

The City of St. Helens Economic Development Plan

August 1, 2007

Richard Hill Associates/MorganCPS Group



The City of St. Helens Economic Development Plan

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents.....	1	STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #3- Policies and Programs with Community-Wide Impact	28
Introduction.....	3	Business Districts Observations and Analysis.....	34
How this Plan came About	5	Current Setting.....	34
Comprehensive Plan Policy Framework.....	8	Future Strategy.....	34
Where the City is Now	10	Old Towne District	36
The economic base of St. Helens – 2007 Update.....	13	Houlton District	39
What the City is Doing Now	13	Highway 30 District	40
Methodology	17	Business Districts Recommended actions	43
Community-wide Observations and Analysis	18	STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #4- Old Towne District	43
Current Setting	18	STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #5- Houlton District	43
Community Wide Recommended actions	22	STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #6- Highway 30 District	44
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #1- Leadership in Economic Policy and Programs	22	Appendices	45
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #2- Effective Relationships with Other Agencies and Private-Sector Partners.....	25	Appendix A: Development Goals, Policies, and Implementation	46
		Appendix B: Selected Statistics.....	52
		The economic base of the City of St. Helens - 2000...52	



Materials and energy Availability	52
The labor market	52
Education and Technical Training.....	52
Key Public Facilities	53
Support For Economic Growth	53
Market forces.....	54
Location Factors.....	54
Resource Availability	54
Land Availability	54
Pollution Controls	55
Economic Patterns	55
Conclusions About Trends.....	56
Inventories.....	56
Appendix C: Economic Development Resources and Contacts.....	58
Appendix D: Project Participants	61
Appendix E: Relevant Ordinances	63



INTRODUCTION

This is a plan about prosperity. It is intended to guide the community of St. Helens in taking specific steps to create prosperity for its citizens and supporting its civic life.

Prosperity as a concept is found in several element of the community:

- ≈ Prosperity is found in **employment** for all who seek it at wage and salary levels appropriate to meet the needs of every individual and family.
- ≈ Prosperity is found in **commerce** for those who own or operate businesses be they in the industrial, retail, professional, or service sectors.
- ≈ Prosperity is found in property **value** where land and improvements increase in value commensurate with the economic vitality of the community.
- ≈ Prosperity is found in new **investment** when people create, expand, or improve buildings, developments, and businesses.
- ≈ Prosperity is found in tax and fee **revenue** that supports all units of local government so that the

needs and desires of the community for common services can be met.

- ≈ Prosperity is found in the **wealth** of the community where that wealth can be shared to support community activities, events, and support for those in need.
- ≈ Prosperity is found in the **opportunity** to live, work, play, shop, and learn within the community without needing to go elsewhere.

This plan examines the current state of the community's prosperity and identifies specific actions to be pursued to enhance it. It is intended to achieve these purposes:

- ≈ Guide the City Council in establishing economic development policies, projects, and programs reflected in adopted budgets and work programs.
- ≈ Guide the City Council, Boards and Commissions, and City Staff in carrying out those policies, projects, and programs.
- ≈ Provide a framework and catalyst for community action and citizen engagement.



- ≈ Establish a framework for the business community to use in participating in the community's economic development program.
- ≈ Create a document that can be used to frame issues, initiate action, and hold the community and its leaders accountable for progress in meeting economic development goals.

As this plan is read and acted upon, it is important to keep in mind the words and lessons expressed in an editorial in The Chronicle, an excerpt of which is quoted here:

“The action by the St. Helens City Council last week may have been the spark that was needed to rekindle a long-time burning dream of past City Fathers – the rebirth of the downtown area...For too long, St. Helens has seen other communities make use of their natural habitats to attract tourist dollars, while it has been unable to do the same because of a lack of investment capital...the city is finally realizing the long-held dream, revitalization of the downtown area...the city plans to do its best to see that the development

works...(the) Mayor...aptly described the planned development as the “first step” in helping to revitalize the downtown area... We agree, and would only hope that the City Council continues its pursuit of rebuilding one of the city’s most treasured possessions.”

The unfortunate aspect of these words was that they were published in the September 3, 1981 edition of the newspaper, almost 26 years ago. Many lessons come from understanding the implications of this editorial. Some are reflected in this Plan's recommendations.

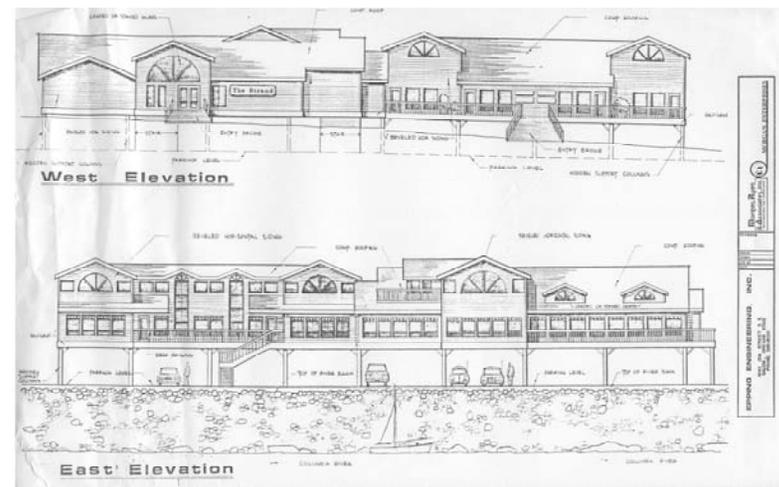


Figure 1 - Planned Waterfront Project - 1981



HOW THIS PLAN CAME ABOUT

This Economic Development Plan came about through the development and implementation of two prior planning efforts, the St. Helens Comprehensive Plan Update and the St. Helens Strategic Plan, which was adopted in late 2005. This document established this Mission Statement for the City:

The City of St. Helens' mission is to provide quality, effective, and efficient service to our citizens.

By doing so we will:

- ≈ Develop and preserve the highest possible quality of life for our residents, businesses and visitors.*
- ≈ Provide a safe and healthy environment within a sound economic framework.*
- ≈ Provide leadership which is open and responsive to the needs of the community and works for the benefit of all.*

To implement the Mission Statement, the Council adopted as part of the Plan nine primary focus areas. Two of those areas deal with economic development. The description for

each is given below, along with the recommended strategies. The detailed action plan is found in Appendix A of this document:

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #4 – Economic Development

The City's leadership and pro-active work to support and grow all the economic elements of the Community

DESIRED OUTCOME –

The City of St. Helens has a vibrant local economy that is in balance with the needs of its residents.

MEASURES –

- ≈ New family-wage level jobs are created at a pace commensurate with population growth
- ≈ Retail and service businesses compete effectively for local shopping dollars
- ≈ Property tax revenue is augmented by consistently increasing assessed valuation
- ≈ Business districts are vibrant and vital with no empty storefronts or other signs of blight



STRATEGIES -

- ≈ Identify and implement the City's most effective and efficient inter-agency economic development role.
- ≈ Fully develop the Tourism and Recreation potential of the Community.
- ≈ Identify and promote public-private, and inter-governmental service, economic, and job creation opportunities.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #9 – Business Development

The planning and development of the City's Business Districts

DESIRED OUTCOME –

The City's Old Towne and Waterfront become an exciting, dynamic, and successful cultural, government, recreational, and business district; the highway strip is attractive and functional; and the Mid-Town area is a vibrant area of many uses.

MEASURES –

- ≈ There is an extremely low vacancy rate for both business space and residences within the Business Districts
- ≈ Significant new private investment is taking place within the Business Districts
- ≈ River oriented tourism and recreational uses are flourishing
- ≈ The entire Waterfront area is master planned and in the process of development for river-oriented uses

STRATEGIES -

- ≈ Develop a comprehensive Old Towne/Waterfront master plan
- ≈ Develop a comprehensive development plan for the Highway 30 corridor
- ≈ Develop a comprehensive development plan for the Houlton Business District



These two focus areas, along with their desired outcomes, measures, and strategies, are the genesis of this Economic Development Plan. To implement these focus areas, the City Council initiated this planning process in order to identify the specific action plans and priorities for their implementation. (See Appendix A.1 and A.2 on Implementation Framework)



Figure 2 - Courthouse Plaza in Old Towne



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICY FRAMEWORK

The adopted St. Helens Comprehensive Plan includes the following economic development goals and policies:

Economic Goals in the St. Helens Comprehensive Plan

- 1) To maintain favorable conditions for a growing, healthy, stable and diversified business and industrial climate.
- 2) To encourage the expansion of employment opportunities within the urban area so residents can work within their communities rather than commute to jobs outside the County.
- 3) To promote industrial development necessary to provide a balanced tax base for the operation of local government services.
- 4) To establish greater local control over the destiny of the local economic development

Economic Policies in the St. Helens Comprehensive Plan

It is the policy of the City of St. Helens to:

- 1) Develop program strategies with other agencies groups and business in an effort to improve the local economy.

Strategies may include but not be limited to:
 - tax incentives and disincentives
 - land use controls and ordinances
 - preferential assessments
 - capital improvement programming; and
 - fee and less-than-fee acquisition techniques
- 2) Assist in programs to attract business and industries in terms of diversification and non-pollution rather than accept any business or industry which may wish to locate here; additionally, to prohibit industries with levels of pollution or other effects which would outweigh economic benefits or threaten the existing quality of living.
- 3) Work with applicable agencies at the State and Federal levels in enacting controls and performance standards for industrial operators to reduce the possibility of adverse impacts on the environment.



- 4) Encourage enterprises offering local residents a far greater selection of goods and services to locate here.
- 5) Make waterfront development a high priority and explore the possibility of acquiring grants for their revitalization.
- 6) Develop the local tourist and recreation sectors of the economy.
- 7) Allocate adequate amounts of land for economic growth and support the creation of commercial and industrial focal points.
- 8) Identify special locations for industrial activities that will assist in energy conservation.
- 9) All new industrial development must connect to public water and sewer.
- 10) Discourage commercial development that lacks sufficient land for future expansion and that does not allow sufficient buffer space from residential zones.
- 11) Ensure that land uses are compatible with the transportation facilities, such as commercial uses along a major arterial related to that facility and along railroads the same, and along navigable waterways the same, and along minor arterials the same.

The Comprehensive Plan is in conformance with the Statewide Planning Goals and Guidelines. Goal 9 establishes the basic requirements for local comprehensive plan relative to the economy. It states:

Comprehensive plans and policies shall contribute to a stable and healthy economy when they are based upon inventories of areas suitable to economic growth and activity when the following are taken into consideration: the health of the current economic base; materials and energy availability and cost; labor market factors; educational and technical training programs; availability of key public facilities; necessary support facilities; current market forces; location relative to markets; availability of renewable and non-renewable resources; availability of land; and pollution control requirements.



Figure 3 - Houlton District Businesses



WHERE THE CITY IS NOW

The 2000 Census reveals a great deal of information about the economy of St. Helens. This information is summarized below and is presented in more detail in Appendix B. A brief 2007 update follows the 2000 census discussion.

St. Helens, Oregon, a city located in the southeastern portion of Columbia County, is transitioning from an economy centered historically on industry to a one that is multi-faceted and diversified. The City's location as the Columbia County seat, proximity to the Portland metropolitan area, continuously increasing population, natural resources, waterfront property, history in the wood-products industry, and existing and future tourism and recreation assets all contribute to its increasingly diversified economic base.

According to the 2000 United States Census, the city has a population of 10,019, representing approximately 23 percent of the County-wide population of 43,560. As represented in Table 1, the Town's growth rate has exceeded that of the County and State for the last two decades, with the greatest increase (33 percent) occurring from 1990 to 2000.

As county-wide infrastructure and roadways improve, more commuters are living in St. Helens and traveling to the Portland metropolitan area for employment. Over 50 percent of the City's population commutes to work.¹ The community has continued to grow as people have chosen St. Helens as a place of residence. Table 2 indicates that the number of housing units has increased approximately 31 percent from 1990 to 2000, a faster rate of increase than the County, which experienced a 21 percent increase during the same period.

One of the most significant changes in St. Helens's economy is the decrease in local industries such as PGE, Trojan, Multnomah Plywood and others. Over the last 20 years, the importance of the wood products industry has diminished as well as the number of local industrial businesses directly involved in wood products processing.² However, the City's natural resource assets, including its location on the Columbia River, is now recognized and is being harnessed as a focus for recreation and tourism.

St. Helens boasts over two miles of waterfront area and another mile of waterfront in the Urban Growth area. As

¹ St. Helens Comprehensive Plan Economic Goals and Policies

² St. Helens Strategic Plan – 2006-2008



industrial uses have declined, the waterfront and other areas in the City have experienced an increase in personal uses

vacant or underutilized industrial parcels is currently underway, as new smaller industrial businesses and new commercial uses are taking their place. In addition, previously undeveloped residentially zoned property is being developed into new residences.³

TABLE 1
POPULATION TRENDS, 1980-2000

Area	1980	1990	1980-1990 % Change	2000	1990-2000 % Change
St. Helens	7,064	7,535	+6.7%	10,019	+33%
Columbia County	35,646	37,557	+5.4%	43,560	+16%
Oregon	2,633,156	2,842,321	+7.9 %	3,560,109	+25.3%
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau					

Changes in the economy have brought changes in employment and the workforce in the City. Given its role as County-seat, the number of government workers makes up approximately 13.3 percent of the workforce, an increase of 3 percent since 1990. In addition, St. Helens has approximately 20 large employers with over 2,000

such as marinas, houseboats, and recreational users. In the future, the City is planning for the continued growth and upgrade of the waterfront docks and park areas to facilitate more recreation and tourism.

employees and approximately 260 small business and approximately 88 home occupations.³

As St. Helens' economy continues to transition, the City has undergone an inventory of underdeveloped, vacant, or abandoned properties within the city. The conversion of

³ St. Helens Comprehensive Plan Economic Goals and Policies



As the economy of St. Helens changes, so does the makeup of the population. Personal wealth is growing, as illustrated by a 6.7 percent increase of per capita income growth for the period of 1990 to 2000, with adjustments for inflation. In addition, property values are increasing, with the assessed property value in the City increasing from \$365 million to \$590 million, including inflation, from 1990 to 2000. ³

TABLE 2
HOUSING UNITS, 1990-2000

AREA	1990	2000	1990-2000 % CHANGE
ST. HELENS	3,081	4,032	+ 31 %
COLUMBIA COUNTY	14,576	17,572	+ 21 %
OREGON	1,193,567	1,558,421	+ 30.6%
SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau			

As the City of St. Helens' population continues to increase and the economy transitions, the City is recognizing that growth in a variety of economic sectors will be necessary for positive and continuing economic growth. While the City recognizes its role in the metropolitan commute, it also seeks to increase its economic base in tourism and gain self-sufficiency in other areas such as healthcare, small business, and small industrial development.



THE ECONOMIC BASE OF ST. HELENS – 2007 UPDATE

WHAT THE CITY IS DOING NOW

The trends identified in the 2000 census are all still relevant today.

As in 2000, the most significant change in the City of St. Helens is the growth of commuters. If anything, that number has increased in both real numbers and as a percentage of all employees. St. Helens is like other communities within a one hour drive of the Portland metropolitan area. In this “commute-shed” there is one underlying economy consisting of employment, housing, and shopping. People work in the metro area, but choose to live in St. Helens for quality of life reasons, housing availability, and housing costs. Part of this trend, however, is that many people do major and day-to-day shopping in the Portland area, as that is where they spend their daytime hours. This trend hurts local merchants and professional service providers.

The second change in 2000 was the decreases in local industries such as PGE, Trojan, Multnomah Plywood, and such. This trend has stabilized with a net gain in jobs from new industrial users such as Pacific Stainless.

The third most significant change in 2000 was the shift in use of the waterfront from industries to personal uses such as marinas, houseboats, and recreational users. This change has stabilized with no further elimination of waterfront industrial uses. However, the community has developed an amphitheater on vacant property next to the Courthouse on the river. There is new redevelopment on Strand Street facing the waterfront bringing in additional housing.

The fourth most significant change in 2000 was the age of many of the buildings on the east side of Hwy 30. This trend has not changed and those building are now seven years old.

The fifth most significant change in 2000 was the increase in park areas and recreational opportunities. There have been no increases in park lands or public recreational opportunities over the last seven years. Private recreational activities have increased especially in water sports.

The population increases of the City through the 2000’s have been consistent, and have exceeded the growth rate of the State and Columbia County. Tables 3 and 4 below show the data which is also represented in the graph following.



**TABLE 3
POPULATION GROWTH**

AREA	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
ST. HELENS	10,100	10,380	10,780	11,250	11,370	11,795	11,940
COLUMBIA COUNTY	43,700	44,300	44,600	45,000	45,650	46,200	46,965
OREGON	3,436,750	3,471,700	3,504,700	3,541,500	3,582,600	3,631,440	3,690,505

**TABLE 4
RATE OF POPULATION GROWTH**

AREA	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
ST. HELENS		2.77%	3.85%	4.36%	1.07%	3.74%	1.23%
COLUMBIA COUNTY		1.37%	0.68%	0.90%	1.44%	1.20%	1.66%
OREGON		1.02%	0.95%	1.05%	1.16%	1.36%	1.63%

Current economic activities within the Community are generally pursued in segmented specific areas. Integration and coordination between the participating agencies is one of the challenges the City faces. The relevant agencies are:

City of St. Helens

The City has no specific economic development function. Planning staff, with support from other departments, takes the lead in working with potential business sector investors

to understand local regulations and to work through local processes. Staff has also worked with the Planning Commission to develop a new overlay zone for the downtown area intended to stimulate economic activity.



Port of St. Helens

The Port is the primary economic development agency responsible for developing and selling industrial property with the primary goals of job creation. Port boundaries include lands outside of city limits. Industrial development focuses on entire district, not just within St. Helens.

Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District (Col-Pac)

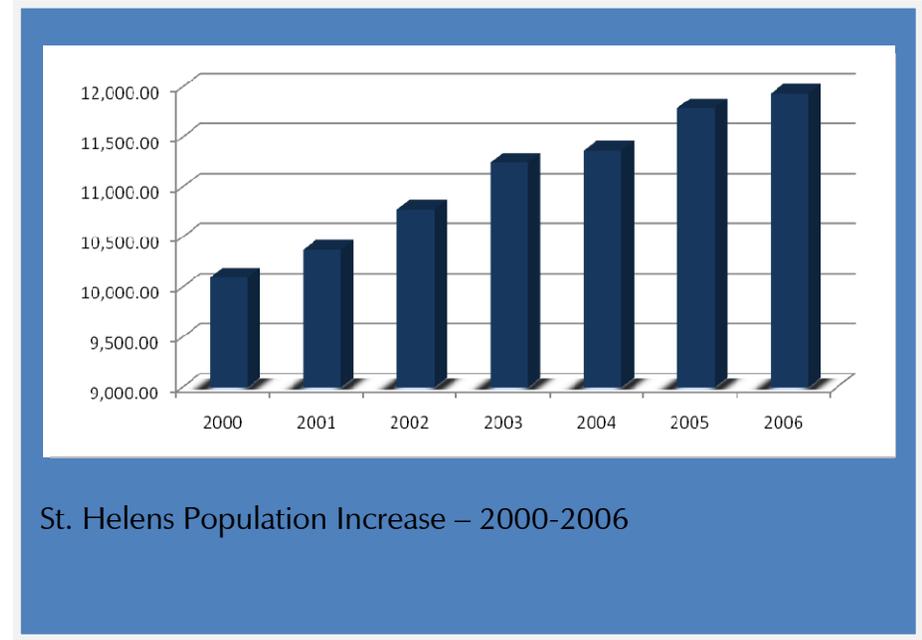
Col-Pac was incorporated in 1994 and serves as the mechanism for channeling federal monies to the region.

Col-Pac's 2005-07 goals are to:

- ≈ Retain and diversify the region's employment base to ensure a stable economy;
- ≈ Build capacity of communities to be economically self-reliant;
- ≈ Strengthen the regional economic identity through encouraging regional coordination, communication and cooperation.

NW Oregon Economic Alliance (NOEA)

NOEA was created in 1994 to meet the requirements of the Oregon Regional Investment and Rural Investment Fund programs for the distribution of lottery dollars for economic



St. Helens Population Increase – 2000-2006

development programs in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties. Funding is targeted toward, but not limited to: agriculture, communication, fisheries, forest products, small manufacturing, services, technology and tourism. The purpose and goals of NOEA are:

- ≈ Retaining and diversifying the region's employment base to ensure a stable economy
- ≈ Building capacity of communities to be economically self-reliant



- ≈ Strengthening the regional economic identity through encouraging partnership coordination, communication and cooperation
- ≈ Retention and creation of family wage jobs

NW Oregon Works (NOW)

NOW is an initiative focusing on cluster-based business development. NOW will support local economic development efforts through training of local staff and businesses on using cluster-based techniques in business retention and expansion. For example, rather than just working with individual companies, local staff will be trained and, where applicable, provided data on linking business activity through suppliers, vendors, workforce training opportunities, marketing, joint venture, etc. This may mean St Helens works jointly with Scappoose or other community to link together business development activity. NOW helps develop networks within the county and within Northwest Oregon that are mutually beneficial.



Figure 4 - Old Towne Sidewalk



METHODOLOGY

This Economic Development Plan builds upon the Comprehensive Plan and the St. Helens Strategic Plan. It was developed by reviewing all the relevant policies and programs of the City and other economic development agencies. It included a review of the current economic climate and an assessment of needs and opportunities. It identifies the players and their current roles.

A major part of this planning process was a series of interviews with individuals involved in the operation of the local economy. (See Appendix D; Participants) This included public officials from the City, County, and State; and private sector business people, investors, developers, and members of the financial community. These interviews revealed history, details, market information, and many ideas for consideration.

The Plan does not include primary economic research. It focuses instead on an overview of the economic climate and the policy and program framework that influences the local economy, providing recommendations for changes in that framework to better meet the Community's economic needs.



Figure 5 - The Riverfront, Marina, and Sand Island



COMMUNITY-WIDE OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

CURRENT SETTING

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Economic needs in St. Helens fall into four major categories:

- ≈ First is the need for family wage jobs. The Port does a good job developing and marketing its industrial parks. The two Boise Cascade plants continue to provide good jobs, though not at the same employment levels as in prior decades. More and more families are choosing to live in St. Helens for the quality of life, but work in the Portland metro area because of job availability.
- ≈ Second is the need for more financial success in the business community, meaning retail stores, professional services, and the service sector. This means successfully providing a broad array of goods and services within St. Helens so that local residents as well as those from the outside make shopping in St. Helens their first choice. Vacant storefronts mark the commercial districts, especially Houlton and Old

Towne, which is a sign of the lack of vibrancy and vitality.



Figure 6 - Houlton District businesses

- ≈ Third is the need to revitalize existing commercial districts. The Highway 30 District is a classic strip commercial area with little to distinguish it from any other such area. It was described as “shabby” in some of the interviews. A number of vacant lots and empty storefronts mark the Houlton District. It does not have the critical mass to be a vibrant commercial area. The Old Towne area is also marked by vacant



storefronts and unfulfilled potential. It has never fully taken advantage of its riverfront location.

- ≈ Fourth is the need to have a pro-active community voice and leadership in economic development efforts. There is no evident and active partnership between the City, Port, County and other economic entities to define and pursue common economic goals. There is no strong partnership between City Hall and the business community. The City is the logical entity to serve as the convener, facilitator, and leader of such efforts.

COMMUNITY ASSETS

The city has three distinct commercial districts, each with its own character and each providing a unique element of the business sector.

The Port's industrial parks and other privately owned industrial parks and sites provide opportunities for industrial development and job growth. Other industrial lands are also available. The two Boise Cascade plants are viable industrial uses that provide job stability and stable assessed valuation for at least the near future. However, these sites, especially the riverfront veneer plant, are underutilized and offer significant potential for redevelopment.

PRINCIPAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Highway 30 District has room for both new development and redevelopment. Traffic on Highway 30 between the Portland metro area and the lower Columbia River will continue to increase providing opportunities to capture drive-by traffic dollars.

The Houlton District is a primary link between the Highway and Old Towne. Its one-way couplet efficiently moves traffic. There is a significant amount of land that can be used for both new development and redevelopment.

Old Towne is the untapped major economic resource of the community. Urban land on riverfront settings is a rare commodity. St. Helen's riverfront includes a significant amount of undeveloped and under developed land. The Marina is a major asset, as is Sand Island. Several buildings downtown are being currently rehabilitated with one being converted to condominiums.

BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ≈ LACK OF VISION – The community does not have an understanding of its desired future relative to the economy.



- ≈ LACK OF LEADERSHIP – There is no source of leadership within the community that addresses the broad economic picture.
- ≈ LACK OF STRUCTURE – No structures are in place within any agency to plan and implement broad economic development initiatives.
- ≈ LACK OF FINANCING – Financial tools are not being developed or utilized to make public investments intended to stimulate private investments.
- ≈ LACK OF RELATIONSHIPS – The City does not have strong partnerships with other agencies engaged in economic development in order to jointly plan and implement economic strategies.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

It is important to identify and understand the advantages of St. Helens for economic development and activity compared to other communities. These advantages provide the competitive “hook” that should be utilized to attract both consumer and investment dollars to St. Helens instead of seeing them spent elsewhere.

LOCATION – St. Helens is less than one hour from the Portland metro area. As with other smaller cities within this distance, St. Helens has become a satellite city that shares much of the housing and employment economy with Portland. St. Helens provides a housing choice with a very livable community and neighborhoods that is not as readily available in Portland.

PRICE – Land for all development types is generally less expensive in St. Helens than in the Portland area or many surrounding communities. These lower prices are also reflected in commercial and residential property values.

TRAFFIC – Highway 30 is the major traffic route between the Portland metro area and the lower Columbia basin. It carries a great deal of traffic, which will continue to grow over time. With the expansion of the highway to five lanes several years ago, the corridor has the capacity to continue to make the commute to Portland, and the travel downriver, easy and convenient. The Highway and this traffic provides an excellent opportunity to provide grow both the tourist oriented commercial sector, and the major retailers that make St. Helens a regional economic hub.



RIVER – the big advantage of St. Helens is its relationship with the Columbia River. Much of the City has a view of the river. The City has a great deal of waterfront property. In the Old Towne area many of the buildings face the river, and the riverfront has been developed with the marina and with the amphitheater. Sand Island provides a unique park. The river is fully navigable for recreational craft and there already is a

great deal of recreational river traffic that visits St. Helens. However, the full potential of developing the riverfront has not been defined or realized. This presents a unique opportunity as there are few cities with the type and amount of riverfront land that can be used for both commercial and residential uses, as well as greatly enhanced recreational opportunity.



Figure 7 - The Historic City Hall building



COMMUNITY WIDE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #1- LEADERSHIP IN ECONOMIC POLICY AND PROGRAMS

The community will be best served if the City takes a more aggressive leadership role in economic development. Today the Port focuses on industrial development; the Economic Development District focuses on job creation; and the City provides a regulatory structure to guide land use. There isn't a coordinated partnership focusing on one economic vision and set of policies and programs for the area. There also are no programs run out of City Hall that give specific attention to the needs of the commercial segment of the local economy, development and re-development opportunities, and needs of the business districts.

DESIRED OUTCOME –

The government of the City of St. Helens provides leadership in regional economic development efforts, seeing that there is a coordinated set of responsibilities working toward common goals. The City also provides economic leadership focusing on the commercial districts and the needs of landowners and merchants to develop, re-develop, and invest in business growth. By these efforts, St. Helens has a robust local economy that has low unemployment, a high number of family wage jobs, and vibrant and prosperous commercial and industrial districts.

MEASURES –

- ≈ The City has low unemployment
- ≈ The City is home to a high number of family-wage jobs
- ≈ Commercial districts are vibrant and prosperous with few if any vacant storefronts or land
- ≈ Day-to-Day shopping needs for St. Helens residents are being met by local merchants
- ≈ The riverfront becomes an economic engine marked by land uses taking advantage of view and access to the river



Leadership

Action/Projects	Description	Priority	Assignment	Key Dates
City Economic Development Role	The City Council adopts as an amendment of its strategic plan specific policies on the City role in Economic Development. The City will, by policy, establish that economic development is an appropriate and important role for City Government and the City will aggressively pursue economic development policy, programs, and projects. These policies speak to the City taking a leadership role through the proactive actions of the City Council and Staff. The City by policy will engage the other agencies, organizations, and individuals that can contribute to the planning, financing, and implementing specific projects and programs to implement this Plan, and will actively seek out and build partnerships to get things done. The City will be a convener, facilitator, and supporter of the economic development activities within the community and region. The City will make it a priority to fund through the annual budget process, including actively seeking supportive revenue sources, the programs and projects that will implement this Plan.	High	Council and City Administrator	On-going



<p>Economic Development Director</p>	<p>The position of Economic Development Director will be established in the FY 07-08 budget. This position will be responsible for leading and administrating the City's economic development programs and projects and coordinating regional economic development efforts</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>City Council</p>	<p>07-08 Budget</p>
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Figure 8 - the Theater in Old Towne



STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #2- EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND PRIVATE-SECTOR PARTNERS

The community will be best served if all the partners that can bring resources to the economic development effort are coordinated and focused toward mutual goals based on common values and interests. The City should provide the leadership in forging and maintaining these relationships.

DESIRED OUTCOME –

The various government agencies involved in economic development in the St. Helens area work together to best serve the public's interest. The agencies plan, strategize, coordinate, communicate, and work together to maximize the efficiency of fostering economic development results and in maximizing the effectiveness of every tax dollar.

MEASURES –

- ≈ The various agencies are working together on projects
- ≈ The staff and elected officials of every agency meet on a regular basis to coordinate and plan economic development activities
- ≈ Strategic plans, Capital Improvement Programs, and work programs are developed in concert between all the agencies based on a common strategy, and when appropriate, mutually adopted



Relationships

Action/Projects	Description	Priority	Assignment	Key Dates
Forge an Economic Development Alliance with other Agencies	Foster a strong working relationship with the Port of St. Helens, Columbia County, The Columbia Economic Development Corporation, and the Oregon Department of Community and Economic Development, as well as other relevant agencies, to plan in concert for the economic improvement of the St. Helens area and to undertake together projects and programs to achieve that plan.	High	City Council, City Administrator, and Economic Development Director	On-going



<p>Forge an Economic Development Alliance with the Private Sector</p>	<p>Foster a strong working relationship with private sector partners engaged in developing the St. Helens economy. Coordinate on economic development efforts. Support individual businesses. Assist in understanding and following regulations and laws. Engage the private sector in planning and implementation of economic development programs. Help support the work of the Chamber of Commerce. Engage the Chamber, as well as other relevant private sector organizations and partners, in planning for the economic improvement of the St. Helens area and to undertaking together projects and programs to achieve that plan.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>City Council, City Administrator, and Economic Development Director</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>Coordinate Development and Job Creation</p>	<p>Coordinate, through City staff, the efforts of regional agencies to foster job creation and support new economic development. Serve as a catalyst to bring groups together around common interests. Actively seek opportunities to leverage the work of agencies into greater results by working together.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Economic Development Director</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>Support the “Business Cluster” Program</p>				



STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #3- POLICIES AND PROGRAMS WITH COMMUNITY-WIDE IMPACT

The community will be best served if an overall economic development focus is established that addresses the vision, priority, and drive to set and accomplish aggressive economic development goals. Such a focus deals with all aspects of economic development including job creation, industrial development, commercial and professional business development, improvement of business districts, and marketing.

DESIRED OUTCOME –

The economy of St. Helens is healthy and growing. There is diversity in employment, and in business and industrial sectors, giving a multi-faceted and solid foundation to the economy. Recognizing that many St. Helens residents work in the Portland metro area, the economic focus is on providing good and services that meet the day-to-day needs of residents effectively competing with businesses on the outside so that residents will choose to do much of their shopping at home. The same competitive advantage will be sought in developing new businesses so that local employers can provide family-wage jobs so that most people can choose to both live and work in St. Helens. In the event of significant plant closures, the City is ready with a strategy to help those displaced and to reclaim the vacated properties with new uses as soon as possible. The community also greatly increases its tourism economy by stressing redevelopment of Old Towne and the riverfront into a remarkable urban attraction that is widely known as an important destination along the Columbia River.

MEASURES –

- ≈ Decisions are made on economic policy and programs that span individual or small area interests and work to address the needs of the community as a whole
- ≈ The economy diversifies to reflect a host of large and medium sized employers, and a large number of viable small businesses
- ≈ Existing businesses are sustained over time as demonstrated by low vacancy rates for commercial and industrial buildings



- ≈ The City receives regional recognition for its economic development success as measured in employment, tourist dollars, local shopping, and strong local businesses



Figure 9 - the Riverfront Amphitheater



Community Wide Impacts

Action/Projects	Description	Priority	Assignment	Key Dates
Maintain a community wide perspective	The city policy should be to relate industrial development efforts to larger business and employment development perspectives. Industrial development should be pursued in a manner that is consistent with overall efforts. This might guide the type of industrial uses being courted for factors such as wage and salary levels, desired labor pool characteristics, location, traffic impacts, and other factors.	Low	Economic Development Director	On-going
Plan Updates	Publically review and update the Economic Development Plan and Strategy every year as part of the overall Strategic Plan update	Medium	City Council	Annually



<p>Seek new and creative Financing for public improvements</p>	<p>Expand the scope of potential financial sources to support development activities and initiatives. Maximize use of available grants and low interest loans to finance needed infrastructure. Implement tax increment financing through establishment of one or more urban renewal districts with those funds focused on public investments designed to maximize private investment.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>City Council, City Administrator, and Economic Development Director</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>Community Theme</p>	<p>Support establishing a community-based theme under the leadership of a community-based organization but with close cooperation of the City. An example is the City of Eugene’s theme, “The World’s Greatest City of the Arts and Outdoors.” Use the theme as a marketing tool while also using it to guide all city activities. Support the establishment and operation of a National Heritage Area on the lower Columbia River possibly using this as a foundation of the city’s theme.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>City Council Community Based Groups</p>	<p>2008</p>



Engage and Support local businesses	Maintain strong City Hall/Chamber of Commerce relationships, and relationships with other business groups. Support a system of community design awards to recognize significant rehabilitation, remodeling, and clean-up efforts for commercial properties. Make visible City participation in Chamber and Community activities a priority.	Low	City Council, City Administrator, and Economic Development Director – Chamber	On-going
Strengthen the Tourism Sector	Support, and integrate with City assets and capacity, a community-based tourism based program under the leadership of a community and business based organization. Focus on the relationship with the Columbia River both as a desirable stop along the River and Highway 30, but also as a destination because of an extraordinary riverfront development.	Medium	Economic Development Director and Chamber	2008
Anticipate plant closures	Prepare a contingency plan for the possible closure of one or more major employers. Include redevelopment and marketing strategies	Low	Economic Development Director	2008
Regulation reform	Continue to review and update ordinances and processes to remove barriers to high-quality and needed investment and development	Medium	Planning Director & Planning Commission	2008



<p>Maintain a long range vision</p>	<p>Initiate long range planning and maintain focus on several large projects including commuter rail service, a railroad overpass, a youth activity center, and a civic center</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>City Council, City Administrator, and Economic Development Director</p>	<p>On-going</p>
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Figure 10 - Old Towne Sidewalk business use



BUSINESS DISTRICTS OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

CURRENT SETTING

St. Helens has three distinct business districts. These districts have developed in an evolutionary pattern as the community has grown, as the economy has changed, and as driving patterns have shifted over time.

The Old Towne area developed first, with shops, services, and offices springing up around both the docks and the Courthouse. Businesses sprung up along the highway in response to growing automobile traffic. The Houlton business district was both the Main Street business core for the Houlton community and the link between Highway 30 and Old Towne.

Each district has its own character and plays its own role in the local economy. However, the relatively high vacancy rates, prevalence of empty storefronts, presence of buildings in various states of disrepair, and short life spans of many stores raises many issues.

First, is there too much commercially zoned land? It appears there is more available land than the market needs at current population levels and at current levels of economic vibrancy. In the same vein, certain stores, especially big box

stores such as Wal-Mart and Fred Meyer, have displaced much of the traditional commerce that frequented smaller, locally owned stores. The market is there, but it is being served in a different way leaving underutilized commercial land behind.

FUTURE STRATEGY

It is not necessarily appropriate to downzone commercial properties to a different type of use because of a current surplus. But, several strategies should be explored to create more intensity of commercial activity and development within the existing districts. All of these must be focused on one principal: ***CREATE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE!***

A competitive advantage must be created in several aspects of the local economy. All efforts should be focused on these principles:

- ≈ *Make it more attractive for investors to invest in business development in St. Helens than in other communities.*
- ≈ *Make it more attractive for businesses to locate in St. Helens than in other communities*



- ≈ *Make it more attractive for existing businesses to stay, redevelop, and grow where they are as opposed to moving.*
- ≈ *Create better opportunities for local residents to shop at home instead of going out-of-town, especially for day-to-day shopping.*
- ≈ *Create a strong local employment market where attractive jobs are available in St. Helens for most of the local labor market keeping people at home to work instead of commuting elsewhere.*
- ≈ *Maintain and grow a business climate where businesses are welcomed and helped to establish, grow, and prosper, all within the context of a body of land use laws and government leadership that support development in a viable, yet responsible manner.*
- ≈ *Build upon the community's unique strengths such as the River, the history, the highway traffic, the proximity to the Portland employment and housing market, to distinguish St. Helens from other communities.*

- ≈ *Make St. Helens the best place to live, work, play, shop, and learn compared to other communities in the region.*

These strategies include:

- ≈ *Broaden the allowable array of uses within each of the commercial zones. Let market forces help fill vacant commercial property by allowing many types of uses. This probably means moving away from strict uni-dimensional zoning to zones that allow a broad array of mixed uses. These broadened ranges of use should include residential at one end of the spectrum to light manufacturing and assembly at the other. The trade-off for this reduction of the use regulations is to strengthen the design standards and the standards for mitigating negative impacts such as those coming from increased levels of traffic.*
- ≈ *Increase the desirability of the commercial districts by creating obvious improvements within the public right-of-way such as enhanced lighting, distinct signage, landscaping, etc.*
- ≈ *Make public investments designed to encourage private investment. Improve infrastructure. Clean up*



shabby streets and sidewalks. Dress up the business districts.

- ≈ *Create remarkable and unique elements in the community that draw attention, attract people, and create a source of pride.*
- ≈ *Forge powerful partnerships with other public and private partners to foster and carry out economic initiatives leveraging each other strengths and the public's tax dollars.*

OLD TOWNE DISTRICT

The Old Towne District has been the focus of a great deal of community energy and civic hope for years. It is easy to visualize its potential as a vibrant center of government, commerce, recreation, and civic life.

Its anchor use is the County Courthouse with City Hall serving as the second major use. These government facilities employ dozens of people and attract hundreds of people during the day. They encourage support uses, such as title companies and attorney offices, to locate in close proximity.

The waterfront itself has four major facets attracting people: the marina, Sand Island, the amphitheater, and the view of the Columbia River itself.

Yet, Old Towne is but a shadow of the dream held by so many. Vacant storefronts dot the streets. old buildings in states of disrepair are common. Few people are seen walking the sidewalks. Businesses that depend on walk-in traffic, such as cafes and coffee shops, have not proven viable.



Figure 11 - Waterfront Park and the Boise property beyond



Figure 12 - Old Towne Businesses

The Boise Cascade Veneer Plant occupies over a dozen acres of riverfront property immediately south of Old Towne. Much of the land along the River is vacant and lightly used for log storage and other low intensity activities. While the land is prime for development, and would double the size of the Old Towne District, Boise officials report the veneer mill is a viable, profitable operation that employs many people and there are no plans to close the

use in the foreseeable future. However, those officials support the City's efforts to plan for the Old Towne area anticipating changes in the Boise property at some point in the future.

Many plans and strategies for Old Towne have been prepared and formulated over the last three decades. Nice maps and renderings show a history of attention to the aesthetics of the Courthouse Plaza and the streetscape throughout the area. Building rehabilitation has been the focus of many plans. Yet, little has happened to stem the continuing decline of the Old Towne's fortunes.

One bright spot is the current rehabilitation activity remodeling old buildings for residential use. Enterprising developers have seen the potential for housing being attractive to those who want to live near the River in condominium style homes with River views. This new investment is encouraging. It also sets the stage to have more people living in Old Towne, which will help support business activity.

However, despite this upsurge of interest, and all the planning and effort of the past, there is little sign that Old Towne will soon be full of people on the sidewalks, busy offices, urban homes, and ringing cash registers.



Figure 13 - Old Towne Redevelopment Scenario

One idea that has surfaced is to relocate the government offices of the County and City to a new facility in the Houlton District, and reuse the Courthouse and City Hall for businesses that will take advantage of the proximity to the

River. This might be a very viable and exciting idea, but it comes with the risk of removing the Old Towne's anchor uses with no guarantee the replacing uses will do better in stimulating the local economy. This dramatic idea must be thoroughly studied and fleshed out to determine its viability before it advances very far.

A review of City records shows no lack of planning for the old Town District. What also shows is a lack of follow-through. City government, the business community, and local leadership all failed to have the courage and commitment to implement these plans and sustain a redevelopment program over time. A lack of effective leadership that brings together all the parties; facilitates the development of common vision, goals, and strategy; and maintains the focus of energy, resources, and commitment to implement that strategy, has prevented any meaningful redevelopment effort and allowed blighting influences to continue to erode Old Towne.

It is critical that this blighting process be stemmed and reversed. The community is losing a valuable resource that could become much more of a jewel of the local economy, recreation, and civic and cultural life. The costs of this blight



are high in maintenance and crime. The greater cost is reflected in property values, which are depressed and not appreciating as they could. This robs the community of potential tax revenue and causes more tax dollars to be spent to control the ills of blight.

Probably the role that was missing from earlier redevelopment plan efforts, besides the lack of sustaining leadership, was an active programmatic role by the City. There are two key elements that must be part of this effort:

- ≈ The City should have a program of making public



Figure 14 - Houlton District Businesses

investments designed to encourage private investments, creating a many-fold return.

- ≈ The City should focus long-term resources, especially through pro-active program management, to sustain the redevelopment activity over time. This includes developing and managing programs of public investment, forging working partnerships with the private sector and other relevant agencies, advocating and marketing, and keeping the spotlight on the programs so that community energy and pride about Old Towne continue to grow.

Without these three critical elements, leadership; investment; and sustained and focused effort, Old Towne will continue to languish and decline.

HOULTON DISTRICT

This District has several distinct areas including each of the corridors along the one-way couplet and the corridor elements along the street as it moves east toward Old Towne. These sub-areas are marked by a mixture of retail and office spaces, a mixture of old and newer buildings, and a mixture of strong and weak businesses along with a number of vacant storefronts and vacant land.



Figure 15 - Houlton Redevelopment Scenario

This is an area that probably needs to have development opportunity other than for retail and office space. There is too much vacant land and too many empty buildings to be filled by market demand. Other opportunities for new uses

need to be provided that encourage housing, professional services, entertainment, buildings that house mixed uses, and other uses so that the District becomes a viable mixture of a number of uses. This District needs people during the day and night that are there because they live or work there. These people become customers for the retail uses and help to support a viable micro-economy.

As discussed above, one idea that has surfaced that provides opportunity in both Houlton and Old Towne is to consider relocation of the County Courthouse and City Hall to a new facility within the Houlton District. This would provide an excellent anchor use that will bring a new substantial building, uses, and people to Houlton, while freeing up valuable waterfront property and historic buildings in Old Towne for new commercial uses.

HIGHWAY 30 DISTRICT

The Highway 30 District is a typical strip commercial area that can be found in any community with a highway. It has an array of newer businesses, including a number of national franchises. Automobile-oriented businesses are commonplace. Many newer businesses that provide day-to-day goods and services, such as groceries and

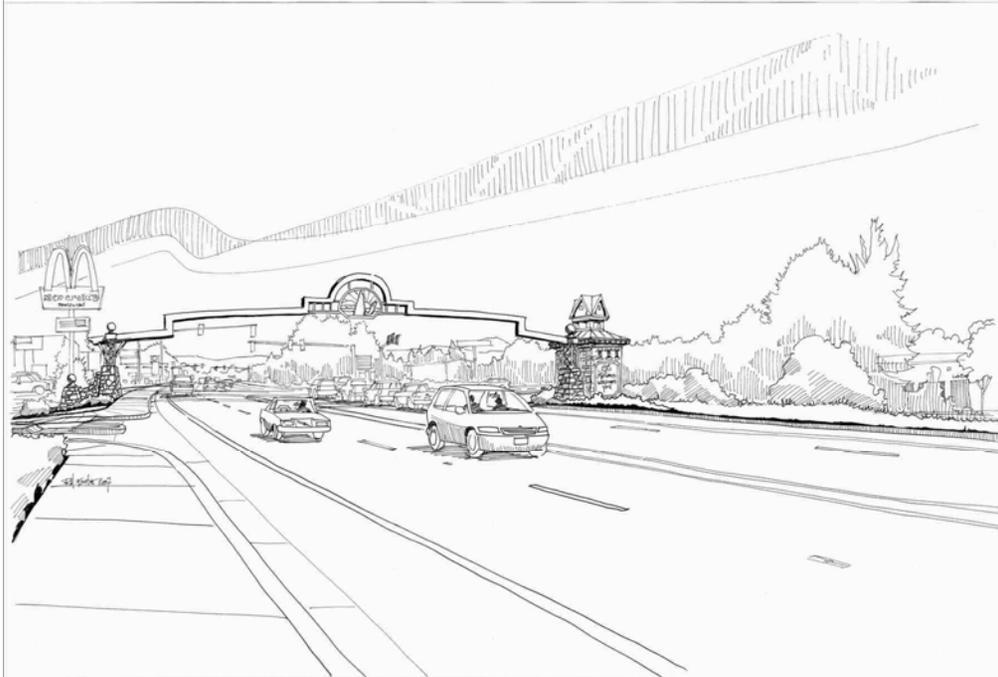


Figure 16 - Highway 30 Redevelopment Scenario

drug stores, are located here having relocated from or displaced smaller, older traditional businesses in Houlton and Old Towne.

The District is unique in that it is one-sided. The railroad tracks on the east side of the street prohibit access and therefore businesses from that side. This creates an asymmetrical district. One advantage is it is easier to manage traffic flows with half the number of turning movements of other districts.

The Highway 30 District provides the greatest variety of commercial opportunities to the community. It is the site of most of the stores providing both day-to-day and durable goods. It has the only readily available sites for larger new stores

It is also very important to the over economy of St. Helens in that it captures revenue from passing motorists. With the high volume of pass-through traffic, many businesses cater to those motorists bringing outside dollars into the community.

While the District is very important to the community, it also is not something about which anyone interviewed for this project expressed any pride. It has aesthetic problems due to a proliferations of signs and a lack of landscaping. There are traffic congestion



problems stemming from a proliferation of driveways. While there are newer stores, there are also a number of buildings and businesses suffering from age and neglect. These factors can create a blighting influence that impacts the viability and worth of the entire district.

Equally important, there is nothing that distinguishes this commercial district from any other highway commercial district, other than its one-sided nature. There is nothing special that causes people to consider this District to be more attractive or distinguished compared to other commercial areas.



BUSINESS DISTRICTS RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #4- OLD TOWNE DISTRICT

- ≈ Give a very high priority to development of an Old Towne master plan and strategy that is less about aesthetics and more about viable and realistic economic development
- ≈ Explore all options for taking advantage of the Columbia River as an economic force. Recreation, tourism, housing, aesthetics, character, heritage, civic life, and marketing all should revolve around this unique opportunity, physical element, and competitive advantage
- ≈ Encourage a broad array of uses in Old Towne, including residential, office, service, retail, research and development, and light manufacturing and assembly. Create built-in customers
- ≈ Create the financial tools that will support Old Towne's redevelopment. This should include establishment of an Urban Renewal District so that Tax Increment Financing can be used to make the needed public investments

- ≈ Make Old Towne a priority for the work of the City. Investing City resources in planning, strategic investment, marketing, project management, and leadership in a sustaining manner over time will give a multi-fold return in tax revenue and a healthy local economy
- ≈ Plan for the future redevelopment of the Boise Cascade site so that when the day comes when the property is redeveloped, it does so within a context that is consistent with and supportive of the balance of Old Towne.
- ≈ Seriously study the potential development at a strategic location in Houlton of a Civic Center complex to house a relocation of City and County offices, with the conversion of the Courthouse and City Hall business uses

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #5- HOULTON DISTRICT

- ≈ De-emphasize retail uses and encourage more office, service, and residential uses
- ≈ Develop a mixed-use zone for this district encouraging this broad array of uses



- ≈ Implement design standards that encourage development in a high quality fashion where each new or remodeled building contributes to the overall positive character and viability of the District
- ≈ Seriously study the potential development at a strategic location of a Civic Center complex to house a relocation of City and County offices

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #6- HIGHWAY 30
DISTRICT

- ≈ Develop an urban design plan focusing on creating a unique and remarkable highway commercial district
- ≈ Address the major ills of strip commercial areas: traffic congestion and poor aesthetics
- ≈ Adopt zoning standards implementing the urban design plan
- ≈ Develop the financial tools to make strategic public investments needed to stimulate the urban design plan's implementation
- ≈ Define the Highway 30 District by gateways or other means that indicates to the traveler that a special destination has been reached

- ≈ Encourage in-fill and rehabilitation of existing buildings



Figure 17 - Businesses along Highway 30



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Development Goals, Policies and Implementation

APPENDIX B: Selected Statistics

APPENDIX C: Economic Development Resources and Contacts

APPENDIX D: Project Participants

APPENDIX E: Relevant Ordinances



APPENDIX A: DEVELOPMENT GOALS, POLICIES,
AND IMPLEMENTATION

Economic Goals in the St. Helens Comprehensive Plan

- 1) To maintain favorable conditions for a growing, healthy, stable and diversified business and industrial climate.
- 2) To encourage the expansion of employment opportunities within the urban area so residents can work within their communities rather than commute to jobs outside the County.
- 3) To promote industrial development necessary to provide a balanced tax base for the operation of local government services.
- 4) To establish greater local control over the destiny of the local economic development

Economic Policies in the St. Helens Comprehensive Plan

It is the policy of the City of St. Helens to:

- 1) Develop program strategies with other agencies groups and business in an effort to improve the local economy.

Strategies may include but not be limited to:

tax incentives and disincentives;

land use controls and ordinances;

preferential assessments;

capital improvement programming; and

fee and less-than-fee acquisition techniques.

- 2) Assist in programs to attract business and industries in terms of diversification and non-pollution rather than accept any business or industry which may wish to locate here; additionally, to prohibit industries with levels of pollution or other effects which would outweigh economic benefits or threaten the existing quality of living.
- 3) Work with applicable agencies at the State and Federal levels in enacting controls and performance standards for industrial operators to reduce the possibility of adverse impacts on the environment.



- 4) Encourage enterprises offering local residents a far greater selection of goods and services to locate here.
- 5) Make waterfront development a high priority and explore the possibility of acquiring grants for their revitalization.
- 6) Develop the local tourist and recreation sectors of the economy.
- 7) Allocate adequate amounts of land for economic growth and support the creation of commercial and industrial focal points.
- 8) Identify special locations for industrial activities that will assist in energy conservation.
- 9) All new industrial development must connect to public water and sewer.
- 10) Discourage commercial development that lacks sufficient land for future expansion and that does not allow sufficient buffer space from residential zones.
- 11) Ensure that land uses are compatible with the transportation facilities, such as commercial uses along a major arterial related to that facility and along railroads the same, and along navigable waterways the same, and along minor arterials the same.

St. Helens Strategic Plan

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #4–Economic Development

The City’s leadership and pro-active work focused to support and grow all the economic elements of the Community.

DESIRED OUTCOME –

The City of St. Helens has a vibrant local economy that is in balance with the needs of its residents.

MEASURES –

- ≈ New family-wage level jobs are created at a pace commensurate with population growth
- ≈ Retail and service businesses compete effectively for local shopping dollars.
- ≈ Property tax revenue is augmented by consistently increasing assessed valuation.
- ≈ Business districts are vibrant and vital with no empty storefronts or other signs of blight.

Goal 4: Strive to Maximize the City’s Impact on Initiating and Supporting Economic Development Activities and Opportunities.



The City recognizes that high quality services are to a large extent dependent on a strong business community. Based on this recognition, the City is committed to provide and further enhance a strong economic base by encouraging revenue-producing, high quality, "clean" retail, commercial and industrial development that is compatible with a community of homes atmosphere.

Strategy 1: Identify and implement the City's most effective and efficient inter-agency economic development role.

- ≈ Provide adequate infrastructure in water, sewer and transportation.
- ≈ Effective zoning policies and ordinances designed to support economic development and job creation activities.
- ≈ Involve elected officials in development / promotion activities.
- ≈ Sustain a Substantive "Buy Local" Effort.

Strategy 2: Fully develop the Tourism and Recreation potential of the Community.

- ≈ Market local tourist attractions and amenities in cooperation with businesses and other organizations.

- ≈ Develop and expand community oriented recreational facilities.

Strategy 3: Identify and promote public-private, and inter-governmental service, economic and job creation opportunities.

- ≈ Commit to grantsmanship as an important City function and staff the function appropriately,
- ≈ Establish a standing committee to evaluate economic development opportunities, to include representatives from the Port, county, etc.
- ≈ Establish opportunities inventory and assessment program to target priority development opportunities. Possible inventory opportunities may include items such as:
 - ≈ North end waterfront park
 - ≈ New Boat ramp
 - ≈ Land link to Sand Island
 - ≈ Angled parking in Houlton
 - ≈ Commuter train to Portland
 - ≈ Train to Astoria



STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #6–Physical Condition and Appearance

The level of upkeep of yards, buildings, and public spaces.

DESIRED OUTCOME

The physical environment of the City, regardless of public or private ownership, is maintained in a clean and tidy manner.

MEASURES –

- ≈ Streets and sidewalks are free of weeds and litter.
- ≈ Buildings are in good repair and condition.
- ≈ Private yards and spaces are free from clutter and junk and well maintained.

Goal 6: Improve and Maintain the City’s Appearance and the Condition of Community

Assets

The City is committed to provide a pleasing community atmosphere and a level of maintenance of public streets, parks, rights-of-way and other public facilities that is consistent with the level of maintenance our citizens provide to their private property. We are further committed to recognize and promote individual property rights while

ensuring that the rights of others are not infringed upon. This commitment is intended to promote and support a positive spirit and pride in the community.

Strategy 1: Enhance the City’s appearance and appeal to citizens, business owners and investors and visitors.

- ≈ Undertake a campaign to rid all city owned property of weeds, litter, and other unkempt conditions. Options include volunteers, clubs, community corrections, and City resources.

Strategy 2: Improve the appearance of private property.

- ≈ Assure nuisance ordinances are up-to-date and adequate to address visible junk and clutter on private property. Enforce these ordinances.

Strategy 3: Encourage the rehabilitation of old buildings within the commercial districts.

- ≈ Provide design standards as both a catalyst to private investment, and a framework to guide private actions. Encourage private investment by providing match grants or low-interest loans for work that is consistent with the City’s plans. City Staff June 2007start

Strategy 4: Eliminate gravel streets within the community.



- ≈ Develop and implement a program to pave all streets including consideration of alternative street standards appropriate for retrofitting old streets and including funding mechanism that are fair while also achieving community goals.

Strategy 5: Create attractive and distinctive gateways to the Community along Highway 30.

- ≈ Design and build gateways that create a very positive first impression and that reflect a high degree of pride through good design and maintenance.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA #9–Business Development

The planning and development of the City’s Business Districts

DESIRED OUTCOME

The City’s Old Towne and Waterfront become an exciting, dynamic, and successful cultural, government, recreational, and business district; the highway strip is attractive and functional; and the Mid-Town area is a vibrant area of many uses.

MEASURES

- ≈ There is an extremely low vacancy rate for both business space and residences within the Business Districts.
- ≈ Significant new private investment is taking place within the Business Districts.
- ≈ River oriented tourism and recreational uses are flourishing.
- ≈ The entire Waterfront area is master planned and in the process of development for river-oriented uses.

Goal 9: Develop the Long-Term Community and Business Potential of the City.

The City has tried for years to develop the waterfront as an important resource that helps to stimulate the economic revitalization of Old Towne. However, the full potential has never been realized. A number of disparate owners, including the City, have not created a common vision and plan and worked together for its achievement. The Highway area is developing in a typical strip-commercial pattern with the attendant problems of aesthetic degradation, loss of landscaping, safety and congestion issues, and the loss of a unique character. The Houlton area has a high number of vacant storefronts and has lost much of its economic vitality.



Strategy 1: Develop a comprehensive Old Towne/Waterfront master plan.

- ≈ This plan should build off the numerous plans of the past, but should also be based on a solid economic foundation and physical assessment of the area and infrastructure. It should be developed in close partnership with all involved property owners and merchants looking for common interest and opportunities for mutual gain. City Staff FY 07-08 Medium Develop and implement a specific implementation strategy for the Old Towne/Waterfront Plan that focuses on finance and programming. All funding options, including urban renewal, should be examined for potential use.

Strategy 2: Develop a comprehensive development plan for the Highway 30 corridor.

- ≈ The plan should address the economic role of the Corridor, its aesthetics, traffic circulation, land use patterns, and other appropriate issues.

Strategy 3: Develop a comprehensive development plan for the Houlton Business District.

- ≈ The plan should address the economic role of the District, its aesthetics, traffic circulation, land use patterns, and other appropriate issues.



APPENDIX B: SELECTED STATISTICS

THE ECONOMIC BASE OF THE CITY OF ST. HELENS - 2000

Personal wealth is growing measured by per capita income growth. There was a 6.7% increase for the period of 1990 to 2000 after adjustments for inflation.

Property value is growing as seen by the addition of 1000 dwellings @ \$100,000 avg. value. This increased assessed property value in City of St. Helens from \$356 million to \$590 million including inflation of about 37% for the period of 1990 to 2000.

Employment is another measure of economic base and during this period the work force grew about 37% and unemployment changed from 6.7% in 1990 to 7% in 2000.

MATERIALS AND ENERGY AVAILABILITY

Within the City there are no energy resources available for use in the economy.

Within the City there are some rock resources available but there are none deemed significant and most are limited to industrial areas for uses.

THE LABOR MARKET

During this period the civilian work force increased from 64.4% to 67.6%

Private employees decreased from 84.2 to 79.4%; government workers increased from 10.6 to 13.3%; and self-employed increased from 5.1 to 6.6%.

The ratio of “blue collar” to “white collar” employees hardly changed.

St Helens has about over 20 large employers with over 2,000 employees and about 260 small businesses and 88 licensed home occupations.

EDUCATION AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

Of the population over 25 the amount of education is increasing. In 1990 24.4% of population had not completed the 12th grade and in 2000 it dropped to 17.6%. The amount completing 2 or more years of college increased from 13.9% to 18.3%.

In St. Helens the opportunities for advanced education have decreased with Portland Community College dropping classes held in the city area.

Technical opportunities have improved with the addition of the Community Learning Center and a new and improved library with computer connectivity.



KEY PUBLIC FACILITIES

Current operating capacity for water supply is about 4.5 million gallons per day with a max capacity for 8.2 mgd. Normal usage averages 1.5 mgd and peak summer usage is 3.5 mgd. Water is available to all of the commercial and industrial properties.

Current operating capacity for the sanitary sewer system at the waste water treatment plant is about 36 mgd with a storage capacity of 215 million gallons. Over 90% of the plant is used for industrial treatment. The primary treatment plant has a design capacity of 3.2 mgd but because of the secondary treatment system can handle significantly more. The real capacity of the system is in the sewer lines which can sometimes become overwhelmed in storm situations. The City continues to reduce storm impacts on the sanitary sewer system by removing the connectivity and replacing deficient pipes. Sewer lines/pipes are not available to all commercial and industrial locations yet.

Roads currently serve most of the commercial and industrial properties in St. Helens. Some roads have not been improved to City Standards but are adequate to meet the current needs. Highway 30, Gable/old Portland Road, Columbia Blvd., and South First Street all have adequate

capacity to serve their respective abutting properties for their zoned uses.

The Storm Drainage system is adequate to meet most of the needs of the community with only some flooding situations in a few low areas. Quality control of storm runoff is not established yet but has been analyzed and a plan is prepared.

Security seems to be working adequately but with the significant increase in population in the last few years, the police force is being challenged.

Other utilities such as electricity, gas, phone and cable are keeping up with most of the needs of the community in a timely manner.

SUPPORT FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Chamber of Commerce is very supportive of the businesses located in St. Helens and Scappoose.

The City has a transient occupancy tax to support tourism, encourage overnight stays, and develop a process to improve tourism in the St. Helens area.

The City has a Business Enterprise Zone to help attract new businesses.



The City has reduced some fees and charges to help new businesses.

The Port of St. Helens is an active owner of lands within the St. Helens area and actively markets its lands to encourage businesses to locate here.

Portland Community College supports businesses with special courses.

St. Helens offers boaters free docks on a short-term basis as well as dumping facilities.

See Appendix C for more information on Resources.

MARKET FORCES

The cost of living and especially housing is much lower here than in most of the Portland area.

Businesses compete with the Portland market, especially for the more expensive needs and for the entertainment areas.

St. Helens is the capitol for Columbia County and thus attracts businesses related to government.

St. Helens is growing at a strong rate with over 4% per annum for the last ten years.

St. Helens has a railroad bifurcating the City.

Both the railroad and main highway are conduits for traffic either to Portland or to Astoria without much through traffic to other destinations.

LOCATION FACTORS

St. Helens is not quite far enough away to be considered a rural community.

The commuting population is growing due to the fact that St. Helens is a fairly convenient commute to both the northern half of Portland and to Beaverton/Hillsboro areas.

St. Helens is on the way to and from the coast or beaches.

RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

St. Helens is very near significant private tree farms and reserves.

St. Helens is very near significant private mineral resources, especially gravel type rocks.

St. Helens is located at the juncture of the Multnomah Channel and Columbia River.

St. Helens is not an agricultural community and has very little agric-business near it.

LAND AVAILABILITY



The City has more than 5% of its total lands zoned for commercial uses.

The City has more than 1000 acres designated for industrial uses. About two-thirds is being used as planned. A large portion of the vacant industrial lands is wetlands.

There are several commercial properties in prime locations either under-utilized or vacant.

The city has over 400 lots approved for residential development in new areas on the west side of the highway and another 500 or more lots platted on the east side of the highway (with some limitations due to soil conditions or topography).

There are several good parcels of land available for industrial uses with at least water or sewer to them and good transportation opportunities with roads or railroad facilities.

POLLUTION CONTROLS

Pollution controls in the St. Helens area are governed by the State Department of Environmental Quality

There are no special air controls air shed requirements other than the normal point source permit requirements.

Water pollution controls are also normal for most urban areas. We have no special sensitive areas that other urban areas do not also have.

The proximity to a major river does add some pollution limits not experienced in inland urban areas.

The City has adopted some special laws regulating air quality by use of controls on smoking and outdoor burning.

ECONOMIC PATTERNS

The City of St. Helens is located in the southeastern portion of Columbia County. The economic history of Columbia County has been directly related to the natural resources in the form of timber and minerals. While the economy has been impacted by activities related to the Columbia River in the form of industries in the past, it has been moving more toward tourist type activities such as pleasure boating, fishing, and such in recent times.

Because of the proximity of South Columbia County to the Portland metropolitan area and due to the upgrade construction of Highway 30, reasonable commute times and conditions, and overall quality of life, the City of St. Helens has experienced significant population growth in the last ten years. This has resulted in many more commuters traveling to the metro area for employment. New businesses located



in the St. Helens area are mostly retailers and services to serve the increased population.

In 1997 the City created a Vision Plan. One of the visions is to develop an economic program to attract small industries and service businesses. This is intended to help retain a community sense of independence while offsetting the reductions in timber related jobs.

During the period from 1990 to 2000 the overall per capita income of the residents of the City of St. Helens rose more than 40.6% or 6.8% after adjustments for inflation. The whole county saw an increase of per capita income of more than 19% above inflation. The per capita income for the metro area was about 17.4% above inflation. The household income for St. Helens was about 78% (not adjusted). The number of St. Helens workers employed in the private sector decreased slightly, while for the government it increased from 10.6% to 13.3% of the workers and self-employed increase from 5.1% to 6.6%.

The City tracks business licenses and for the period of 1996 to 2003 there was a decrease of employees of about 7%. At the same time there was an increase of home-based businesses from 1,500 to about 2,200. During the decade of 1990 to 2000 the percent of those ranked as below the poverty level decreased from 11.9% to 8.7%.

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT TRENDS

The most significant change in the City of St. Helens is the growth of commuters. The second most significant change is probably the decreases in local industries such as PGE, Trojan, Multnomah Plywood, and such. The third most significant change may be the shift in use of the waterfront from industries to personal uses such as marinas, houseboats, and recreational users. The fourth most significant change is the age of many of the buildings on the east side of Hwy 30. The fifth most significant change is the increases in park areas and recreational opportunities.

INVENTORIES

In 1998 the City had about 240 total acres designated for commercial use. About 61 acres of commercial zoned land is vacant and about 19 acres is underutilized. Of the remaining 160 acres, it is estimated that about 35 acres have single dwellings or duplexes on them. Thus about 125 acres have normal commercial uses and the remaining are not committed to normal uses or are vacant or underutilized.

In 1998 the City had 1,034 acres designated for industrial uses. About 544 acres were identified as vacant or underutilized. Since then a jail has been built on 10 acres, a cleanup site has been revitalized and is mostly being used



(35 acres), a closed industrial site (135 acres) is now almost fully utilized by several small industrial businesses, and another 10 acres is currently being proposed for a use. Thus about 350 acres of industrial land is available for development.

In 1998 there were over 1,000 acres of land in the Urban Growth Boundary designated for residential use and over 400 acres of land within the City Limits as vacant residential zoned property. Since then over 200 acres of residential zoned land within the City Limits has been built on or is in development for new residences.

One road has been constructed in a commercial zone and one in an industrial zone. Plans are being developed to install a sanitary sewer to serve several businesses currently outside the City Limits along Hwy 30. The transfer station is being moved to a site further from Hwy 30. A new bridge is being installed to enhance the road for industrial traffic. A water filtration plant is being constructed as well as another high elevation water reservoir.

The City has current studies on sanitary sewer, transportation and storm drainage and is upgrading water facilities to allow for growth in all areas for the next several years. The City has embarked on a tourism project to increase growth in that area. The marinas continue to grow and upgrade and

the State supported docks have recently been upgraded. The City continues to expand its recreational facilities with more park lands being added over the last few years and a major wetland conservation site to be added in the near future.



APPENDIX C: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

Oregon Economic and Community Development
Department

Community Oriented Assistance Programs

775 Summer St NE, Suite 200

Salem Oregon 97301-1280

503-986-0123

A brief listing includes:

Brownfields Redevelopment Fund Program

Coalition Brownfields Cleanup Fund Program

Community Development Block Grants

Competitive Community Assistance (Downtown
Development)

Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Program

Special Public Works Fund Program

Water/Wastewater Fund Program

Business Oriented Assistance Programs

775 Summer St NE, Suite 200

Salem Oregon 97301-1280

503-986-0123

A brief listing includes:

Oregon Business Development Fund (OBDF)

Oregon Business Retention Program

Oregon Capital Access Program (CAP)

Oregon Credit Enhancement Fund (CEF)

Entrepreneurial Development Loan Fund (EDLF)

Industrial Development Revenue Bonds/Express Bonds

Local Revolving Loan Funds

Construction-in-progress

Food processor exemption

Immediate Opportunity Fund

Oregon Investment Advantage (Tax Exemption)

Strategic Investment Program (SIP)

Vertical Housing Program

Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC)

Dependent care tax credit

Federal/State worker-based tax credits

Pollution control tax credits

Research tax credits

Regional Business Development

Dennie Houle

800 Exchange Building, Ste. 420

Astoria, Oregon 97103



(503) 791-2732

Salem, Oregon 97304
(503) 587-0574

Development Partners and Development Support Sources

Columbia County

Tony Hyde, Commissioner
230 Strand Street
St. Helens, OR 97051
(503) 397-7210

Oregon Economic and Community Development Department

Art Fish, Coordinator
Business Incentives
775 Summer St NE, Suite 200
Salem OR 97301-1280
(503) 986-0140

Columbia River PUD

Kevin P. Owens, P.E.
General Manager
64001 Columbia River Highway
Deer Island, Oregon 97051
(503) 366-3260

Port of St. Helens

Kim Shade, Operations Manager
100 E Street
Columbia, Oregon 97018
(503) 397-2888

Destination Pacific Group

Cindy Mudge
Executive Director
PO Box 2005
Astoria, Oregon 97103
(503) 440-7168

South Columbia County Chamber of Commerce

Marna Gatlin, President, CEO
Julie Beehler, Tourism Manager
2194 Columbia Blvd.
St. Helens, Oregon 97051
(503) 397-0685

Oregon Downtown Development Association
PO Box 2912

Potential Community Based Resources



St. Helens Community Foundation

Charles Grant

280 S. First Street

St. Helens, OR 97051

(503)366-4325.

St. Helens Garden Club

Lynn Chiotti

244 Shore Drive

St. Helens, Oregon 97051

(503) 397-0805

Historical Society of Columbia County

R.J. "Bob" Brown

PO Box 837

St. Helens, OR 97051

(503) 720-7001



APPENDIX D: PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Community Role(s)</u>
Ken Anderson	Citizen
Skip Baker	Planning Administrator
Phil Barlow	Councilor, City of St. Helens
Julie Beehler	Chamber of Commerce Tourism Manager
Janice Blazek	Citizen
Cynthia Brewington	Chair, Library Board
John Brewington	Vice Chair, Parks Commission
R.J. Bob Brown	Tourism Committee
Donna Cech	Citizen
Ronda Courtney	Chair, Tourism Committee
Chris Dahlgren	Business Owner, Investor
Eric Dahlgren	Business Owner, Investor - Tourism Committee
Jill Dale	Parks Commission

Diane Daley	Manager, Boise Cascade Veneer Plant - Charter Review Committee
Eddie Dunton	Citizen
Vern Fischer	Planning Commission, Business Owner
Joli Flori	Citizen
Casey Garrett	Project Manager
Pacific Stainless	
Steve Gibons	Business Owner
Charles Grant	Councilor, City of St. Helens
Sally Gump	Charter Review Committee - Parks Commission
Monte Gustafson	Chair, Parks Commission
George Hafeman	Hafeman Windermere Real Estate
Tim Homann	Community Development Manager
Dennie Houle	Business Development Officer, OECDD
Tony Hyde	Commissioner, Columbia County
Carmen Kulp	Citizen



Marjorie Kundiger	Library Board	Eloise Poole	Citizen
Cathy Lambert	Chair, Arts and Cultural Commission	Pam Powell	Arts and Cultural Commission
Brian Little	City Administrator	Paul Pulliam	President, Port of St. Helens Commission
Kathy Locke	Library Board	Thad Roth	Marketing Development & Communications - Columbia River PUD
Keith Locke	Council President, City of St. Helens - Tourism Committee	Kim Shade	Vice Chair, Tourism Committee - Operations Manager, Port of St. Helens
Sarah Martin	Planning Commission	Rosemary Siipola	Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments - Transportation Program Manager
Mary McArthur	Executive Director, Columbia-Pacific EDD	Cliff Tetreault	Commissioner, Port of St. Helens
Mike Moar	Property Owner, Investor	Terri Washburn	Library Director, City of St. Helens
Doug Morton	Councilor, City of St. Helens	Wayne Weigandt	Business Owner, Investor
Cindy Mudge	Executive Director, Destination Pacific Group	Casey Wheeler	CEO, St. Helens Community Federal Credit Union
Erika Owens	Columbia County Parks	Linda Young	Citizen
Kevin Owens	General Manager, Columbia River PUD		
Kathy Payne	Executive Secretary, City of St. Helens		
Al Petersen	Akaan Architecture		
Randy Peterson	Mayor, City of St. Helens		



APPENDIX E: RELEVANT ORDINANCES

The following items are recent or proposed amendments of City of St. Helens ordinances. These amendments are intended, among other things, to enhance and promote economic and business development activities in the City. The purposes for each amendment are noted below. The full text of each amendment is available at City Hall or at the City's Official Website.

Old Towne

1.080.170 Old Towne St. Helens: OTSH.

Purposes: The OTSH Zone is intended to provide an innovative and flexible zoning category that may be used to implement the St. Helens Comprehensive Plan economic goals and policies and the strategic plan goals and policies for economic development. The strategy is to provide opportunities for traditional neighborhood design and mixed residential and commercial uses in redeveloping Old Towne areas. The OTSH Zone is designed to preserve and revitalize old developed areas, by eliminating nonconformities, providing for more mixed use development in individual buildings, and other more flexible development regulations which acknowledge the developed nature of the properties

involved. The OTSH Zone also allows for the establishment of special design and aesthetic standards for development, consistent with a community plan for redevelopment, preservation, and conservation. The location for the establishment of this Old Towne St. Helens Zone shall be limited to existing developed areas, such as the existing commercial downtown, which could benefit from revitalization in the form of specific long-range planning, mixed uses and innovative development options and community improvement programs. The land use designations implemented by the OTSH Zone include General Commercial (GC), Mixed Use (MU), and Public Lands (PL).

Sidewalks Use

Ordinance No. 2146 amendment

Section 8. Obstructions in Passageways.

(1) Purpose.

The purpose of this ordinance is to ensure that any objects placed on sidewalks, streets, and other rights-of-way are appropriately located, are compatible with surrounding allowed uses, and are conducive to the



public health, safety, and welfare. Another purpose of this ordinance is for enhancement and beautification of the commercial areas.

Sign Code

Community Development Code

Chapter 1.122 Signs

1.122.010 Purpose.

The purposes of this chapter are to protect the health, safety, property and welfare of the public, to provide a neat, clean, orderly and attractive appearance of the community, to improve the effectiveness of signs, to provide for safe construction, location, erection and maintenance of signs, to prevent proliferation of signs and sign clutter, to minimize adverse visual safety factors to travelers on public highways and on private areas open to public travel, and to achieve this purpose consistent with state and federal constitutional limits on

the regulation of speech. To achieve these purposes it is necessary to regulate the design, quality of materials, construction, location, electrification, illumination, and maintenance of signs that are visible from public property, public rights-of-way and private areas open to public travel.

Housing Definitions

Community Development Code

Chapter 1.040 Definitions

The purposes of the deletions and amendments include:

- Comply with provisions of the Oregon Revised Statutes,
- Clarify terms,
- Ensure intent is accomplished, and
- Expand Mixed Use Zone “outright permitted use” and “conditional uses.