



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

## BUILDING DIVISION REPORT JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup> – JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2022

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.

### Workload

The Building Division, which is comprised of 3.4 FTE's, has issued 300 permits from January 1st, 2022, to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Within this term 258 Plan Reviews and 807 inspections were performed. Please note, that this does not reflect all the reviews or inspections performed by all departments with regard to building permits.

### PERMITS ISSUED SUMMARY

**Report parameters:**

Date start from 1/1/2022 to 6/30/2022

Minimum valuation is \$0.00

<b>Record type</b>	<b>Permits issued</b>	<b>Fees paid</b>	<b>Job value</b>
Residential Demolition	1	\$198.11	\$12,990.00
Commercial Plumbing	17	\$8,624.95	\$127,566.00
Commercial Alarm or Suppression Systems	15	\$20,964.48	\$1,158,585.00
Residential Site Development	1	\$207.33	\$0.00
Commercial Revision	5	\$295.90	\$0.00
Residential Manufactured Dwelling	1	\$916.56	\$20,460.00
Residential Mechanical	101	\$11,686.71	\$536,607.16
Commercial Mechanical	29	\$9,000.21	\$225,523.18
Commercial Structural	19	\$17,602.80	\$813,765.00
Commercial Deferred Submittal	25	\$7,100.07	\$365,944.00
Residential 1 & 2 Fam Dwelling (New Only) Limited	12	\$158,756.97	\$2,658,130.38
Residential Plumbing	30	\$11,936.43	\$78,372.00
Commercial Site Development	1	\$799.81	\$0.00
Residential Structural	43	\$18,610.73	\$623,734.49
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<b>Overall summary</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>\$266,701.06</b>	<b>\$6,621,677.21</b>



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## **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 services to provide better access for people to apply and obtain building permits online. Electronic permitting services, as required by statute, are required to be provided with the passage of HB 2415 by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. In the past two years we have made strides to not only provide the minimum services required but to also to set out to leverage these technologies to provide a new experience for our customers. It began with an electronic permit system, Oregon ePermitting in 2020. This allows customers to apply, pay fees and schedule inspections for permits online. Some permit types are able to be auto issued online, allowing for permit issuance outside normal business hours like nights and weekends. Once established, we looked to expand the services and in November of 2021, council signed an agreement with DigEplan, and set us out to implement electronic plan review service. These services are still fairly new with a mixed review for acceptance of these systems. However, contractors and designers have expressed, that having these options would be a benefit to them, saving time and money by reducing the amount of trips needed to our office and multiple copies of plans. This implementation had to overcome some challenges such as project schedule changes due to staff illness, and coordination with state software requiring development of custom software scripts. In late June, the implementation was completed, and St. Helens now provides customers with the ability to upload construction documents for review and download approved plans, from our customer online portal. The software was selected, in part, due to its ability to be integrated into our existing electronic permitting services available at the Oregon ePermitting website. This integration makes all our electronic permitting services accesible to the customer from one website.

Another door has been opened by the council decision to provide these services, is the idea of concurrent plan review. Currently, we pass a permit through four departments, where progression dependent upon the previous reviewer's approval. This is due to our exclusive use of paper plans for review. With electronic plan submittal, we can make the plans available to all reviewers at the same time. This method allows us to reduce the time it takes for the city to approve or provide comments upon completion of their review. The tools we need for concurrent plan review became available with the implementation of the electronic plan review software. We are implementing this method and have made it available for use with commercial mechanical and single family dwelling permits.



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## **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.

BCD recently opened up training for the Specialized Plumbing Inspector certification. 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 are scheduled to begin in January of 2023. This certification will further our capacity to serve our community and reduce our dependence on other agencies to provide these services.

To followup on a topic presented to council in January related to fire sprinkler requirements in child and adult care facilities. BCD has since updated, by rule, that fire sprinkler systems are not required where certain conditions are met. As stated from BCD, in Oregon, both registered and certified family child care homes, defined by ORS 329A, were previously governed by the Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) scope, prior to the April 1, 2021, code adoption. These care facilities are permitted to have 10 and 16 individuals receiving care respectively, which is double and more than triple the national standard limitation of five. As of April 1, 2021, the care facilities were made to comply with the OSSC, but were assigned a less restrictive Group R-3 designation. This designation was intended to prevent the more robust standards required for Groups I and E from being applied to these care facilities, while still allowing the increased number of care recipients (i.e., 10 and 16, respectively). These amendments were discussed by the technical review committee appointed by the Building Codes Structures Board, and the public during several public meetings. A modification was suggested during the committee process via public testimony (child care facility public proposal). The modification focused on providing an exception to the requirement of a domestic residential sprinkler system. The committee was unanimously in favor of providing an exception to the automatic sprinkler system requirement. The child care facility public proposal modification to remove the automatic sprinkler system requirement was used as the basis for the language, and the following elements were added: care facility location within the dwelling; intervening spaces along the occupants' path to an exit; and documentation verifying facility licensure approval for the certificate of occupancy. In addition, the language in the child care facility public proposal related to the age of the care recipients was removed. On Jan. 26, 2022, the Building Codes Structures Board (BCSB) approved this language and forwarded it to the administrator for rulemaking and subsequent adoption. The rule language was adopted via temporary rule on Jan. 26, 2022, and is effective until July 24, 2022. This rulemaking will make permanent the exception that was approved by the BCSB and adopted on Jan. 26, 2022. On April 26, 2022, a rulemaking advisory committee met and provided feedback on the



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proposed language. The language was revised according to the feedback received including removing the documentation requirement that was previously a part of the alternate compliance path in the temporary rule. The revised rule language was added to the May BCSB meeting agenda for the board's consultation and approval. On May 4, 2022, the BCSB approved the revised language and forwarded it to the administrator for rulemaking and subsequent adoption. On June 22, 2022, the division held a rulemaking public hearing to provide an opportunity for public comment on the proposed rule amendments. This rulemaking will also adopt language into the Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) that points to the OSSC for the requirements that apply to in-home childcare facilities. Finally, the rulemaking removes some rule language that refers to code sections that are no longer effective.

In general, the state building codes are updated on a 3-year cycle. Currently the Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC) and the Oregon Mechanical Specialty Code (OMSC) are in the final steps of approval for the 2022 OSSC and OMSC. The anticipated effective date is October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Unlike the residential code the OSSC and OMSC, do not have any grace period, where applicants have the option of submitting designs using the previously or currently approved edition. The OSSC adoption date is when we begin to administer.

Under Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 455.500, BCD, in consultation with the appropriate advisory board, must establish a Reach Code, a set of statewide optional construction standards and methods that are economically and technically feasible, including any published generally accepted codes and standards newly developed for construction or for the installation of products, equipment and devices. The Reach Code is designed to increase energy efficiency in buildings and provide a choice for builders, consumers, contractors, and others. The Oregon Commercial Reach Code is an optional standard for the construction, reconstruction, alteration, or repair of a building governed by the Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC). The provisions of the Reach Code are not mandatory. Builders and designers can choose to comply with the 2021 Oregon Energy Efficiency Specialty Code (OEESC), which is Chapter 13 of the OSSC, or the 2022 Oregon Commercial Reach Code.

### **Projects**

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

St. Helens High School- Permits have been issued related to the demolition, site work, underground utilities. The balance of the work is currently under review by multiple departments within the city.

Broad Leaf Arbor Apartments- Eight Buildings are under construction. Utilities being installed. Thermal Barrier wall completed between Wilcox and Flegel tank site and new apartment



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Elk Ridge Phase 6- Most single-family dwelling permits issued have obtained occupancy. Majority of subdivision is filled in.

7<sup>th</sup> Street Condos -This building comprised of repurposed shipping container has been completed and received occupancy. This project was unique in many ways, and permitting was no different. In this case, BCD reviewed and provided the appropriate approvals for the building plans and design specifications. Many parts of the building were prefabricated offsite and approved by BCD inspection services. All onsite construction and installations were permitted by St. Helens Building Division.

Popeye's Chicken- Project completed.

Beyond keeping up with daily services, to finish out 2022 we will be working on chapter 15 code updates to the SHMC, training for the OSSC and OMSC code adoption and continuing to improve and expand our electronic permitting services.

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

Thank you

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