

# **CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT**



**To:** City Council  
**From:** Jacob A. Graichen, AICP, City Planner  
**cc:** Planning Commission

**Date:** 7.24.2023

This report does not indicate all *current planning* activities over the past report period. These are tasks, processing and administration of the Development Code which are a weekly if not daily responsibility. The Planning Commission agenda, available on the City's website, is a good indicator of *current planning* activities. The number of building permits issued is another good indicator as many require Development Code review prior to Building Official review.

**ASSOCIATE PLANNER/PROJECT MANAGER**—*In addition to routine tasks, the Associate Planner/Community Development Project Manager has been working on: **See attached.***

## **PLANNING ADMINISTRATION—MISC.**

Assisted city engineering with review, scoring and interviews of design-build contractor selection for replacement of a 2.0-million-gallon water reservoir at 35259 Pittsburg Road. Interestingly, this property is not within city limits.

Continue to assist City Engineering with mercury TMDL efforts. There will be a community education/engagement event next month related to this, as required by Oregon DEQ.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION (& *acting* **HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION**)**

July 11, 2023 meeting (outcome): The Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit for a storage use and business at 1955 Old Portland Road (the old Ralph's wrecking yard).

Due to resignation, a new chair (Commissioners Cary) and vice chair (Commissioner Pugsley) were selected for the remainder of this calendar year.

*As the Historic Landmarks Commission*, they reviewed the proposed gateway proposal at the S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street / St. Helens Street intersection. Also, some discussion of potential architectural standards for St. Helens (an ongoing discussion) in the future.

August 8, 2023 meeting (upcoming): At a minimum, *as the Historic Landmarks Commission*, they will select the recipient of the latest Historic Preservation Rehabilitation Grant that the city offers as a Certified Local Government.

## **FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT (NFIP)**

FEMA periodically updates the Elevation Certificate forms used for floodplain matters. The previous version "expired" in Nov. '22. FEMA finally released its replacement this month. These expire in June of 2026.

**From:** [Jennifer Dimsho](#)  
**To:** [Jacob Graichen](#)  
**Subject:** July Planning Department Report  
**Date:** Monday, July 24, 2023 12:03:46 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Here are my additions to the July Planning Department Report.

## GRANTS

1. **Safe Routes to School - Columbia Blvd. Sidewalk & County Culvert Project** – Construction with TFT began July 17, starting at the culvert near Gable Road. Trees have been removed along sidewalks project. Conducted multiple site walks with contractor.
2. **Business Oregon – Infrastructure Finance Authority** – Low-interest loan for Streets & Utilities Project and Columbia View Park improvements that are not covered by grants and Parks SDCs. 1<sup>st</sup> Reimbursement request is being processed (which included over 30 invoices). Submitted an amendment request (for scope of work changes and cost increases). Working with finance to support amendment request.
3. **Riverwalk Project (OPRD Grants x2)** – 100% design completed. Bid documents received. Compiled contract documents/bid documents with City Engineering. Bidding to occur 7/26 and will close on 8/29!
4. **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** – \$2.5 million grant award to fund design/engineering/permitting for the City's Sanitary Sewer Improvement Project. This project covers 3 sanitary sewer basins which were identified as deficient and priorities for improvement in the adopted Wastewater Master Plan. Contracts are expected in August. Construction will be funded by a \$16.4 million loan (with up to \$4.5 million in loan forgiveness) from DEQ's revolving loan fund.
5. **Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Grant Program** – Received our contract for 17k. ~95 property owners received notifications of pass-through grant program. Grant deadline 7/24 for property owners. Anticipating 3-4 applications. Compiled materials for PC to review and select projects for funding at 8/8 meeting.
6. **DLCD Technical Assistance Program** – Grant cycle opening pushed from August to September. DLCD Regional Rep thinks updating our Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA) could be funded. Compiled resources to assist with scoping our EOA update.
7. **Veterans Memorial Grant Program** - 33k award for an expansion at McCormick Park Veterans Memorial. Project includes 7 branch of service monuments and corresponding flags. The project includes matching funds of \$28,130 through in-kind labor and donations. The in-kind match includes the donation of flags and hardware from the local VFW Post 1440, labor and equipment use from the St. Helens Public Works Department, engineering and design donated by Lower Columbia Engineering, LLC, and in-kind labor from City staff to manage the grant.
8. **ODOT Community Paths Program - RECEIVED NOTIFICATION OF SUCCESSFUL 300K GRANT AWARD** to study a trail route refinement project (30% design) from St. Helens to Scappoose. Contracts are expected in October. Award is \$300k, with a match of around 42k split between Scappoose, the County, and us.
9. **ODOT Transportation Growth Management Grant** - Providing assistance to Engineering with TGM grant materials to fund a new Transportation Systems Plan. Our last TSP was

from 2011 and the Engineering Department would like to initiate an update. Reviewed 2011 TSP Assessment which DLCD provides for free as a resource.

## PROJECTS & MISC

10. **Riverfront Streets/Utilities Project** – Attending weekly check-ins to stay in tune with project schedule and any construction delays/issues. Held another public open house for residents/businesses impacted by construction on June 6. Undergrounding utilities bids due 7/25.
11. **S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street & St. Helens St. Gateway Project** – Stakeholder committee met 3 times to narrow down final direction for gateway. Design reviewed 7/11 by PC for compliance with the Architectural Guidelines. Final design anticipated by 7/31 with bidding of the project to occur in August. Internal review meeting scheduled for 7/27 to wrap up design.
12. **St. Helens Industrial Business Park (SHIBP) Public Infrastructure Design** – 30% design for Phase I infrastructure & permitting/grading work for Phase II with Mackenzie. Mackenzie provided preliminary PT for PGE parcel. City will facilitate partition process, PGE will prepare other land use applications. Kicked off Phase II grading work effort.
13. **Warrior Rock Lighthouse Replica Project** – Restoration of the warrior rock lighthouse replica on County-property near Columbia View Park. Councilor Sundeen was able to locate original Warrior Rock lighthouse plans! 2023 Oregon Heritage grant opportunity opens August 2023 which could fund the design and cost of materials for the replica, a kiosk, and signage. Work would be completed in-house by Public Works staff.
14. **Central Waterfront video production** - Sat in on a scoping meeting with communications team on the Central Waterfront video project.

### Jenny Dimsho, AICP | Associate Planner

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