural and environmental integrity of this unique rural area

The push for additional homes in this sensitive location appears to be driven by developer expansion and profit motives, not by the best interests of the families who live here or the public. Preserving the rural character and safety of this neighborhood serves the long-term public interest far more than annexation would.

We respectfully urge the City to deny this annexation request to protect our families, the neighborhood, and the environment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jared and Jennifer Motherway

Jared and Jennifer Motherway
34385 Southview Drive
St. Helens, Oregon

Property & Road Map Numbers: 4N1W-06C-003000 (our home/property), 4N1W-06C-003201 (shared private road), 4N1W-6D-3100 (annexation request)

