



COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

APPROVED MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jennifer Massey
Councilor Mark Gundersen
Councilor Russell Hubbard
Councilor Brandon Sundeen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Council President Jessica Chilton

STAFF PRESENT

John Walsh, City Administrator
Kathy Payne, City Recorder
Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder
Jacob Graichen, City Planner
Jenny Dimsho, Associate Planner
Sharon Darroux, Engineering Manager

OTHERS

KOIN
Brady Preheim
Kevin McCarter
Kathy McCarter
Beth Goodman

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING – 6:13 p.m.

TOPIC

1. Economic Opportunities Analysis

Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho introduced the topic, explaining that this was a Legislative Land Use hearing to amend the Comprehensive Plan to include the Economic Opportunities Analysis, related economic goals and policies, and to include the St. Helens Wastewater Master Plan, Water Master Plan, and Stormwater Master Plan. Dimsho asked if any members of the Council wish to declare an actual or potential conflict of interest or bias in this matter. There were no objections from the audience for the Council to make a fair decision.

Beth Goodman from EcoNorthwest presented the Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA). She explained that the EOA would replace the previous one from 2009 and would be part of the Comprehensive Plan. The EOA provides a new fact base for zoning changes, comprehensive plan changes, and economic development strategies.

Goodman outlined the EOA process, which included a buildable lands inventory, employment growth projections, and economic development recommendations. She noted that St. Helens has about 302

acres of unconstrained buildable land, with most of it within City limits and zoned for heavy industrial use.

The employment growth forecast projected an addition of about 1,400 new employees between 2025 and 2045, based on a regional employment growth rate of 0.85% per year. Goodman explained that this growth rate was considered ambitious but allowable as a safe harbor.

The analysis concluded that St. Helens had sufficient industrial land to meet the 20-year growth expectation, with about 200 acres of surplus industrial land. However, there was only a 4-acre surplus of commercial land, suggesting a need to carefully manage commercial land use and potentially consider rezoning some industrial land for commercial use.

Goodman then presented policy recommendations, including:

1. Encouraging growth of a healthy, stable, and diversified economic base
2. Ensuring sufficient land and infrastructure capacity
3. Attracting and retaining existing businesses
4. Fostering vibrant commercial zones
5. Enhancing tourism as an economic driver

Specific actions recommended included hiring a Community Development Specialist, developing a business growth and attraction strategy, conducting a zoning audit, and working with partners to develop a comprehensive tourism strategy.

Dimsho added that in addition to adopting the EOA, there was a recommendation to adopt the utility master plans (wastewater, water, and stormwater) by ordinance into the Comprehensive Plan. These plans were created in 2019 and 2020 and had previously been adopted by resolution. Adopting them by ordinance would provide more leverage and tools for staff, as recommended by the Department of Land Conservation and Development.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING – 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Scholl, Deputy City Recorder.

ATTEST:

/s/ Kathy Payne

Kathy Payne, City Recorder

/s/ Jennifer Massey

Jennifer Massey, Mayor