

**CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
STAFF REPORT  
Annexation A.3.23**

**DATE:** June 12, 2024  
**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** Jennifer Dimsho, AICP, Associate Planner  
**APPLICANT:** Port of Columbia County, c/o Sean Clark  
**OWNERS:** Same  
**ZONING:** Columbia County’s Heavy Industrial (M-1)  
**LOCATION:** Property west, south, and east of 58212 Old Portland Road  
Map No. 4N1W-8D-1000  
**PROPOSAL:** The property owner filed consent to annex because they desire to connect to City utilities

**SITE INFORMATION / BACKGROUND**

The subject property is an irregular shaped lot at 11.84 acres. The site is accessed off Old Portland Road, which is a developed minor arterial classified street without frontage improvements (sidewalks and curb) abutting the property. The site has land use approval with County File DR 23-06 for a 10,320 sq. ft. maintenance building for the Port of Columbia County. A large portion of the property is encumbered by the 100-year flood plain with the site sloping heavily along the southeastern property line. The Port’s project intends to keep the proposed building out of the 100-year flood plain. The City’s Local Wetland Inventory also identifies wetland MC-25a which is a locally significant wetland with a 75’ upland protection zone. The Port’s project avoids the wetland areas.



*Subject property taken from Old Portland Road looking at access which is shared between property with existing buildings in the background and proposed new maintenance building (proposed on grassy field to the right of the existing buildings).*

**Abutting Zoning**

North – City Heavy Industrial (HI) & County Heavy Industrial (M-1)  
East – City Heavy Industrial (HI)  
South – City Heavy Industrial (HI)  
West – County Heavy Industrial (M-1)

## PUBLIC HEARING & NOTICE

**Public hearing** before the Planning Commission for *recommendation to the City Council*: May 14, 2024. Public hearing before the City Council: June 19, 2024.

**Notice** of this proposal was sent to the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development on April 3, 2024, through their PAPA Online Submittal website.

**Notice** of this proposal was sent to surrounding property owners within 300 feet of the subject property on April 17, 2024, via first class mail. Notice was sent to agencies by mail or e-mail on the same date.

**Notice** was published on May 1, 2024, in The Chronicle newspaper.

## AGENCY REFERRALS & COMMENTS

**Columbia County Land Development Services:** No concerns about this proposal as present.

**Columbia County Public Works:** No comments or concerns for this annexation. It looks like there are no County roads involved. Old Portland Road is the City's jurisdiction in this location.

## 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 Unincorporated Heavy Industrial (UHI). Zoning and Comprehensive Plan designations are addressed under SHMC 17.28.030 (1).

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 general Comprehensive Plan policies identified in Chapter 19.08 SHMC.

There is no known conflict with the specific Comprehensive Plan policies identified in Chapter 19.12 SHMC. Zoning and Comprehensive Plan designations are addressed under SHMC 17.28.030 (1)

There is no known conflict with the addendums to the Comprehensive Plan which includes Economic Opportunities Analysis (Ord. No. 3101), 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), and the Housing Needs Analysis (Ord. No. 3244).

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, during the 2016 Legislative Assembly, Senate Bill 1578 was passed. It 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

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 inconsistency 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 Heavy Industrial (M-1) and the City’s zoning option given annexation is Heavy Industrial.**

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. 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.

**Finding:** No transportation facility will be significantly affected by this proposal. No traffic impact analysis is warranted.

**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) Water** – City water is available in the Old Portland Road right-of-way. With regards to capacity, 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.

**Sewer** – While not currently connected to City sewer, it is available along the Old Portland Road right-of-way.

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 County's approval of County file DR 23-06 included referral comments from the City which addressed the City's sanitary sewer conveyance issues identified in the City's 2021 Wastewater Master Plan. The city recommended specific conditions that were partially reflected in the County's final decision per condition 8.aa (there are two condition "8.a's"), requiring a will serve letter from the city verifying the new maintenance facility can utilize its water and sewer. However, specific language pertaining to the "fair share" fee was not included. To help ensure this provision is an aspect of this will serve letter, the following condition shall be incorporated into this annexation:

*For the project triggering this annexation, as approved by Columbia County File DR 23-06, an additional "fair share" fee shall be paid per equivalent dwelling unit (EDU) based on the portions of the city wastewater collection system between the subject property and the wastewater treatment plant, that this development depends on, that are at or above capacity as identified in the city's 2021 Wastewater Master Plan. Estimated per EDU cost is \$3,200 based on October 2022 dollars. Inflation adjustment to value at time of building permit issuance shall be included.*

Below are the sanitary sewer findings of the City per its referral for County file DR 23-06 to be incorporated with this annexation:

City sanitary sewer is available along the Old Portland Road right-of-way. Like with water, connection will require a consent to annex to be filed with the city (and recorded on the deed records of the County Clerk). In addition, System Development Charges and connection fees will apply.

Pumping may be necessary for the sanitary sewer.

Moreover, there are system deficiencies in the city's sanitary sewer system. The city adopted a new **Wastewater Master Plan (WWMP)** in November 2021 that identifies undersized trunk lines already operating at or above capacity that this development would depend on. The WWMP can be found here:

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

Sewer pipes are considered "at capacity" when peak flows exceed 85% of the full depth of the pipe in accordance with industry standards. This depth is based on the maximum depth of flow ratio (d/D), where "d" is the depth of flow and "D" is the pipe diameter. The WWMP includes an exhibit—Figure 18—that shows that a portion of the sanitary sewer main along the north side of the waste water treatment pond is currently operating between 0.85 and 0.99. This is greater than the industry and city standard 85% "at capacity" flows and is a portion of the conveyance system between the subject property and the wastewater treatment plant.

Pipeline surcharging occurs as flows exceed the capacity of a full pipe, causing wastewater to back up into manholes and services. In addition to potentially backing up into homes and health risks associated with sanitary sewer overflows, Oregon DEQ prohibits all sanitary sewer overflows and can fine cities for allowing such and has done so to other jurisdictions. Examples of DEQ fines can be found here:

[https://www.oregon.gov/deq/Pages/enforcement-actions.aspx?wp2643=p:2#g\\_c4e47a01\\_bc88\\_4a9f\\_aa38\\_c1bcac799ce5](https://www.oregon.gov/deq/Pages/enforcement-actions.aspx?wp2643=p:2#g_c4e47a01_bc88_4a9f_aa38_c1bcac799ce5)

This deficiency could be a basis to disallow connection to the sanitary sewer system. However, the city can accept a fee to help offset costs of sanitary sewer upgrades to avoid delays to this project.

A condition of approval to require a fee per equivalent dwelling unit will be included. This is not a System Development Charge pursuant to ORS 223.299(4)(b); it is a temporary charge by order for development and land divisions proposed under these circumstances until the infrastructure is in order per the WWMP. The nexus is clear as it relates to the sewer conveyance deficiency and an amount has been determined based on calculations to determine fair proportionality—see attached **St. Helens Wastewater Collection System New Sewer Connection Surcharge memo**.

**For this project, the fee per equivalent dwelling unit is \$3,200**, and this estimated amount is determined to be a fair share quantity for this proposal. It is based on October 2022 dollars, and inflation must be considered.

**Transportation** - As described above, this proposal poses no significant impact on a transportation facility.

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

**(b)** This property is currently vacant. The County-approved development proposal for a maintenance building would be considered a public facility, major in the City's HI zone. This is a conditional use per the city's zoning. There is no known conflict with the Comprehensive Plan and implementing ordinances.

**(c)** With regards to Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS), 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 three sides of the subject property. 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 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.

**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 regards 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."*

City water and sewer capacities are addressed under SHMC 17.28.030 (1) above. There is no evidence that adequate infrastructure will not be available to serve the annexed area if developed in the future.

- **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.

**(d)** The subject property abuts Old Portland Road. Old Portland Road is classified as a minor arterial with a minimum right-of-way width of 60', which is met.

There are no frontage improvements (sidewalks and curb) abutting the subject property. City standards require such improvements. Such was not required by Columbia County's approval of DR 23-06, which is the development prompting this annexation. Because no such requirement was associated with the development permitting and that an annexation, by itself, does not provide the necessary legal nexus and proportionality to require such improvements, no conditions for this annexation pertaining to street improvements are warranted.

**(e)** The subject property is not zoned residential. A needs analysis is not necessary.

**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 Unincorporated Heavy Industrial (UHI). The City option for zoning is Heavy Industrial (HI). The Comprehensive Plan designation would be Heavy Industrial (Incorporated).



**Finding:** Upon annexation, the subject property’s Comprehensive Plan designation shall be Heavy Industrial (Incorporated) and zoned Heavy Industrial (HI).

**SHMC 17.112.020 – Established & Developed Area Classification criteria**

- (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.

**Discussion:** OAR 660-008-0005 generally defines “Buildable Land” as vacant residential property not constrained by natural hazards or resources, and typically not publicly owned. The subject property is not zoned residential. This provision does not apply.

**Finding:** This provision is not applicable.

**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 Heavy Industrial (Incorporated) and be zoned Heavy Industrial (HI), with the condition that:**

For the project triggering this annexation, as approved by Columbia County File DR 23-06, an additional “fair share” fee shall be paid per equivalent dwelling unit (EDU) based on the portions of the city wastewater collection system between the subject property and the wastewater treatment plant, that this development depends on, that are at or above capacity as identified in the city’s 2021 Wastewater Master Plan. Estimated per EDU cost is \$3,200 based on October 2022 dollars. Inflation adjustment to value at time of building permit issuance shall be included.

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

**Attachments:** Aerial Map

# Annexation A.3.23 Aerial Map

