

St. Helens Brownfield Assessment Program

City of St. Helens
Public Involvement Plan

The City of St. Helens (City) has been awarded a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Community-Wide Brownfield Assessment (CWA) grant. As part of implementing this grant, the City has created this Public Involvement Plan (PIP) to outline their approach to educating, engaging, and communicating with the community about the CWA project.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The primary objective of the St. Helens Brownfield Assessment Program is to identify and assess priority sites in the target area to remove the barriers to redevelopment created by their brownfield status. This includes an emphasis on community education around brownfields and involvement in the selection of priority sites to receive assessment and remediation planning. To date, the community has been deeply engaged in brownfield redevelopment efforts, such as the FY15 USEPA AWP project. In addition, the project intends to achieve the following:

- Build a comprehensive database of known and potential brownfield sites
- Conduct up to six Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs)
- Complete up to six Phase II ESAs (split evenly between petroleum and hazardous-substance sites)
- Prepare site-specific reuse plans at one petroleum and one hazardous-substance site
- Convene a Brownfield Advisory Committee (BAC) to provide input and oversight at key project milestones
- Hold two public meetings to incorporate community input into the site prioritization process and site-specific reuse planning

This PIP has been designed to align with the USEPA-approved Work Plan for St. Helens Brownfield Assessment Program.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GOALS

- Provide information in various formats and venues to help raise awareness of brownfields issues, the redevelopment process, and technical and funding assistance programs among various stakeholder groups and the public
- Host events and trainings to provide education to the public and targeted stakeholder groups
- Provide technical assistance to partners involved on selected sites to educate those involved, including, but not limited to property owners, potential buyers, and local jurisdiction representatives
- Outreach and involvement activities to create multiple partnerships among stakeholder groups and local community members
- Outreach and involvement activities to create opportunities for the leveraging of additional resources

- Public involvement to solicit input from advisory committees and the public, and the integration of comments received to improve the brownfield program and its outputs and outcomes

Key Messages

- The City will be thoughtful in how it uses this grant funding and will prioritize the projects that will have the biggest impact.
- The work done as a part of this CWA project will contribute to the Urban Renewal and waterfront redevelopment projects the City has been working on.
- There are properties in St. Helens that are underutilized and face barriers to redevelopment because of known or suspected contamination. These properties need funding support to help understand the presence, character, and extent of contamination; and to help identify a clear path to remediation.
- By dispelling incorrect perceptions of contamination or creating clear paths to remediation, these properties can be moved toward redevelopment, which will promote economic development and create new jobs in St. Helens.
- The CWA program will create a clear path to remediation for property owners that participate

Supporting Messages

- This program, including all activities, is funded by an USEPA CWA Grant.
- Environmental assessments are an important part of due diligence that lenders will often require, and potential buyers will expect to be completed.

PROJECT STAFF

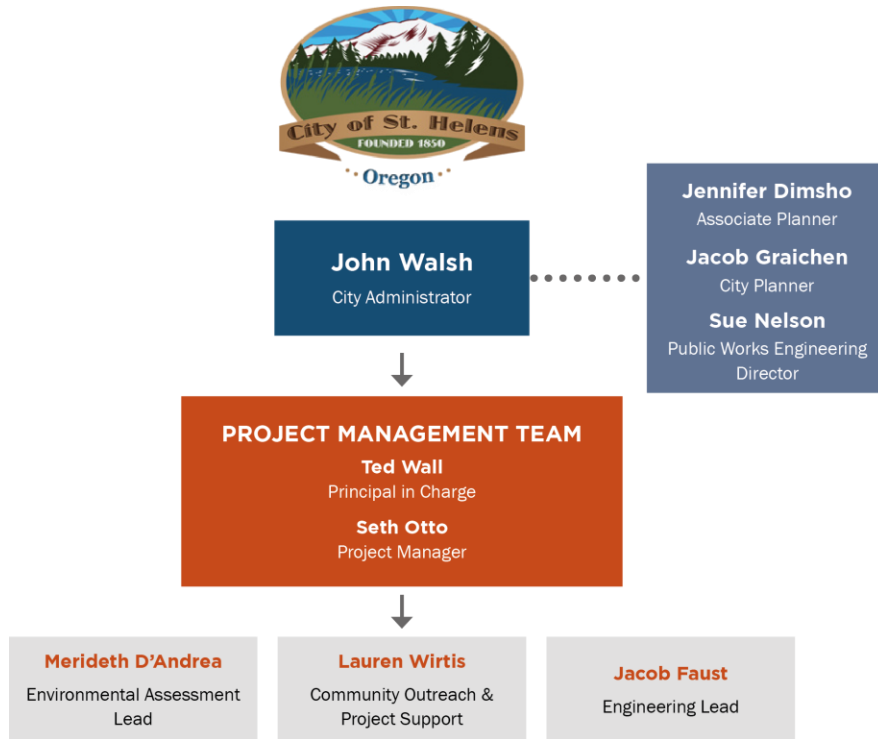
City Staff

- *John Walsh, City Administrator:* will manage the USEPA Brownfield Grant and will report the status of the project on a quarterly basis, or as needed, to the USEPA program coordinator, City's Finance Director, Mayor, and City Council.
- *Jennifer Dimsho, Associate Planner:* will act as the City's primary point of contact for the CWA project.
- *Sue Nelson, Public Works Engineering Director:* will provide advice and direction on all issues related to utilities, roads, and engineering/public works projects.
- *Jacob Gaichen, City Planner:* will provide advice and direction on all issues related to local land use planning goals and regulations.

Consulting Staff – Maul Foster & Alongi, Inc. (MFA)

- *Ted Wall, Principal Engineer:* will be Principal in Charge providing strategic advice as needed.
- *Seth Otto, Senior Planner:* will be the project manager and primary point of contact at MFA.
- *Merideth D'Andrea, Senior Geologist:* will be the environmental lead for site assessments.

- *Jacob Faust, Senior Engineer:* will be the environmental engineering lead for remediation design.
- *Lauren Wirtis, Planner:* will be the public involvement lead.



Roles and Responsibilities

The PIP and all implementation activities and materials require review and approval by the City's Project Manager, John Walsh, prior to execution. Jennifer Dimsho will be the primary point of contact for project communications.

The primary contact for the consulting team will be MFA's project manager, Seth Otto. MFA's communications staff, led by Lauren Wirtis, will be responsible for developing and assisting with the implementation of the community engagement plan and related materials, exhibits, and promotional and web content. The City will be responsible for distributing notification letters and emails, serving as the primary point of contact for public inquiries, and managing media relations including developing and distributing news releases and responding to media inquiries.

As the engagement plan is implemented, responsibilities for various tasks will be determined through ongoing conversations, recognizing budgetary and time limitations for City staff.

APPROACH TO PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Stakeholders

The following organizations provided letters in support of the City's CWA grant application and will be updated and consulted with on the project as needed:

- Oregon State Marine Board
- Department of Land Conservation and Development
- Business Oregon
- North Coast Regional Solutions Team
- Oregon Department of Transportation
- Scappoose Bay Watershed Council
- St. Helens Economic Development Corporation
- Columbia River Yacht Association
- South Columbia City Chamber of Commerce
- Columbia Pacific Development District
- Columbia City Commissioners
- Friends of Nob Hill Nature Park
- Columbia Pacific Food Bank

Brownfield Advisory Committee

The following people and organizations will be invited to participate in the BAC:

- Port of St. Helens
- Public Health Foundation of Columbia
- Columbia County Commissioner
- Columbia County Economic Team
- St. Helens City Council
- Mayor of St. Helens

BAC Meetings

It is anticipated that BAC meetings will happen on a quarterly basis or as needed, depending on the status and progress of the project. Several meetings will need to occur at key milestones in the project, which are described below:

- **Kickoff Meeting:** This meeting will introduce brownfields and background on brownfield planning in St. Helens. The City and MFA will explain the CWA project process and work with the BAC to define what aspects of potential brownfield sites they would like to prioritize (e.g., size, potential for jobs to be created, access to infrastructure, etc.).
- **Property Selection:** During this meeting we will review the brownfield inventory that has been completed and discuss the various properties on which Phase I and Phase II ESAs could be conducted. The BAC will use the priorities they identified during the kickoff meeting to select which properties will have Phase I and II ESAs conducted.
- **Assessment Results Briefing:** The City and MFA will summarize the results of the Phase I and Phase II ESAs, Analyses of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives, and Final Cleanup Plans. Based on this information, the BAC will come to an agreement on which properties would benefit most from area-wide planning and preliminary cleanup design.
- **Area-Wide Planning Results:** The City and MFA will provide the BAC with a summary of the results of the area-wide planning efforts and next steps in the City's brownfield redevelopment efforts.

Other Public Involvement Tools

The brownfield planning and redevelopment activities in St. Helens have already garnered significant community and media attention. Building on that awareness, this strategy recommends using a variety of tools to educate and engage the community as the City continues to promote economic development and job growth through brownfield assessment in the community.

Community Open Houses

- The City will host two open houses at appropriate project milestones.
 - The first open house will provide background information on brownfield planning, urban renewal, and waterfront redevelopment efforts in St. Helens. At this open house, the community will have an opportunity to provide feedback on priorities the BAC has identified for selecting sites that will go through Phase I and Phase II ESAs.
 - The second open house will update the community on the results of the environmental assessments and cleanup plans and engage them in the area-wide planning process.

Project Materials

- Create fact sheets at the beginning and end of the environmental assessment process
- Property nomination and application forms
- Web-based viewer of brownfield inventory
- Educational materials to help the community understand brownfield redevelopment planning in general and the CWA process in particular
- Press releases for local media outlets
- Project-specific web page that includes all project materials and is consistently updated to reflect project progress
- Project specific-contact for those interested to ask questions, request information or be placed on project update distribution lists
- Engage local media in the project, providing information and updates as appropriate

Timeline

The timeline below outlines the CWA process and when deliverables will be produced. This timeline represents an ideal pathway from inventory to assessment to cleanup planning. It is important to recognize that project availability and willingness of property owners will ultimately determine the timing and process that the City follows in implementing the grant program. This flexibility needs to be clearly communicated in all public meetings and communication with stakeholders.

