

CITY OF ST. HELENS PLANNING DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT



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

Date: 05/28/24

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

Conducted a pre-application meeting for potential new mixed-use development just north of Wapama Way in the Riverfront District.

Had a preliminary Q&A meeting for potential use/development for the old icehouse property at 185 S. 1st Street.

PLANNING ADMINISTRATION—MISC.

With the help of Christina Sullivan, Community Development Administrative Assistant, staff reviewed and provided updates of Columbia County Assessor data for over 500 taxlots so assessor data will more accurately reflect the city's zoning. We started this in November 2023. It turns out that the County Assessor staff taking the initiative on this is a long-term employee, on the verge of retirement, with this effort of cleaning up their data one their "before I retire" goals.

561 taxlots!!

Continue to work “behind the scenes” on the 2024 Development Code amendments, such as starting to prepare the staff report and address all the necessary findings required.

PLANNING COMMISSION (& *acting* HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION)

May 14, 2024 meeting (outcome): The Commission held four public hearings. Three were for annexations, all which will come before the Council in June. *As the Historic Landmarks Commission*, they reviewed Historic Resource Review of 260 S. 2nd Street as the fourth hearing.

The Commission reviewed and considered its annual report to the Council and staff presented the Planning Department’s semi-annual report to them.

Though several hours into the meeting, the Commission soldiered on and finished reviewing the draft 2024 Development Code amendments.

June 11, 2024 meeting (upcoming): The Commission has two public hearings scheduled. One is for an off-street parking reduction Variance for subsequent development at 325 Strand Street. *As the Historic Landmarks Commission*, the second hearing is a Historic Resource Review for proposed alterations to the building at 120 S. 1st Street.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

Quarterly data updates this month.

COUNCIL ACTIONS RELATED TO LAND USE

At a Special Session on May 9th, the Council reconsidered its decision for the Police Station at the Kaster Road/Old Portland Road site and denied it.

From: [Jennifer Dimsho](#)
To: [Jacob Graichen](#)
Subject: May Planning Department Report
Date: Tuesday, May 28, 2024 10:04:11 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Here are my additions to the May Planning Department Report.

GRANTS

1. **Business Oregon – Infrastructure Finance Authority** – Low-interest loan for Streets & Utilities Project and Riverwalk improvements. Provided updates to loan officer.
2. **Riverwalk Project (OPRD Grants x2)** – Notice to proceed issued 5/16. Contractor has mobilized & set up erosion control. Coordinated with Communications on park closure/E-newsletter content. Reviewing/tracking submittals and RFIs. Working with state grant coordinators on forthcoming amendments for timeline extension which are forthcoming. Working with LWCF to increase grant award.
3. **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. Processed amendment of CDBG contract to move \$ from “permitting” into “environmental review” activities. Held 2 check-ins. Preparing for first quarterly report/disbursement.
4. **CLG Historic Preservation Grant Program** – SHPO Certified Local Government Program. Received our contract for 17k. State approved work plan. Executed contract with grant recipients. Project to be completed by July 31, 2024. Continued communication with grant recipient to ensure completion successfully.
5. **DLCD Technical Assistance Program** – 60k will fund a new Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA). Reviewed BLI data, provided feedback. Finalized TAC membership. Scheduled first TAC meeting July 10. Reviewed materials/prepared for Joint PC/CC meeting on June 10.
6. **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. Award is \$363,407, with a match of around 42k split between Scappoose, the County, and us. Final grant contract provided to the City by ODOT. Met with Scappoose & Columbia County to work through draft Statement of Work (SoW). SoW sent to DOJ for review.. IGAs and ODOT grant contract to go before Council for approval in May. Finalized County IGA and Scappoose IGA. All 3 IGAs to go before Council on 6/5 for approval.
7. **Travel Oregon Grant Program: Riverwalk Project** - 100k grant for Riverwalk Project. Received 50% of the grant as contract terms require. Will receive remainder when project is complete.
8. **ODOT TGM Program: Transportation Systems Plan** – ODOT says it could be ~3 months before we see movement on this project.

9. **CDBG – Columbia Pacific Food Bank** – Request from Executive Director to act on the City’s 2-year public contract warranty for leaks in their roof. Coordinated with the contractor JH Kelly on repairs. Repairs will restart the warranty for an additional year to allow the Food Bank to monitor the repair work this winter.

PROJECTS & MISC

10. **Riverfront Streets/Utilities Project** – Attending weekly check-ins. Pump station generator to be installed soon. Tualatin staircase/bluff trailhead and Wapama Way intersection under construction. Traffic circle and elevated picnic platform under construction. North and south water quality swales underway. Joint utility trenching nearly complete. Undergrounding contract for 1st & St. Helens intersection work has begun.
11. **Urban Renewal Agency** – Prepared for FY 24-25 budget adoption with Gloria/John. URA Budget Committee meeting held on 5/16. URA meeting and budget adoption PH to be held on 6/5. Prepared a Resolution/IGA to set up to recapture funds utilized by the City to create and implement the URA. Will be put on Council agenda and URA agenda on 6/5.
12. **Library Solar Array Project** – Assisting library with grant-funded solar planning project. Planning grant is nearly complete, while an additional Oregon Dept of Energy construction grant is in process by contractor.
13. **VFW Post 1440 Veterans Memorial** – Organized a discussion with our local VFW and Lower Columbia Engineering about how to use VFW’s remaining funds on improvements to the memorial in McCormick Park.

Jenny Dimsho, AICP | Community Development Project Manager

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