



COUNCIL PUBLIC FORUM

Wednesday, May 07, 2025

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey
Council President Jessica Chilton
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilor Mark Gundersen

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Crystal King, Communications Officer
Joe Hogue, Interim Police Chief
Jacob Graichen, City Planner

OTHERS

Dave Lintz, OTAK	Jennifer Shoemaker
Scott	Brady Preheim
Paul Carroll	Jenni Gilbert
Jane Garcia	Kit Gardes

OPEN PUBLIC FORUM – 6:00 p.m.

TOPIC

1. Presentation on Proposed Site for New Police Station

Mayor Massey disclosed a potential conflict of interest, stating that her husband is a City of St. Helens police officer, but expressed confidence in her ability to act objectively in the best interest of the City.

City Administrator John Walsh introduced Dave Lintz, the project manager for the construction of the police station.

Dave Lintz, OTAK Senior Project Manager and Project Executive, provided a detailed presentation on the various sites considered for the new police station. He explained the evaluation criteria used to assess each site and presented a matrix comparing the costs and benefits of different locations.

Lintz discussed five potential sites:

1. 1771 Columbia Blvd.
2. Existing police station site
3. Old Kaster Road site (no longer in contention)
4. Gable Road site

5. Sheriff's office site

The presentation included cost estimates for each site, with the 1771 Columbia Boulevard location emerging as the most cost-effective option at approximately \$15.8 million. Lintz emphasized the importance of building a new police station that could withstand seismic events and meet the City's long-term needs.

Council members and City officials engaged in a discussion about the various sites, their pros and cons, and the financial implications of each option. They addressed concerns about parking requirements, environmental studies, and the potential impact on the surrounding area.

Mayor Massey highlighted that the City had already lost approximately \$685,000 in arbitrage fees due to delays in building the police station over the past five years.

Public Comment

- ◆ Brady Preheim. Expressed concerns about the timing of the public forum and the perceived lack of transparency in the decision-making process. He questioned the affordability of the project and its potential impact on residents' utility bills, suggesting that the whole process be delayed to get the City's finances in order.
- ◆ Jenni Gilbert. Criticized the decision-making process as disingenuous and expressed opposition to financing the proposed site. She suggested demolishing the existing police station or using the community center (later corrected as recreation center) as a substation to save costs.
- ◆ Jennifer Shoemaker. Inquired whether environmental tests had been conducted on the proposed site, concerned about potential environmental surprises.

City officials addressed some of the concerns raised, explaining the extensive site selection process that had taken place over the past few years and the reasons for preferring the 1771 Columbia Boulevard site. Walsh emphasized that there had been over 20 meetings with an evaluation committee to consider various potential sites. This process included assessing different locations using a set of evaluation criteria. Lintz elaborated that the 1771 Columbia Boulevard site emerged as the top choice due to its location and the overall cost-effectiveness, highlighted by an estimated cost of approximately \$15.8 million. The site was favored for maintaining a central presence in town, ensuring proper urban police dispatch visibility. City officials reiterated that seismic safety was a critical concern, and the chosen site was the most feasible option to build a properly designed station that could withstand seismic events. Additionally, they discussed previous challenges with other sites, such as floodplain issues and higher costs, which influenced the decision to prioritize the Columbia Blvd. location.

CLOSE PUBLIC FORUM – 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Lisa Scholl
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder

/s/ Jennifer Massey
Jennifer Massey, Mayor