

City of St. Helens
ORDINANCE NO. 3322

AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH CHAPTER 13.34, GENERAL SERVICES FEE, IF APPROVED BY THE VOTERS AT A CITYWIDE ELECTION

WHEREAS, the City of St. Helens, is experiencing an ever-increasing impact on its budget as a result of Measure 5 (1990) and Measure 50 (1997), decreasing revenue in other areas, and rising costs. Because of these property tax limits and decreasing revenue, property tax revenues for the City grow more slowly than the rising costs of services. In particular, the growing costs of the resource-intensive provision of public safety services continues to outpace General Fund revenue growth; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Helens' permanent tax rate of \$1.9078 per thousand of taxable assessed value is among the lowest in the State of Oregon; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that a generally applicable fee to pay for the provision of General Fund services, is the best mechanism to generate the long-term and stable revenue needed to sufficiently cover the expense of on-going services, including staffing, programs, and services in police, library, parks, recreation, community development, administration, information technology, and municipal court, which is imperative to the health, safety, and general welfare of the city; and

WHEREAS, the City Council further finds that the most fair and equitable method of collecting such revenue can best be accomplished through the formation of a General Services Fee. In comparison to other funding options, the City Council finds that the General Services Fee will be charged to all developed properties and constitutes a reliable and equitable source of funding to address the public need for on-going General Fund services; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that assessing the Fee on each developed unit of property constitutes a reasonably accurate measure for the intensity of General Fund services, used throughout the City, also considering the resources needed to implement and maintain the revenue source; and

WHEREAS, in Chapter 13.32, the City requires that before the establishment of a municipal service fee, such as the General Services Fee, voter approval by a majority of votes cast at a citywide election shall be required. Therefore, after approval of this Ordinance, it shall be referred to the voters for a citywide election, and only if approved by a majority of votes cast at a citywide election, shall it be effective.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF ST. HELENS ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Recitations. The above recitations are true and correct and are incorporated herein by this reference.

Section 2. St. Helens Municipal Code, Chapter 13.34, General Services Fee, is hereby added to the City Code as described in Exhibit A.

Section 3. Effective Date. Chapter 13.34, General Fund Services Fee, shall be referred to the voters in a general citywide election and shall be effective if approved by a majority of votes cast at the May 19, 2026, citywide election.

Section 4. The General Services Fee adopted herein is classified as a fee and thus not subject to the limits of Section 11 or 11b, Article XI of the Oregon Constitution. The General Services Fee is based on the direct and indirect use of or benefit derived from the use of the City's public safety and General Fund infrastructure and resources; it is not a property tax. The City Recorder is directed to provide notice of the adoption of this Ordinance as provided in ORS 305.583(9).

Section 5. Errors. The City Recorder is authorized to administratively correct any reference errors contained herein or in other provisions of the St. Helens City Code to the provisions added, amended, or repealed herein.

Section 6. Severability. If any section, phrase, sentence, or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any Court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions thereof.

Section 7. Codification. Provisions of this Ordinance shall be incorporated in the City Code and the word "ordinance" may be changed to "code", "article," "section," or other word, and the sections of this Ordinance may be renumbered, or relettered provided however that Section 4 and 5 need not be codified.

Read the first time: February 11, 2026
Read the second time: February 25, 2026

APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the City Council this 25th day of February 2026 by the following vote:

Ayes:
Nays:
Abstains:

Jennifer Massey, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kathy Payne, City Recorder