

CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT



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

Date: Jan. 27, 2025

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—PREAPPLICATIONS MEETINGS

Had a preliminary Q&A meeting for a potential new grocer. They are looking for potential sites.

PLANNING ADMINISTRATION—MISC.

Prep time spent for the (hopefully) end of the 2024 code amendments and start if the final adoption process for the Economic Opportunities Analysis. Basically, prep for the January 15, 2024 City Council meeting. And with rejection of the ordinance at the Jan. 15th meeting, additional time preparing a revised ordinance (+ attachments) for February meetings.

Assisted Engineering with road transfer documentation “how to” for the transfer of a portion of Gable Road, Bachelor Flat Road and Columbia Boulevard from the county to the city. This doesn't happen often, and the most recent one was in 2002.

Staring back around 2018 the city is required to provide annual reporting on housing production. This reporting has normally been in January, but the survey will start to be collected in June instead of January. June is a typically busy month; I wish they kept this in the winter.

Community Development Assistant call for applications has closed. We have started to review applications to progress towards the interview stage of the selection process. We received many applications.

DEVELOPMENT CODE ENFORCEMENT

Provided violation notice to the new property owner of 184 S. 15th Street. This is the property with the long-time unfinished building across the street from Vinnie's Chicago Sandwich Shop. The good news is that they cleaned up some mess on the outside of the property. The bad news is work needing permitting has occurred. The Building Official posted a stop work order.

A multiple-year unauthorized access issue at 2180 Gable Road is resolved. A new permitted access has been completed and the former access discontinued and replaced with fencing along Gable Road.

PLANNING COMMISSION (& *acting* HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION)

January 14, 2025 meeting (outcome): This meeting was cancelled. However, the Commission has been invited to a forum with the Council on February 5th to discuss police station location.

February 11, 2025 meeting (upcoming): The Commission will have a hearing to consider some variances that if approved, would potentially enable the application to partition an undersized parcel.

The Commission will also do their annual chair/vice chair selection, conduct interviews for a vacant position and review the end-of-year land use permit summary report.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

ArcGIS Desktop, including ArcMap and ArcCatalog, will retire in March 2026. This is a long time and daily used software. The Planning Department has started using the replacement, ArcGIS Pro, to be able to use both in this transition period. The interface of ArcGIS Pro, seemingly improved in many ways, is very different from its predecessor, so certain tasks that would normally be mindless and automatic, are slow and clumsy. But over time, we should get better and more efficient at it, and this is why I didn't want to wait any longer to start using the new software.

COUNCIL ACTIONS RELATED TO LAND USE

The Council authorized the Mayor's signature for the partitioning of the OYO Hotel (Village Inn) property.

At the January 15, 2025 regular session the City Council rejected the second reading of Ordinance No. 3306 pertaining to proposed Development Code amendments. The Council instructed staff to remove amendments pertaining to manufactured and prefabricated homes, and those that allow detached multifamily development. A new replacement ordinance will be proposed.

From: [Jennifer Dimsho](#)
To: [Jacob Graichen](#)
Subject: January Planning Department Report
Date: Friday, January 24, 2025 12:42:46 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Here are my additions to the January Planning Department Report.

GRANTS

1. **Riverwalk Project (OPRD Grants x2)** – Masonry work on cantilever is nearly done. Landscaping is about 50% done. Concrete pours have continued with the walkways at the south end completed. Construction timeline looks on track for an early completion. Contract is approximately 70% expended. Submitted & received our first LWCF grant disbursement of approximately 750k and our first and final LGGP reimbursement request for 338.5k. Coordinated with Communications on E-newsletter content and timing of drone footage. Reviewing/tracking submittals and RFIs. Attending bi-weekly check-ins with contractor and design team.
2. **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): Sanitary Sewer Improvement Project** – \$2.5 million grant award to fund design/engineering/permitting for 3 sanitary sewer basins identified as deficient in the adopted Wastewater Master Plan. Reviewing 60% design package. Approximately 54% expended of the grant. Received our 3rd disbursement request.
3. **DLCD Technical Assistance Program** – 60k funding a new Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA). Prepared staff report and noticing requirements for adoption public hearings in March for PC and April for CC.
4. **ODOT Community Paths Program: St. Helens Scappoose Trail Refinement Project** – 405k to study a trail route refinement project (30% design) from St. Helens to Scappoose. RFP closed on 1/9 for consultants to submit proposals! Scored and reviewed proposals on the selection committee with a selection meeting scheduled for early February. This project is likely to kickoff some time in March/April!
5. **2024 Travel Oregon Grant Program: Riverwalk Project** - 100k grant for Riverwalk Project. Anticipated to receive remaining 50k when project is complete by April 2025.
6. **ODOT TGM Program: Transportation Systems Plan** – Consultant selection is likely for late February or early March.
7. **2025 Travel Oregon Grant Program** - Letter of Interest submitted by the deadline for January 15. Travel OR invited us to prepare a full submittal for County Courthouse plaza accessibility improvements. Final grant applications due February 27.

PROJECTS & MISC

8. **Business Oregon – Infrastructure Finance Authority** – Low-interest loan for Streets & Utilities Project and Riverwalk improvements. Loan amendment coordinated and approved by Council on 11/20. Submitted final Disbursement Request #5, putting us at

100% expended for the loan. Remaining budget to come from budgeted URA funding. Reviewed regular Waterfront E-newsletter content regarding construction updates, closures, progress, etc. Follow the [City's Waterfront E-newsletter](#) for timely updates.

9. **Team Building Workshop** – Attended half day workshop held on 1/14 focused DISC personality types and strengths/weaknesses based on a DISC personality survey.
10. **Community Development Administrative Assistant** – Covering all of the Planning Department secretarial duties which includes file creation, notice mailings, planning commission packets/minutes, 2024 annual reporting, and creating all new 2025 planning file tracking systems. Deadline for applicants for this position was 1/24. Hoping hiring will occur in February.

Jenny Dimsho, AICP | Community Development Project Manager

City of St. Helens | Planning Department
265 Strand Street, St. Helens, OR 97051 | www.sthelensoregon.gov
P: (503) 366-8207 | jdimsho@sthelensoregon.gov

