

**CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
STAFF REPORT  
Site Development Review SDR.1.22**

**DATE:** February 1, 2022  
**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Jacob A. Graichen, AICP, City Planner

**APPLICANT:** City of St. Helens  
**OWNER:** same as applicant

**ZONING:** Riverfront District, RD, Mill Subdistrict  
**LOCATION:** 4N1W-3BA-7500 and 4N1W-3-100; park expansion proposed south of the existing Columbia View Park at 270 The Strand (Strand Street)  
**PROPOSAL:** Expansion of Columbia View Park

**SITE INFORMATION / BACKGROUND**

The property is the former location of a veneer mill, which discontinued after the Great Recession (2007-2009). The site was used for industrial purposes since the early days of the city up until the Great Recession. The city purchased the former mill property in 2015 and rezoned the property from Heavy Industrial, HI to the current zoning district in 2016 (Ordinance No. 3215; file CPZA.3.16).

**PUBLIC HEARING & NOTICE**

**Public hearing** before the Planning Commission: February 8, 2022

**Notice** of this proposal was sent to surrounding property owners within 100 feet of the subject property(ies) on January 20, 2022 via first class mail. Notice was sent to agencies by mail or e-mail on the same date.

**Notice** was published on January 26, 2022 in The Chronicle newspaper.

**APPLICABLE CRITERIA, ANALYSIS & FINDINGS**

**Zoning Compliance:** The site is zoned Riverfront District, RD, Mill Subdistrict. Public Park is a permitted use. This requires a Site Development Review.

Site Development Review applications are normally administrative decisions. Pursuant to SHMC 17.24.090(2), the Planning Director may refer any application for review to the Planning Commission. Staff chose to refer this to the Commission given the importance of the waterfront to the community, to keep the Commission engaged in the Riverfront District efforts, and to provide a better platform for public testimony.

Maximum building height allowed is 55 feet. No building proposed for the expansion area, but at least one future building is anticipated within the existing Columbia View Park (under a different zoning district)—future stage—but final design for that will be subsequent to this SDR.

The architectural character review provisions pursuant to SHMC 17.32.172(7) will apply to any building (e.g., new stage), when proposed.

Minimum landscaping is 10%/maximum impervious surface is 90%. As a park, these criteria are easily met.

No yard (setback) standards apply.

Pursuant to 17.32.173(5)(a):

In addition to other applicable standards, all development, division of land, lot line adjustment, replat and such subject to review by the city shall also comply with the St. Helens Waterfront Framework Plan, attached to Ordinance 3215 as Attachment E, as amended. Whenever the standards or requirements of the Waterfront Framework Plan are in conflict with other city codes, the approval authority may consider those of the Waterfront Framework Plan to be of the higher standard per SHMC 17.12.010.

The Waterfront Framework Plan can be accessed online:

[https://www.sthelensoregon.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/268/cosh\\_framework\\_plan.pdf](https://www.sthelensoregon.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/268/cosh_framework_plan.pdf)

The Waterfront Framework Plan emphasizes pedestrian access through the former mill property including the 50' greenway along the river. The waterfront accessway is considered the highest priority for the former mill property and notes connection to Columbia View Park on the north side.

The plan identifies the large contiguous area that will remain a public park and specifically identifies (pg. 25):

*“An extension or enlargement of the existing Columbia View Park to the south, creating a contiguous park that allows for growth in programmed activities at the park and potential growth of play areas or active sports.”*

This proposal advances the intended park expansion and the public accessible greenway along the Columbia River, thus complying with the plan.

Pursuant to 17.32.173(5)(c):

As part of any development, division of land, lot line adjustment, replat and such, a minimum 50-foot width, measured from the top of bank/shoreline of the Columbia River landward, shall be dedicated for public access. The approval authority shall deny any proposal that prevents public access along the waterfront.

As a park with a walkway proposed along the river, this is met.

Some chapters of the Development Code do not specifically apply in this zoning district. Noteworthy for this proposal is Chapter 17.40 pertaining to wetlands and riparian areas.

\* \* \*

**RD Architectural Review:** This will apply to any new buildings proposed, such as the new stage conceptualized for the exiting Columbia View Park area. This includes involvement of the Historic Landmarks Commission.

\* \* \*

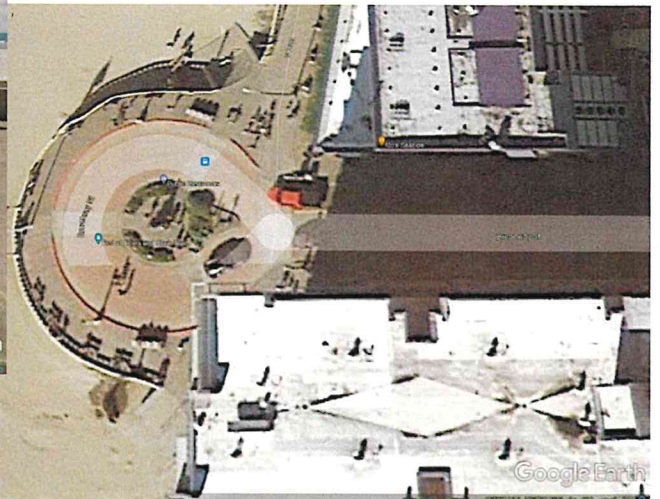
**Landscaping/buffering/screening:** Since this is a park with no proposed off-street parking, there is nothing to screen or buffer.

\* \* \*

**Off-Street Parking/Loading:** The parking requirement for community parks and recreation is “as required by the facilities provided.” The existing Columbia View Park relies on street and nearby public parking. This is not proposed to change.

Note that part of the development of the old mill site includes street extensions of The Strand and S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, which will include additional on-street parking to serve the area.

In addition, an extension of Cowlitz Street into the park in the form of a circular feature is proposed, which is anticipated to include approximately 8 additional on-street parking spaces.



The proposed extension of Cowlitz Street across The Strand (Strand Street) into the proposed expansion area of Columbia View Park is comparable to the beachward terminus of Broadway Street in Seaside, Oregon as shown in these photos.

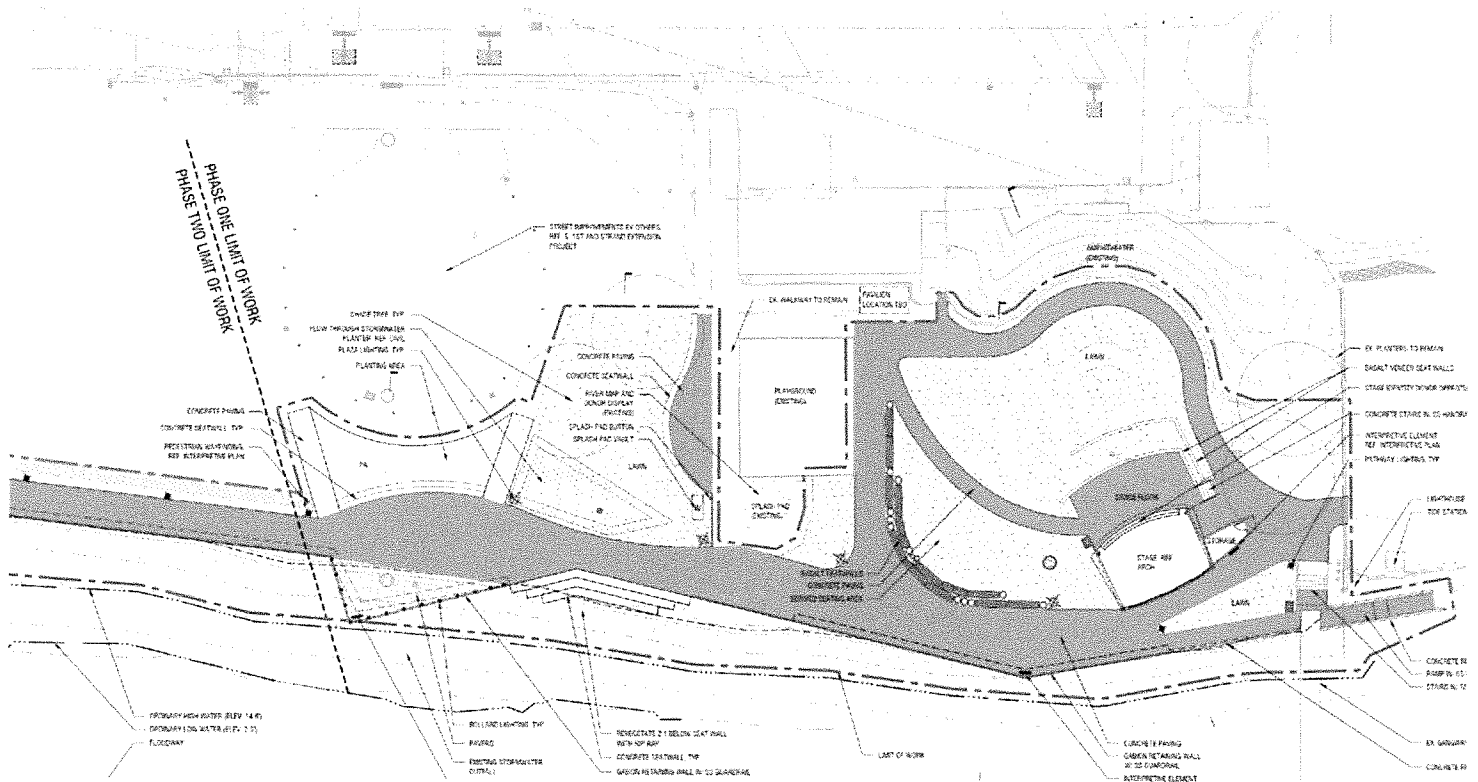
\* \* \*

**Access/egress/circulation:** The Strand (Strand Street) is classified as a local street. The extension of Cowlitz Street into the park expansion area does not conflict with any access standards. The intersection of Cowlitz Street and The Strand is proposed to be improved for non-vehicular modes of travel along with other street improvements proposed in the Riverfront District.

\* \* \*

**Site Development Review:** There are no trees or other natural features for preservation consideration in the park expansion area.

Street lighting and proposed lighting within the expansion area (e.g., proposed bollard lighting along the overlook and other lighting) are anticipated to help with crime prevention.



Lighting and other features are identified on this plan for Columbia View Park and the expansion area thereof.

\* \* \*

**Street/Right-of-Way Standards:** City proposed street improvements in the area as part of the Riverfront District revitalization efforts.

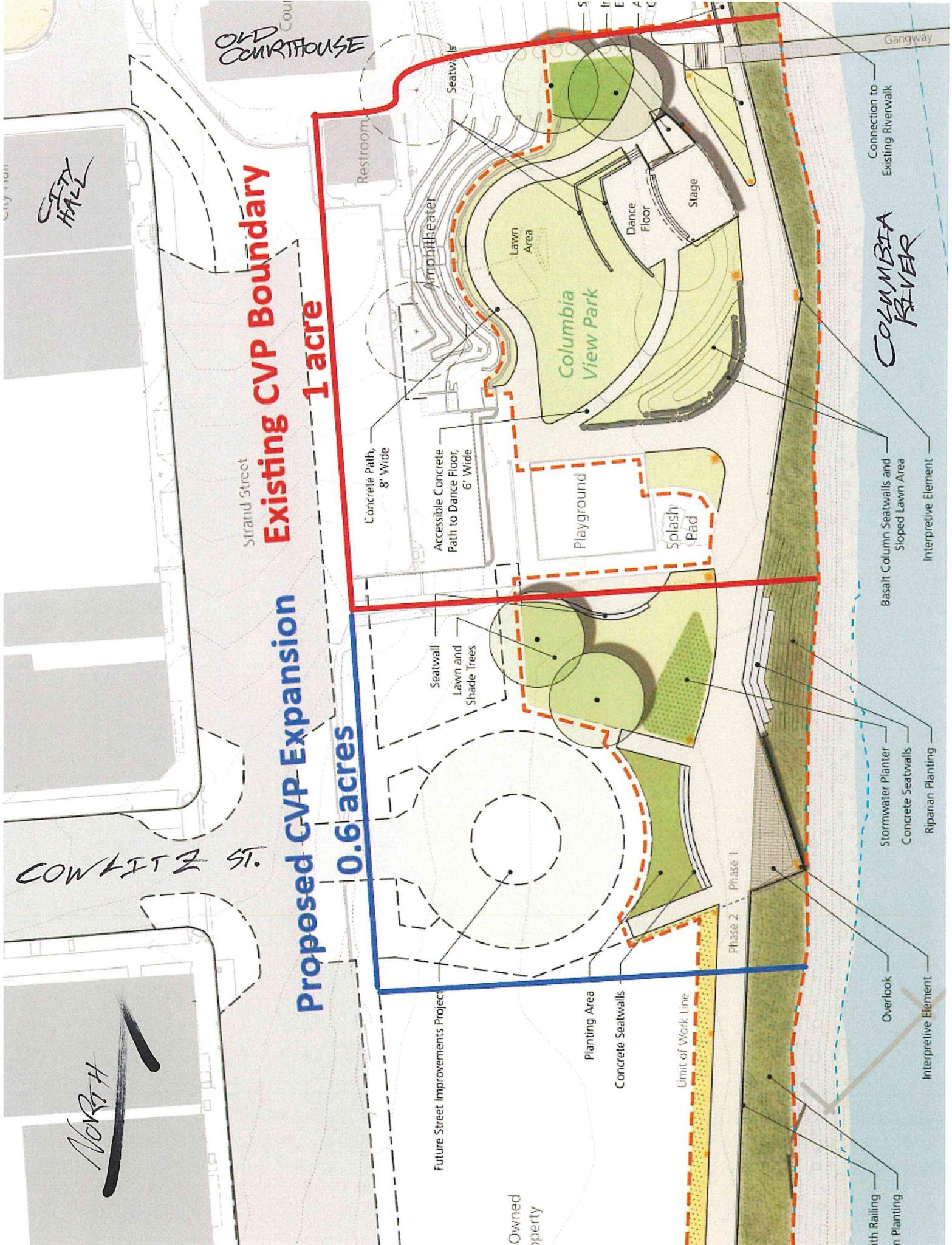
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## **CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION**

**Based upon the facts and findings herein, staff recommends approval of this application.**

**Attachment(s):** existing conditions and site plan





OLD COURTHOUSE

Strand Street  
**Existing CVP Boundary**  
**1 acre**

**Proposed CVP Expansion**  
**0.6 acres**

COW ITZ ST.

NORTH

OWNED PROPERTY

Restroom

Future Street Improvements Project

Concrete Path, 8' Wide

Seatwall  
Lawn and Shade Trees

Amphitheater

Lawn Area

Playground

Dance Floor

Stage

Splash Pad

Planting Area

Concrete Seatwalls

Limit of Work Line

Phase 1  
Phase 2

Connection to Existing Riverwalk

COLUMBIA RIVER

Basalt Column Seatwalls and Sloped Lawn Area

Interpretive Element

Stormwater Planter

Concrete Seatwalls

Riparian Planting

Overlook

Interpretive Element

with Railing in Planting



Columbia  
View Park  
Existing  
Conditions

