



CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Jacob A. Graichen, AICP, City Planner
RE: Proposed design modification for the new Police Station at 1771 Columbia Boulevard
Conditional Use Permit CUP.2.25
DATE: January 27, 2026

The Planning Commission approved the above referenced Conditional Use Permit for a new police station in the Houlton Business District in December 2025. The decision was not appealed and was final as of December 30, 2025.

Since then, Mackenzie (the city's design consultant team) has proposed some modifications as cost saving measures. Please see [attached](#) memo from Mackenzie and notated site plan.

Given the Commission's recent review and to maximize transparency, I wanted you to see these to provide an opportunity to express concern, support, input, etc.

My comments about the four proposed modifications:

1. **Reduction of east planter area.** The planter at the corner of Columbia Boulevard and S. 17th Street is being reduced in size along S. 17th Street. The Conditional Use Permit approval was not dependent on this feature, and it is still a planting area. It just reduces raised planting area in favor of at grade planting area.

As such, it is an acceptable change from my perspective.

2. **Omission of concrete surface areas for gravel.** There are paving requirements for areas used by vehicles and for placement of conex boxes (shipping containers) to be used as buildings.

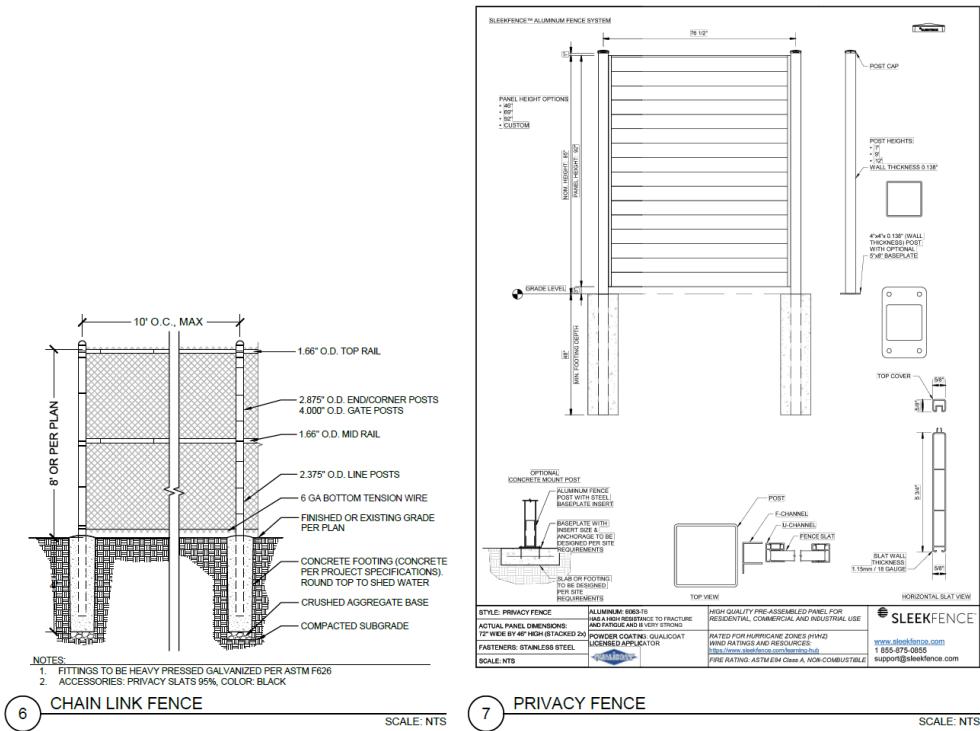
The concrete areas were not intended for vehicle travel, storage or parking and as Mackenzie notes, will still be curb protected, so that avoids the surface area type debate.* Also, because these are not planter areas to now be gravel, this avoids the bait-and-switch tactic concern.

*The plans for the concrete slab for a future conex box did not show any curb protection. [As such, staff recommends wheel stops for the parking spaces fronting the future conex box slab.](#)

3. **Use of chain link fence instead of a fancy fence behind the plaza at the Columbia Boulevard / S. 18th Street intersection.** The original plans showed two fence types, a privacy fence (i.e., the "fancy fence) and chain link with sight obscuring slats. Now the proposal is to just go with chain link with sight obscuring slats.

The Commission approved the extra tall fence, but it was not necessarily based on fence type, and there are no architectural standards in the Houlton Business District. As such, this is an acceptable change from my perspective.

Two fence types originally proposed:



4. **Modification of plaza design.** Instead of seat walls with integrated benches for the plaza at the Columbia Boulevard / S. 18th Street intersection, the seat walls will be replaced with grade level landscaping and normal benches will be added.

The plaza feature is above and beyond any Development Code requirement and these changes are minor. As the plaza feature will be retained (no bait and switch tactic concern) and only subtly modified, this is an acceptable change from my perspective.



January 19, 2026

City of St. Helens
Attention: Jacob Graichen, City Planner
265 Strand Street
St. Helens, OR 97051

Re: **St. Helens Police**
Conditional Use Permit (CUP 2.25) design modifications
Project Number 2210310.11

Dear Jacob:

The purpose of this letter and attachment is to memorialize proposed design modifications to the approved St. Helens Police Station (CUP 2.25) to be located at 1771 Columbia Boulevard. Included with this letter is an updated site plan which graphically represents the proposed design modifications.

PROPOSED DESIGN MODIFICATIONS

1. *East planter area*

The approved design included a planter wrapping around the northeastern corner of the building. The proposed modification maintains the planter but will reduce the length of the planter on S 17th Street by approximately 50 lineal feet. The area of the approved planter wall and approved plant material will be replaced by ground cover or low-level plantings at the recommendation of a Landscape Architect.

2. *Surfacing*

The approved design included a concrete pad in the location of a future Conex box (subject of a future application) and a few areas of the secure storage area as concrete. As shown in the attached annotated site plan, four (4) of these areas will be graveled instead of hardscaped. These areas will remain curb protected.

3. *North fence*

The approved design included an 8' high decorative privacy fence between the secure outdoor storage area and the pedestrian plaza. The proposed modification will replace this with an 8' high chain link fence with slats to match the fence around the perimeter of the secure outdoor storage area. Landscape screening between the pedestrian plaza and chain link fence will be provided. Utilizing a consistent fence material is intended to create a more cohesive screening and security element.

City of St. Helens
St. Helens Police
Project Number 2210310.11
January 19, 2026
Page 2

4. *Seat walls*

The approved design included seat walls with integrated benches in the pedestrian plaza. The proposed modification includes replacing the seat walls with ground level landscaping and providing standalone benches in the pedestrian plaza.

Please contact me at 971.346.3700 or sh@mcknze.com if you have any questions for the proposed design modifications.

Sincerely,



Sid Hariharan Godt

Enclosure(s): Attachment A – Annotated Site Plan

c: John Walsh – City of St. Helens
David Lintz – OTAK
Adrienne Linton, Jeff Humphreys, Bailey Currier, Nicole Ferreira – Mackenzie

M.

