

St. Helens, OR: Reconnecting With The Waterfront



St. Helens SDAT Report

AIA Communities by Design 
ENVISION. CREATE. SUSTAIN.



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INTRODUCTION

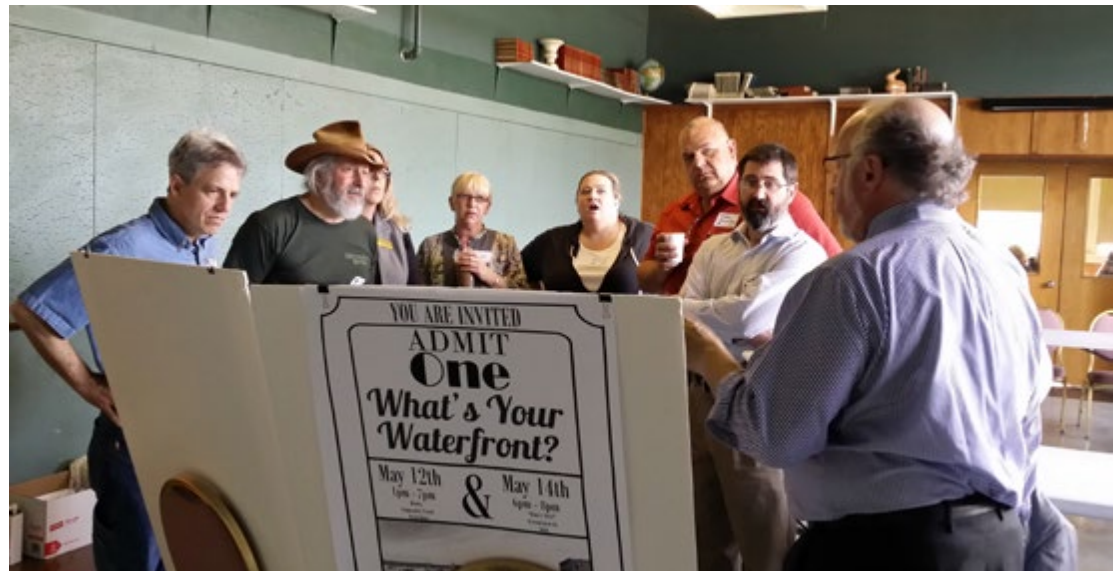
In December of 2013, St. Helens, OR submitted a proposal to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for a Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) to assist the community and its citizens in addressing key issues facing the community. The issues included waterfront design, sustainable development, and economic development. The AIA accepted the proposal and, after a preliminary visit by a small group in February 2014, recruited a multi-disciplinary team of volunteers to serve on the SDAT Team. In May 2014, the SDAT Team members worked closely with local officials, community leaders, technical experts, non-profit organizations and citizens to study the community and its concerns. The team used its expertise to frame a wide range of recommendations, which were presented to the community in a public meeting. This report represents a summary of the findings and recommendations that were presented to the community.

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Program

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) program focuses on the importance of developing sustainable communities through design. The mission of the SDAT program is to provide technical assistance and process expertise to help communities develop a vision and framework for a sustainable future. The SDAT program brings together multidisciplinary teams of professionals to work with community stakeholders and decision-makers in an intensive planning process. Teams are composed of volunteer professionals representing a range of disciplines, including architects, urban design professionals, economic development experts, land use attorneys, and others. Today, communities face a host of challenges to long-term planning for sustainability, including limited resources and technical capacity, ineffective public processes and poor participation. The SDAT approach is designed to address many of the common challenges communities face by producing long-term sustainability plans that are realistic and reflect each community's unique context. Key features of the SDAT approach include the following:

- **Customized Design Assistance.** The SDAT is designed as a customized approach to community assistance which incorporates local realities and the unique challenges and assets of each community.

- **A Systems Approach to Sustainability.** The SDAT applies a systems-based approach to community sustainability, examining cross-cutting issues and relationships between issues. The SDAT forms multi-disciplinary teams that combine a range of disciplines and professions in an integrated assessment and design process.
- **Inclusive and Participatory Processes.** Public participation is the foundation of good community design. The SDAT involves a wide range of stakeholders and utilizes short feedback loops, resulting in sustainable decision-making that has broad public support and ownership.
- **Objective Technical Expertise.** The SDAT Team is assembled to include a range of technical experts from across the country. Team Members do not accept payment for services in an SDAT. They serve in a volunteer capacity on behalf of the AIA and the partner community. As a result, the SDAT Team has enhanced credibility with local stakeholders and can provide unencumbered technical advice.
- **Cost Effectiveness.** By employing the SDAT approach, communities are able to take advantage of leveraged resources for their planning efforts. The AIA contributes up to \$15,000 in financial assistance for each project. The SDAT team members volunteer their labor and expertise, allowing communities to gain immediate access to the combined technical knowledge of top-notch professionals from varied fields.



The SDAT program is modeled on the Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) program, one of AIA's longest-running success stories. While the R/UDAT program was developed to provide communities with specific design solutions, the SDAT program provides broad assessments to help frame future policies or design solutions in the context of sustainability and help communities plan the first steps of implementation. Through the Design Assistance Team (DAT) program, over 500 professionals from 30 disciplines have provided millions of dollars in professional pro bono services to more than 200 communities across the country. The SDAT program leverages the pivotal role of the architectural community in the creation and support of sustainable livable communities.

The following report includes a narrative account of the St. Helens SDAT project recommendations, with summary information concerning several principle areas of investigation. The recommendations are made within the broad framework of sustainability, and are designed to form an integrated approach to future sustainability efforts in the community.



Executive Summary

The AIA Sustainable Design Assessment Team's visit to St. Helens, Oregon, was a rewarding, productive, and memorable experience. We greatly appreciated the preparatory work led by Mr. John Walsh, City Administrator, as supported by the Mayor, City Council, and an extraordinarily capable and hospitable City staff. We believe that the proponents were more than sufficiently aware of the critically important juncture at which the City of St. Helens finds itself and the enormous potential the "vener parcel" has to shape the future of the City.

The design work that our interdisciplinary team produced in three days depicts one of the innumerable forms that a new St. Helens waterfront could take. It depicts a mix of water-related uses: some within private commercial buildings, others intended for public use driven by public investment. It recognizes the regional tourism economy as the most viable market segment for the City's future growth, but is inclusive of local residents and businesses. It begins to suggest a unified identity for Historic St. Helens and demonstrates how new development can harmonize with unique local character.

This program of uses depicted for the site responds to many of the specific needs and desires expressed by local participants. It anticipates many of the economic and environmental constraints to redevelopment and goes beyond the limits of the veneer parcel to recommend other measures that the City of St. Helens can undertake to maximize the potential of this moment in its history.

This report, however, is not a master plan. It is – at its most valuable – a template for what the City must do.

We hope the City of St. Helens will use this report as a starting point. The design principles we developed to guide our thinking are incontrovertible. The process we used of engaging the community in the work of master planning is essential. Many of our recommendations – especially in the report's last section on Next Steps– can serve the City well. A comprehensive plan that touches on all the topics this report describes – municipal branding and identity, streetscape improvement, storefront and signage revitalization, resilience and environmental responsibility, transit and housing equity, walkable and

bike-able trails, and progressive land use and zoning must be developed in parallel with a very specific master plan for the Veneer parcel itself. Transparency of process, effective communication and promotion, and the creation of roles and empowerment of people to drive decision-making in the City are all as important as the master plan itself.

Ultimately, the greatest challenge for the City of St. Helens will be the creation of a shared enthusiasm for a new direction that can replace the underlying public doubt, criticism and fear that the sites will remain vacant and nothing will change. It is within the capacity of this municipal government to create such a vision and generate the requisite public support. We look forward to your transformation.

WHAT WE HEARD

For the first day and a half of the AIA SDAT's work in St. Helens, we interviewed and led discussions with a number of residents, elected officials including Mayor Peterson and members of the City Council, municipal employees, business-owners, and other members of public and private "stakeholder" groups organized for us by the City Administrator, Mr. Walsh, and his staff. Some common themes emerged from these discussions.

Many observations and beliefs about St. Helens were unanimously shared across all interest groups. People were considerably proud of the city's rich history and its connection with the Columbia River. There was a justifiable belief that the City had much to offer with its historic buildings, dramatic topography, and beautiful natural setting. There was also a shared recognition that St. Helens' was at a historic turning point, and this gave rise to a pervasive anxiety and uncertainty. That which had literally put St. Helens on the map and defined its relationship to the river for generations – the paper mills – was gone. The principal driver of St. Helens' economy was ultimately not sustainable after awareness of the extraction costs and waste associated with paper products caused demand to decrease. One participant framed the relationship between the people of St. Helens and the Columbia succinctly:

"We are SO much about this river! But it had been all about extraction. Now it must be about stewardship."



Other shared observations were rooted in an interest in self-sufficiency and a reluctance to be seen as a bedroom community or yacht club for Portland. In this sense, the long-term sustainability of St. Helens was at the root of peoples' interest in imagining some uses to the vacant mill sites that would continue the city's very viability. And although every conversation touched on the great value that residents place on the natural environment, we heard an unfortunate widely-held (and mistaken) belief expressed that environmental stewardship and economic growth were mutually exclusive.

In addition, people recognized that St. Helens is experiencing many of the adverse effects that global trends in urbanization and the consolidation of capital has had on other small cities. Downtown was invisible from the nearest major highway, many storefronts were vacant, and people were cocooned in their homes without enough reason to go into Olde Towne.

When asked to describe a desirable state for the "veneer site" somewhere between the polar extremes of returning the entire site to its preindustrial natural state or deeding it entirely to commercial development, opinions were divergent. A unified vision for the new St. Helens waterfront was clearly lacking. But there was significant consensus on enough points for our team to develop design principals to inform our work:

1. A sense of connectivity was lacking on many levels and needed to be re-established, especially between St. Helens' various neighborhoods, between people and the river, and between St. Helens and its greater local region.
2. At their economic peak, the paper mills appropriated great expanses of riverfront for private industrial use. The citizens of St. Helens have never enjoyed public access to the Columbia River. Public access became a design imperative.
3. This community understood the need for balance between economic growth, natural stewardship, and quality of human life. This balance, at the heart of true societal sustainability, should be the principal test of every proposal for these sites.
4. Only water-related uses should be considered.
5. Development on the veneer site should not compete with Olde Town, but rather be planned as an extension of St. Helens' historic town center.
6. The highest and most explicit environmental design standards must be used for all planning and development activity on this site, including the US Green Building Council's LEED for Neighborhood Development for planning and as many components of the International Living Futures Institute's Living Building Challenge for buildings as possible.
7. The site must be planned to anticipate a dynamic and changing future climate. Resilience to future sea level rise in addition to historic river flooding, severe heat and drought and interruptions to power supply and associated threats to

public safety must be considered.

8. Ultimately, the planning of this site is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to return the highest public benefit to the greatest number of citizens over multiple generations.

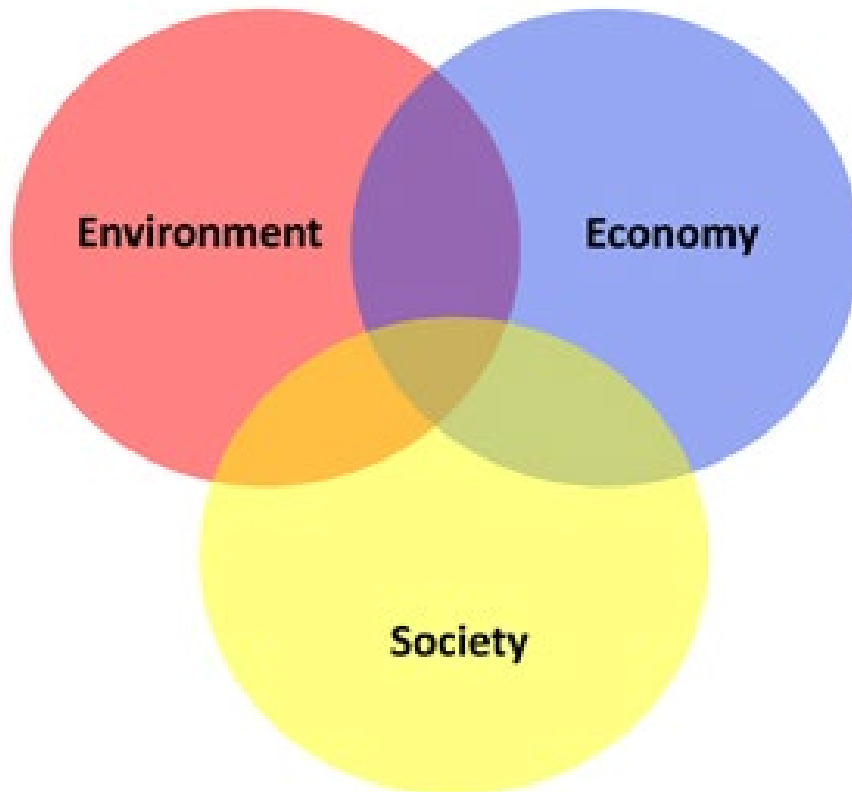
Sustainable Context



Sustainable development, as defined in the Brundtland Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) is, “...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The St. Helens waterfront development should follow this imperative. Accordingly, the SDAT Team recommends that the development address a broad range of sustainable development issues and that subsequent detailed plans and designs that are developed incorporate these elements into the project as it evolves.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

To address the “triple bottom line” of sustainability—equity, environment and economy—the development should balance the needs of nature and people to insure that redevelopment of the veneer site and waterfront parcels improves the current state. As a project located on a post-industrial site, this pending development provides a unique opportunity at this point in time to improve the environmental, economic and social conditions from their current state. Given the current state of the sites, they have little triple bottom line benefit. From an economic standpoint the site currently contributes little to contribute to a thriving economy, does not allow people to access or enjoy the waterfront, and is an ecological “desert” dominated by derelict paving and demolished buildings.



The SDAT team sees the development as a means of improving triple bottom line aspects of sustainability for the site and the City as well. To be economically sustainable, the development must “pencil out” and generate sufficient revenues to offset development costs and maintenance investments. As social space, the development should be an asset to the community as well as the residents. And environmentally, the development should restore and leverage lost ecologies in a creative adaptation of incorporating living systems in the development as design amenities.

Whereas other sections of the report address the economic and social aspects of the proposed project, this section will address green design opportunities that restore and enhance the environmental value and benefits of the development. Using a “green infrastructure” approach, the site can be designed to incorporate working, restorative landscapes that enhance the unique assets at the site while treating stormwater, improving habitat and restoring ecosystems.

Sustainability Objectives

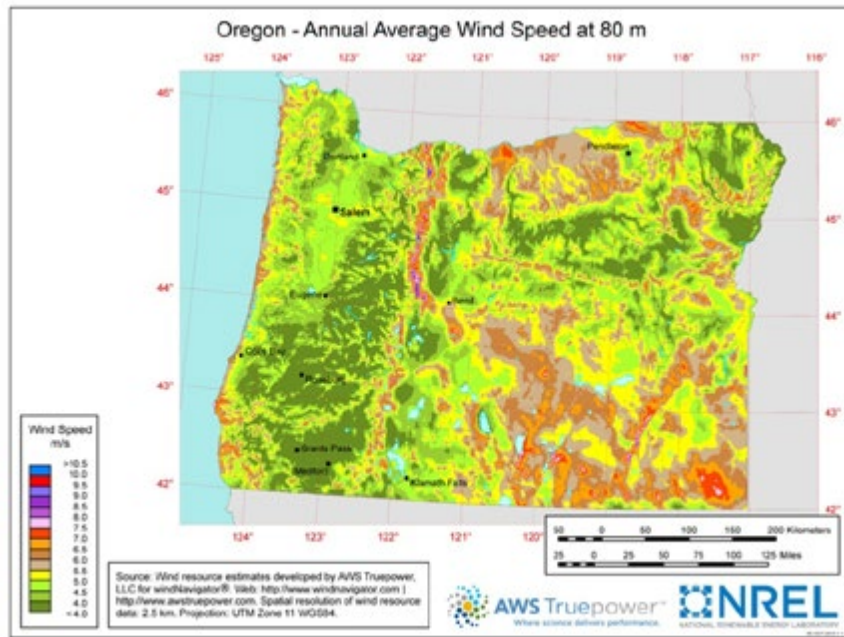
It is helpful to break the broad goal of environmental sustainability into constituent elements. Sustainable developments should address the following interests:

- Energy use and renewable sources; greenhouse gas emissions
- Water demands, rainwater management and ecologic water flows
- Soil, vegetation health and ecological habitats
- Transportation alternatives
- Material usage

The development of the veneer site (and development of the white paper site beyond) should address each of these interests.

Energy and Greenhouse Gasses

Consider Solar and Wind resources. While regional solar potential and wind resources do not appear to be well-suited to large-scale renewable energy production, investigations should be made on-site to determine the feasibility of renewable energy use on the site.



Example of a stormwater treatment landscape in Portland, OR.



The Oregon Convention Center in Portland celebrates water in the landscape.

Stormwater landscapes can be designed as site amenities as well as function for stormwater management. Rainwater and its runoff can be “celebrated” through creative and functional design.

Soil, Vegetation and Habitat

Land development often compromised the ability of a soil to support life. A healthy ecosystem starts with a healthy soil. The physical, chemical, and biological components of soil are all important to keep in balance to support a healthy, thriving landscape on the site.

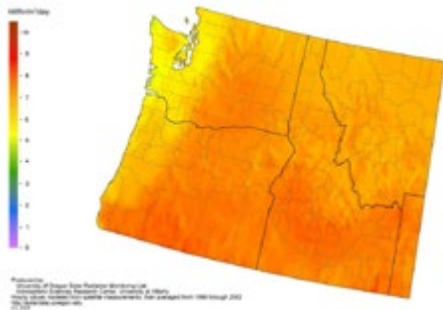
Habitat

The development of the property should respect the presence of rare, endangered and threatened species that may reside in or near the locus of the project. Performing a habitat assessment would result in an understanding of the presence of resident and/or migratory wildlife, and ascertain habitat protection and enhancement measures that could be incorporated into the design of the site.

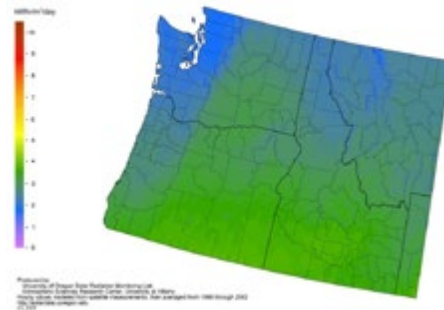
Materials Usage

Sustainability of construction materials should be considered when designing the

Global Horizontal Solar Radiation - July



Global Horizontal Solar Radiation - October



Water

Water is a precious resource. Given the low-permeability of the basalt bedrock in the area, and the adjacency of the veneer site to the Columbia River, the development should carefully assess and take measures to protect from urban stormwater impacts. Increased rate of discharge and decreased water quality are potential threats to the receiving water from any development if unchecked.

The SDAT recommends that landscape-based solutions be employed in the development to provide stormwater management function. Water-receiving landscapes can be designed to capture, filter and detain stormwater generated from the site. Landscapes and natural systems are particularly effective, when properly designed, to treat stormwater, cleansing and releasing it slowly downstream.



Minimize embodied energy by specifying locally-sources materials.



Specifying indigenous materials saves transport energy & promotes economic benefit.

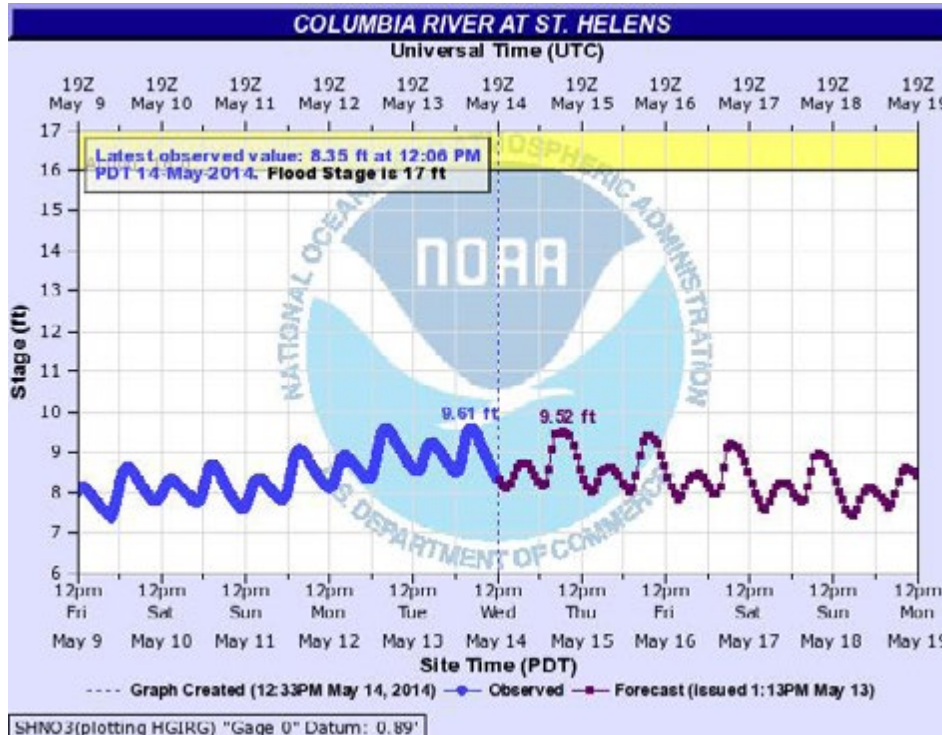


Use materials that have high recycled content and/or high recyclability.

project. Materials should be evaluated on several factors, including the embodied energy (the energy needed to extract, produce and transport the material to the site), availability of indigenous materials, and recycled content and/or recyclability.

Flooding and Resiliency

Given the site's proximity to the Columbia River and Multnomah Channel, a detailed evaluation of flood risk should be prepared during the preliminary design stages of the development. The following river gage station chart shows the diurnal nature of daily river elevations due to tidal influence.



The SDAT Team identified the following historic flood statistics for the Columbia River, representing the 3 highest recorded flood stages at St. Helens.

Flood Year	Flood Elevation
1948	27.1
1964	24.0
1956	23.0

Source: FEMA

Based on large-scale topographical mapping it appears that much of the site is situated near elevation 20, indicating that flooding would be of concern, given the historic flood stages. Site design should elevate permanent structures above at-risk flood levels.

The following chart shows the current flood risk according to the Flood Insurance Rate map and flood study conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for St Helens.

Design Flood Event	Flood Elevation
500-Year	28.9
100-Year	26.4
10-Year	21.9

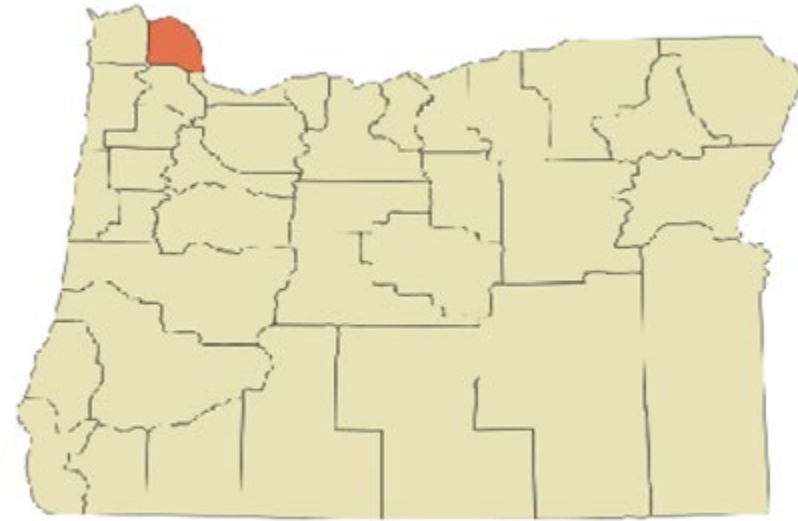
Source: NOAA

To provide maximum resiliency, the SDAT recommends that structures be placed above or be flood-proofed to resist the current 500-yr design flood elevation of 28.9 feet.

Economic Development



LOCATION



St. Helens is the county seat of Columbia County, Oregon. The City is located 30 miles north of Portland along Highway 30, and just 24 miles south of Longview, Washington.

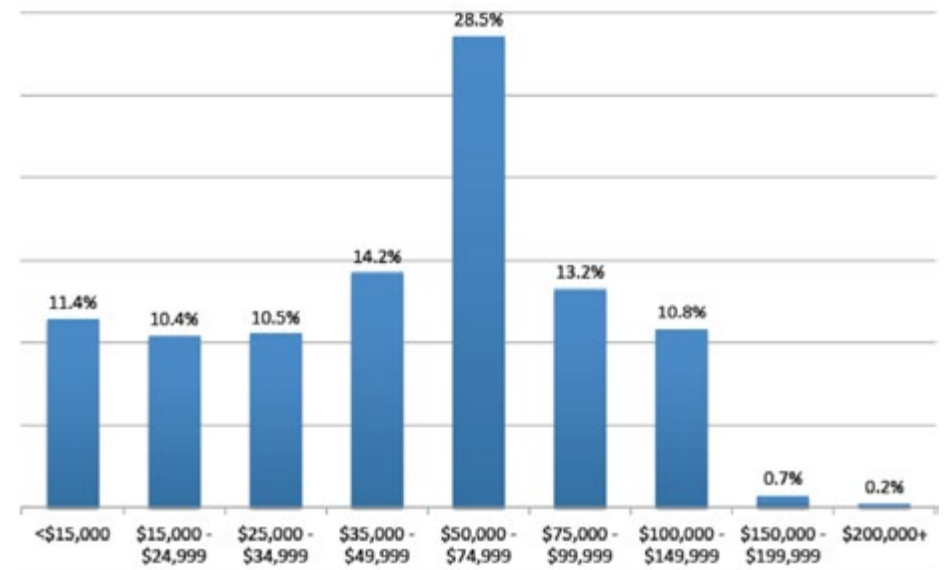
St. Helens is situated to serve as a major hub for both residents and visitors who wish to explore the vast attractions in the area. St. Helens is centrally located to many historic sites and natural attractions. In addition, its position along the Columbia River makes it a strategic location to a large geography that can leverage both tourists and the regional boating community.

According to the US Census, the 2013 population estimate for St. Helens is 13,060. St. Helens has a historical growth rate of 0.2%. Major employers include forest products, mining, and manufacturing operations.

	St. Helens	Oregon
Population, 2013 estimate	13,060	3,930,065
Population Change (2010 - 2013)	0.2%	2.6%
Housing Units, 2010	5,154	1,675,562
Median Home Value	\$186,000	\$246,100
Median Household Income	\$53,151	\$50,036
Retail Sales Per Capita, 2007	\$12,960	\$13,494
Total Businesses, 2007	994	348,154

St. Helens is located 30 miles north of Portland Oregon in southeastern Columbia County.

Income Distribution for St. Helens



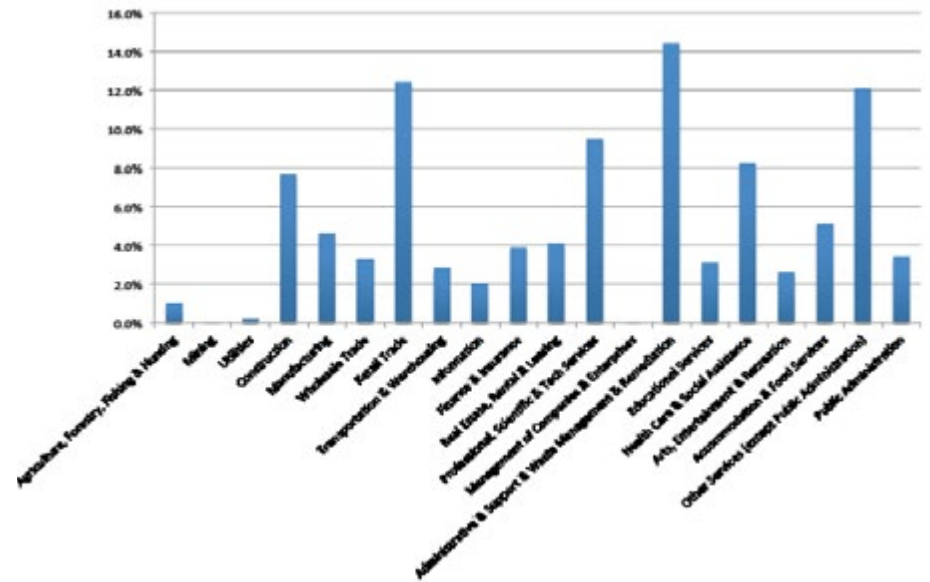
LOCATION

There is potential for St. Helens to capitalize on several regional drivers. The Columbia River provides significant opportunities to attract tourists throughout the region. A marina would provide goods and services to attract the regional boating community to the area which can create significant retail expenditures. In addition, the surrounding natural amenities may attract tourists in search of hiking and paddling opportunities in and around the nearby islands.

St. Helens is located along US 30, which links regional traffic flows between Portland and Southwest Washington. The City is strategically located to capture regional and commuter traffic along this major highway.

There are over 600 firms located in St. Helens with over 3,700 employees. The local workforce has a significant impact on housing demand and economic impact for the local retailers.

Portland Community College is a partner in Columbia County offering both credit and non-credit classes. A potential campus located in St. Helens may leverage student discretionary spending that will provide additional support for local retailers, restaurants, and entertainment venues.



1



Columbia Riverfront

2



Regional Thoroughfares

3



Local Workforce

4



College Students

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Both St. Helens and Columbia County are net exporters of employees. According to US Census, mean travel time to work is 33 minutes for St. Helens and 22 minutes for the State of Oregon. A large portion of the local residents commutes to other areas within Northwest Oregon and Southwest Washington for work. However, residents of nearby communities also commute into St. Helens and Columbia County for work. Over 2,500 non-residents commute to St. Helens for work, and over 4,600 residents of St. Helens commute outside the City each day for work.

Major employers in the region include Fred Meyer, Armstrong World Industries, Wal-Mart, Boise Cascade, and USG. For the purpose of this study, Catalyst estimated the daily percentage of workers which might shop or eat in Olde Towne. This is useful in determining the potential impact of workforce on retail. Using various estimates, there are approximately 370 employees which are likely to shop and eat in Olde Towne on a daily basis.

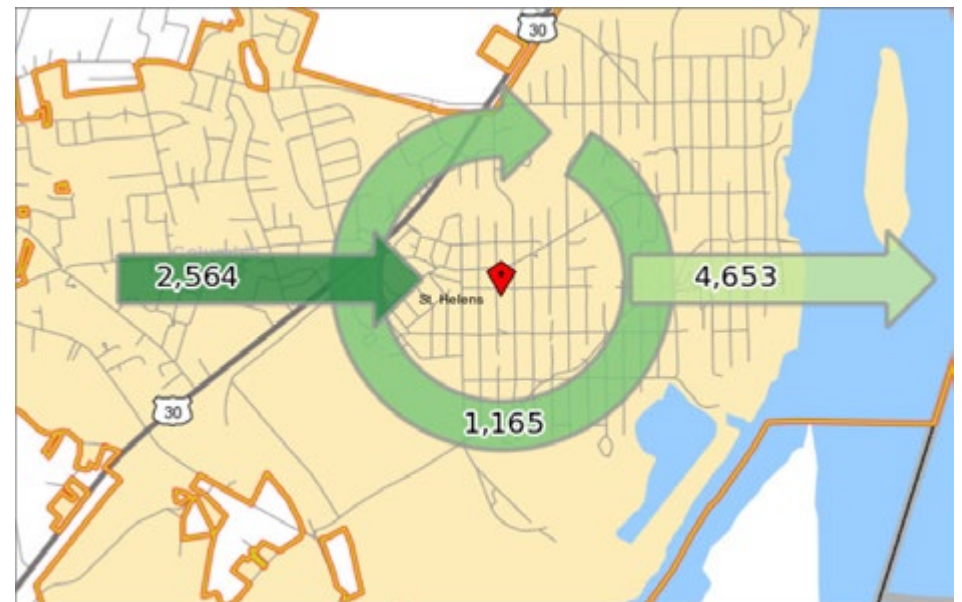
The actual capture rate may decrease or increase dependent on the quality of goods and services available within St. Helens. This demand is anticipated to increase as the development attracts strong credit retailers and restaurants that create synergy for the local market.

Company	Employees	Location	Type
Fred Meyer	170	Scappoose	Retail
Armstrong World Industries	133	St. Helens	Manufacturing
Wal-Mart	129	St. Helens	Retail
Boise Cascade LLC	109	St. Helens	Manufacturing
USG	97	Rainier	Manufacturing
Stimson Lumber	80	Clatskanie	Wood
Safeway	68	St. Helens	Retail
Dyno Nobel	60	Deer Island	Manufacturing
Teevin Bros.Land & Timber	55	Rainier	Logisitics
Letica Corporation	52	St. Helens	Manufacturing
Avamere	52	St. Helens	Edlcare
Oregon Aero	50	Scappoose	General
Composites Universal	47	Scappoose	General
West Coast Shoe Factory	38	Scappoose	Manufacturing

Workforce retail expenditures may support approximately 8,300 SF of retail demand.

Share of Average Workforce Spending				
Category	Percent	Weekly Expenditures	Annual Expenditures	Demand (SF)
Gasoline Stations	21.9%	\$15,800.85	\$790,042.50	
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order House	8.4%	\$6,060.60	\$303,030.00	-
Full-Service Restaurants	8.1%	\$5,844.15	\$292,207.50	688
Limited-Service Eating Places	7.7%	\$5,555.55	\$277,777.50	926
Department Stores	3.9%	\$2,813.85	\$140,692.50	469
Other General Merchandise Stores	12.0%	\$8,658.00	\$432,900.00	2,165
Health & Personal Care Stores	11.7%	\$8,441.55	\$422,077.50	1,407
Grocery Stores	9.6%	\$6,926.40	\$346,320.00	729
Clothing Stores	2.0%	\$1,443.00	\$72,150.00	262
Shoe Stores	1.5%	\$1,082.25	\$54,112.50	361
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stc	1.3%	\$937.95	\$46,897.50	156
Electronics & Appliance Stores	2.9%	\$2,092.35	\$104,617.50	349
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Store	2.4%	\$1,731.60	\$86,580.00	275
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4.4%	\$3,174.60	\$158,730.00	529
Entertainment	2.1%	\$1,515.15	\$75,757.50	-
Total	99.9%	\$72,077.85	\$3,603,892.50	8,315

Using a baseline of 3,700 daily employees, Catalyst calculated the annual potential retail demand generated from area workforce. Total workforce demand is estimated at \$3.6 million. This demand, assuming average sales per square foot for each retail category equates to approximately 8,300 square feet of demand for retail from workforce. For the purpose of this study it is assumed that a quality development in Olde Town may capture 10% of workforce expenditures in St. Helens.



TRAFFIC COUNTS

St. Helens is located off US 30, and Olde Towne can be accessed via Columbia Blvd. and Old Portland Road. Not only is US 30 a major access for commuters traveling to neighboring communities for work, it is also a major link for interstate commerce and regional traffic flows traveling east to Portland and west to Washington State. Traffic from commuters creates additional demand for retail goods and services. Primarily this demand is for automotive services, gasoline, food, and other convenience goods. However, there is also potential to capture retail and restaurant related expenditures for travelers looking for local and regional goods and services in a convenient and relaxing atmosphere.

US 30 and Old Portland Road contain the highest traffic counts in St. Helens. The average daily traffic count on US 30 near Columbia Blvd. is 20,000, and Old Portland Road has an average daily traffic count of 4,000 cars per day.

Assuming that Olde Towne can capture 1% of this traffic daily and \$18 expenditure per trip, this would equate to \$1.5M and 2,600 square feet of additional retail demand.

Vehicles per day	24,000
Vehicles per year	8,760,000
Estimated Capture Rate	1%
Average Retail Spending	\$18
Annual Retail Expenditures	\$1,572,000
Potential Supportable SF from Commuters	2,637

The average commuter spends \$131 per week including transportation related expenses.

Catalyst research reveals an average of 1% of commuters have propensity to spend.

The capture rate will increase with increased marketing, accessibility, position between alternate nodes, and quality of offerings, safety, and service.



VISITOR ECONOMY

Recent research estimates that tourism in Oregon generated \$9.6B in 2013, a 4.1% increase from 2012. Overnight tourism increased by 2.5% for the year, and visitor air travel to Oregon increase to 3M (4.8%) in 2013. Tourism also provides local job demand and is estimated to produce 93,000 jobs in travel and tourism-related industries. The re-spending of travel related revenues by businesses and employees supported an additional 43,000 jobs outside the travel industry. Overall, the travel industry is one of the three largest export-oriented industries in rural Oregon counties behind agriculture and wood production.

Tourism in Columbia County generated \$36M in tourism related expenditures. This directly supported 550 jobs and created \$9.1M in earnings. Of the total expenditures, \$28M was destination related. The largest portion of spending was for food services, followed by food stores, retail, and arts and entertainment.

St. Helens' close proximity to Portland and abundance of natural resources allows the City to capture a significant amount of visitors and tourists to the city. These visitors create capacity to support additional retail, arts, and cultural events by capturing the existing visitor market to Olde Towne. Access to nearby islands for boating, paddling, and hiking make a quality development well positioned to capture a strong portion of visitor expenditures on restaurants and retail due to Olde Towne's close proximity to natural features and scenic views. A marina would provide additional opportunity to draw in the existing boating community to St. Helens.

There is potential for St. Helens to capture 100,000 tourists per year. The capture of these visitors would create \$15M in tourist related expenditures and support and additional 26,000 SF of retail and restaurants in St. Helens.

Tourist related activities may generate \$15M in expenditures and support 26,000 SF of retail expenditures, excluding entertainment and lodging.

Spending by Category

Accommodations	\$2,200,000
Food Service	\$8,800,000
Food Stores	\$5,300,000
Local Transportation	\$3,600,000
Arts & Entertainment	\$3,700,000
Retail Sales	\$4,900,000

Potential Impact of Tourism Related Spending in St. Helens

Category	Potential Annual Expenditures	Demand (SF)
Grocery Stores	\$1,961,816	4,130
Limited-Service Eating Places	\$1,961,816	6,539
Full-Service Restaurants	\$1,961,816	4,616
Clothing Stores	\$644,360	2,343
Shoe Stores	\$644,360	4,296
Jewelry, Luggage, & Leather Goods	\$644,360	2,046
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$644,360	2,148
Entertainment	\$2,621,274	
Lodging	\$4,628,872	
Total	\$15,713,033	26,118

MULTI-FAMILY DEMAND

Catalyst evaluated multi-family demand to determine the annual potential absorption for multi-family in St. Helens. To calculate demand, Catalyst evaluated the percent of new households by income group for the Greater Portland Area. In addition, Catalyst evaluated the distribution of existing homeowners and existing renters that move each year. (See Estimated Demand Potential for Multi-Family Residential table to the right). The results are the estimated number of qualified homeowners that are likely to rent upon moving. The source of these units are renters that rent upon moving, current homeowners that rent upon moving, and household growth due natural growth and in-migration from outside the region. As of 2013, there were 890,000 households in the Greater Portland Region. According to American Community Survey and American Housing Survey, there is demand for approximately 8,800 rental units added to this region annually from former homeowners. In addition, there are approximately 110,000 renters that turnover annually. It is estimated that 14% of these would be likely to move into a new rental versus existing rental. It is assumed that St. Helens could capture 1.5% of this new demand.

Based upon the data, there is demand for approximately 70 new multifamily units per year. A high quality development along the river front may command superior rents and attract additional demand for multifamily housing in the region.

St. Helens has demand for approximately 60 multi-family homes per year.

*Estimated Annual Demand Potential for Multifamily
Based on 2013 - 2018 Demographic Trends for Portland Metro Area*

Monthly Rent	\$500	\$750	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000	Total
	\$750	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000	And Up	
Qualifying Income	Less Than \$35,000	\$35,000	\$50,000	\$75,000	\$100,000	And Up
2013 Total Households						
2018 Total Households¹						
Avg. Annual Household Growth						
New Household Growth						
Total Annual New Households ¹	9,473	9,473	9,473	9,473	9,473	9,473
% Income Qualified	26%	13%	20%	14%	28%	100%
# Income Qualified	2,456	1,187	1,852	1,360	2,617	9,473
Renter Propensity	69%	49%	38%	24%	14%	39%
Qualified New Households	1,695	582	696	331	366	3,671
Existing Owner Household						
Total Households ¹	890,630	890,630	890,630	890,630	890,630	890,630
% Income Qualified ²	26%	13%	20%	14%	28%	100%
Owner Propensity ³	31%	51%	62%	76%	86%	61%
Total Owner Households	71,527	56,874	108,653	96,784	211,703	545,541
Annual Turnover Rate ³	4%	3%	4%	4%	6%	5%
Qualified Owners in Turnover	3039	1769	3901	4271	12377	25357
Estimated % Rent vs. Purchase ⁴	68%	49%	34%	37%	24%	35%
Estimated Owners in Turnover that Rent	2,066	867	1,326	1,580	2,970	8,810
Existing Renter Households						
Total Households ¹	890,630	890,630	890,630	890,630	890,630	890,630
% Income Qualified ²	26%	13%	20%	14%	28%	100%
Renter Propensity ³	69%	49%	38%	24%	14%	39%
Total Renter Households	159,393	54,756	65,468	31,109	34,363	345,089
Annual Turnover Rate ³	31%	32%	34%	33%	31%	32%
Qualified Renters in Turnover	49,364	17,528	21,983	10,345	10,824	110,044
Estimated % Rent vs. Purchase ⁴	85%	72%	55%	54%	43%	70%
Estimated Renters in Turnover that Rent	41,959	12,620	12,091	5,586	4,654	76,911
Income Qualified Households						
Total Potential Demand	45,721	14,069	14,113	7,498	7,990	89,392
Percent New Renters ³	8%	10%	14%	25%	42%	14%
Total Potential Demand for New Units	3,762	1,449	2,023	1,911	3,336	12,481
City Capture Rate^{4,4}						
Total Potential New Multifamily Demand	20	8	11	10	18	66

1. ESRI
2. US Census American Community Survey
3. US Census American Housing Survey
4. US Census Building Permits Survey

RETAIL LEAKAGE

Within St. Helens the per capita income is \$22,000 and the median disposable income is \$40,000. The total retail demand is approximately \$112M .

There are approximately 76 retail businesses within the City with aggregate retail sales (Supply) of \$153M.

If the residents spend \$112M per year and the sales within the area are \$153M then there is approximately \$40M of excess retail, or “retail surplus” in the region. Due to the regional location of St. Helens, these excess sales can be generated from serving a super regional area, which can offset the surplus. Therefore, there is potential for St. Helens to leverage the regional draw to the community for retail purchases to support additional businesses in Olde Towne.

In further review, there are some categories which have unmet demand or “retail leakage.” There is approximately \$5M of unmet demand in clothing and accessories and \$999,000 in home furnishings, and \$500,000 in special food services. According to the data, grocery and food and beverage have significant over-supply. Therefore, adding additional grocery uses may be at risk, or put existing operators at risk, unless additional population growth creates additional demand. The potential demand for multifamily housing may be leveraged to create additional demand for various retail and restaurants. An additional 100 new residential units near Olde Towne may create an additional \$4M in retail expenditures and support an additional 24,000 SF of retail.

The adjacent table shows the total demand and supply per category. Using estimated retail sales per square foot the adjacent chart shows unmet demand by amount and square footage. The total unmet demand is \$8M or approximately 29,000 square feet of additional retail.

Industry Summary	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Unmet Retail Demand	
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$112,810,125	\$153,303,434	-\$40,493,309	
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$101,699,387	\$136,805,854	-\$35,106,467	
Total Food & Drink	722	\$11,110,738	\$16,497,580	-\$5,386,842	
Industry Group	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Unmet Retail Demand	Supportable SF
FurnitureStores	4421	\$1,265,131	\$2,648,244	-\$1,383,113	
HomeFurnishingsStores	4422	\$999,256	\$0	\$999,256	
GroceryStores	4451	\$19,439,395	\$73,650,161	-\$54,210,766	
SpecialtyFoodStores	4452	\$488,982	\$238,509	\$250,473	
Beer,Wine&LiquorStores	4453	\$756,774	\$0	\$756,774	
Health&PersonalCareStores	446,4461	\$5,877,841	\$13,898,199	-\$8,020,358	
GasolineStations	447,4471	\$9,316,204	\$14,246,253	-\$4,930,049	
Clothing&ClothingAccessoriesStores	448	\$6,078,311	\$958,722	\$5,119,589	
SportingGoods,Hobby,Book&MusicStores	451	\$2,770,623	\$2,621,631	\$148,992	
Florists	4531	\$120,307	\$214,936	-\$94,629	
OfficeSupplies,Stationery&GiftStores	4532	\$1,086,963	\$208,925	\$878,038	
UsedMerchandiseStores	4533	\$522,105	\$405,388	\$116,717	
OtherMiscellaneousStoreRetailers	4539	\$1,796,508	\$2,365,970	-\$569,462	
FoodServices&DrinkingPlaces	722	\$11,110,738	\$16,497,580	-\$5,386,842	
Full-ServiceRestaurants	7221	\$4,804,296	\$9,117,412	-\$4,313,116	
Limited-ServiceEatingPlaces	7222	\$5,023,522	\$6,561,429	-\$1,537,907	
SpecialFoodServices	7223	\$419,735	\$0	\$419,735	
DrinkingPlaces-AlcoholicBeverages	7224	\$863,185	\$818,739	\$44,446	
				\$8,734,020	29,113

St. Helens has demand for approximately 29,000 square feet of unmet retail demand from the residential population.

100 new residential units may create an additional \$4M in retail expenditures and support an additional 24,000 square feet of retail.

AGGREGATE DEMAND

The total residential based spending power within St. Helens equals \$112M. The current unmet retail demand could support up to 24,000 square feet of retail. The workforce produces additional spending power of over \$5M and can support an additional 8,000 square feet of retail. US 30 traffic generates commuter demand of over \$1.5M annually, and can support an additional 2,600 square feet of retail demand. The existing Columbia County visitor economy and potential expenditures from the boating community can add an additional purchasing power of \$15M and provide demand for an additional 26,000 square feet of retail.

Total demand from the residential population, area workforce, and commuter traffic creates an aggregate demand of over \$13,900,000, which can support up to 40,000 SF of retail. An additional \$19,000,000 in retail expenditures can be leveraged through the creation of additional housing stock and tourism, which can support an additional 50,000 SF of retail. Therefore, there is potential for Olde Towne to capture \$33M in retail expenditures annually and support 90,000 SF of retail.

While it is often difficult to induce additional residential, St. Helens can develop proactive programs to recruit developers seeking a premium for the proximity to the Columbia River and surround natural amenities. Additional investment in marketing and developing visitor attractions can also increase the visitor economy. Creating a branding and market strategy can increase awareness to a larger regional economy and increase the capture for commuters and additional residents beyond the existing residents.

Potential Retail Demand Drivers

Consumer	Potential Retail Expenditures	Supportable Retail (SF)
Resident (Existing)	\$8,734,020	29,113
Resident (Potential)	\$4,000,000	24,000
Worker	\$3,603,892	8,315
Visitor	\$15,713,033	26,118
Commuter	\$1,572,000	2,637
Total	\$33,622,945	90,183

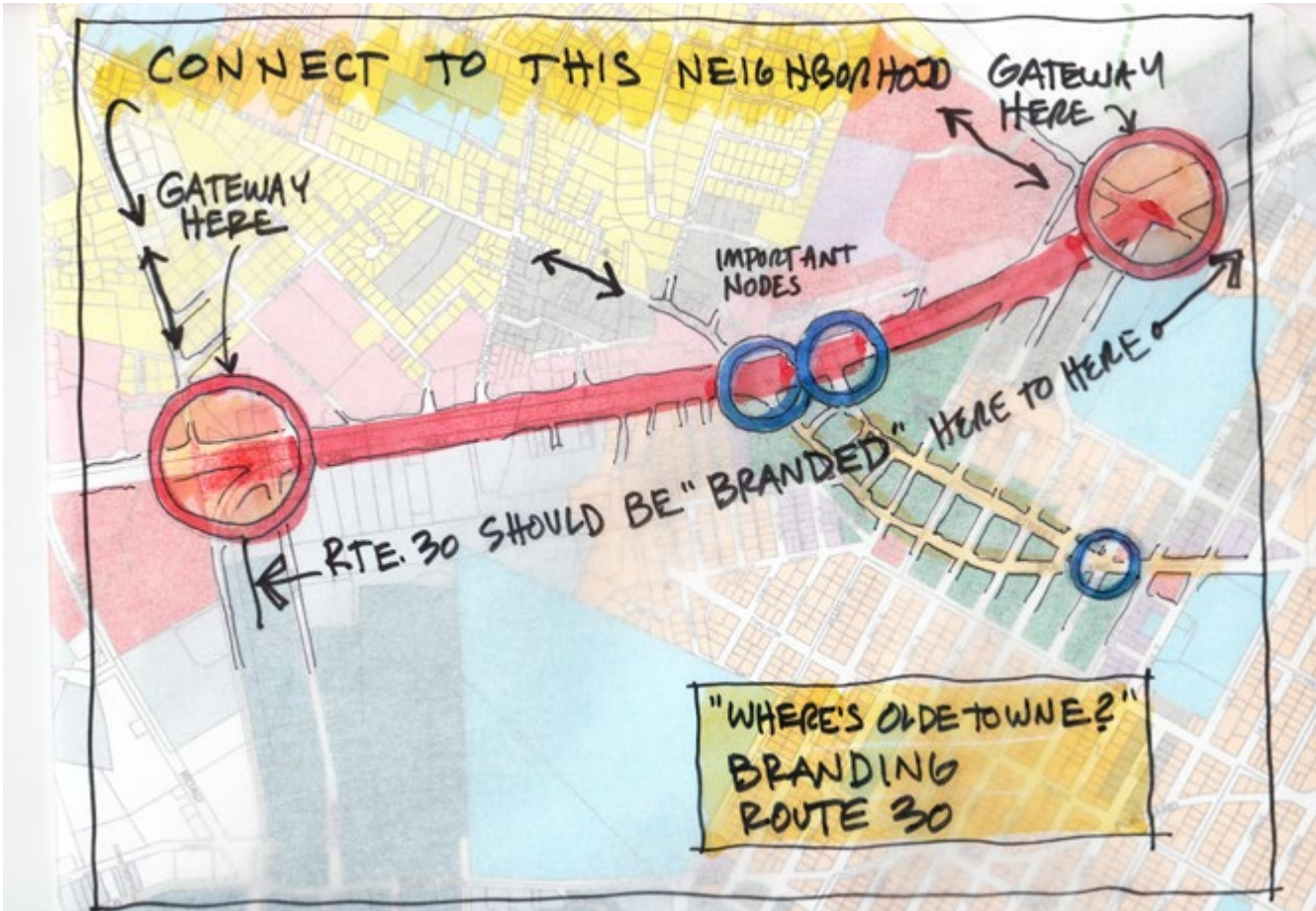
Community Context



ACCESS

U.S. 30 Business/Alternate Route (Old Portland to Plymouth to 1st to Columbia Blvd)

Reconnecting St. Helens with its waterfront starts with access. Barriers to old town, the veneer site and the Boise site must be eliminated. As individuals travel north on U.S. 30, they must be made aware of the St. Helens Business District. The City should work with Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to identify a new alternate/business route. While Columbia Boulevard does have good capacity for this purpose, it does not establish a link through the industrial areas that have the potential to redefine the area waterfront. The suggested route should connect at the south end of town at Old Portland Avenue and U.S. 30. On the Veneer site the route should connect to 1st Street and head north to Columbia Boulevard. The route connects back to U.S. 30 by travelling west on Columbia Boulevard.

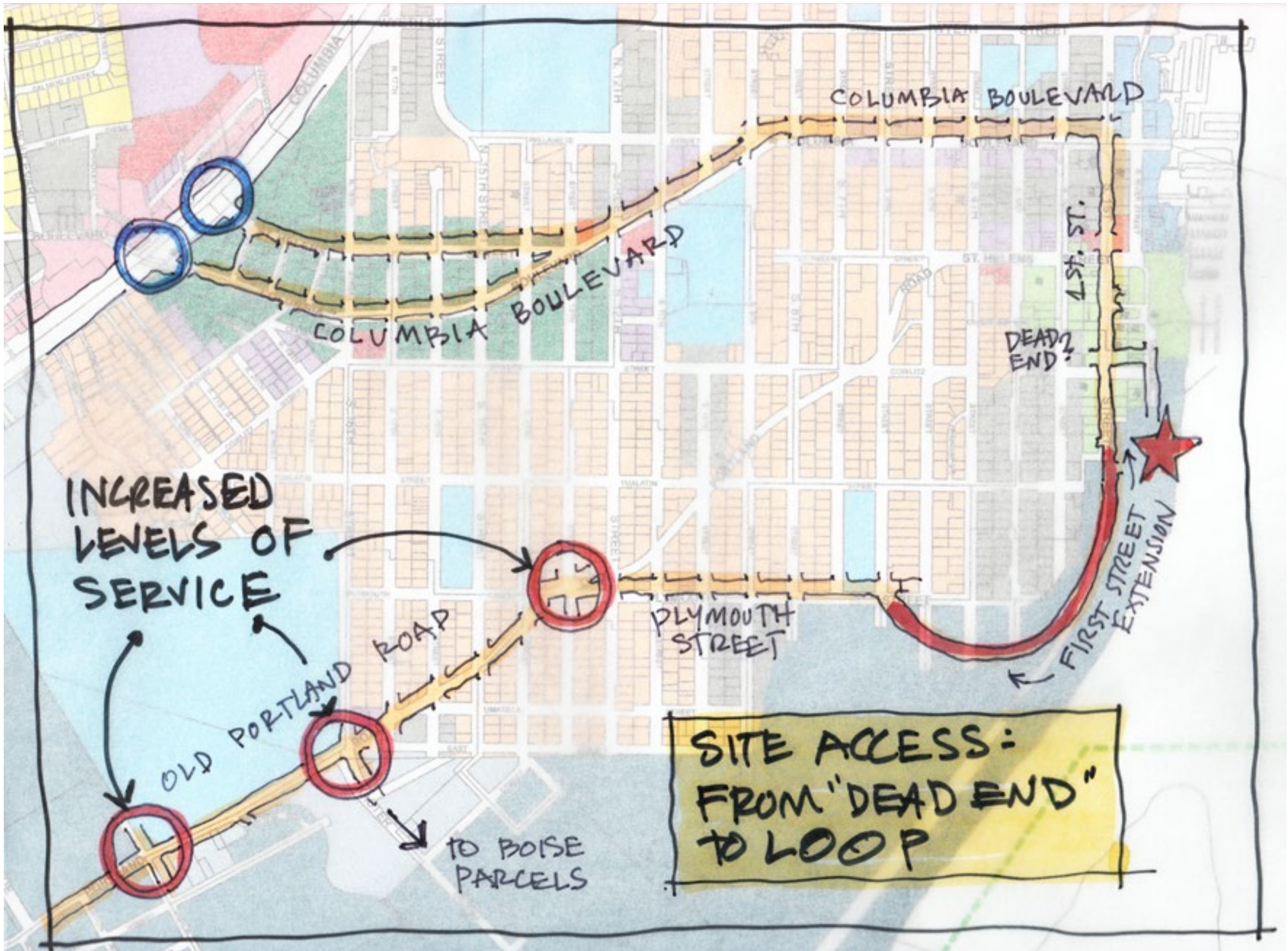


The City's plans to signal entry to St Helens commercial district through signage, landscaping and public realm enhancements currently begins at the intersections of Columbia Boulevard and St. Helens Street with Route 30. As a strategy to bring St. Helens' identity to traffic on Route 30, this will likely be inadequate. Instead, "branding" of the public realm and the "welcome to St. Helens" experience should begin on Route 30 and traverse along its entire length from approximately Gable Road or Sykes Street to Pittsburgh Road. This transformation will also serve to make people leaving the residential neighborhood northwest of Route 30 feel more connected to the City St. Helens as they turn onto Route 30.

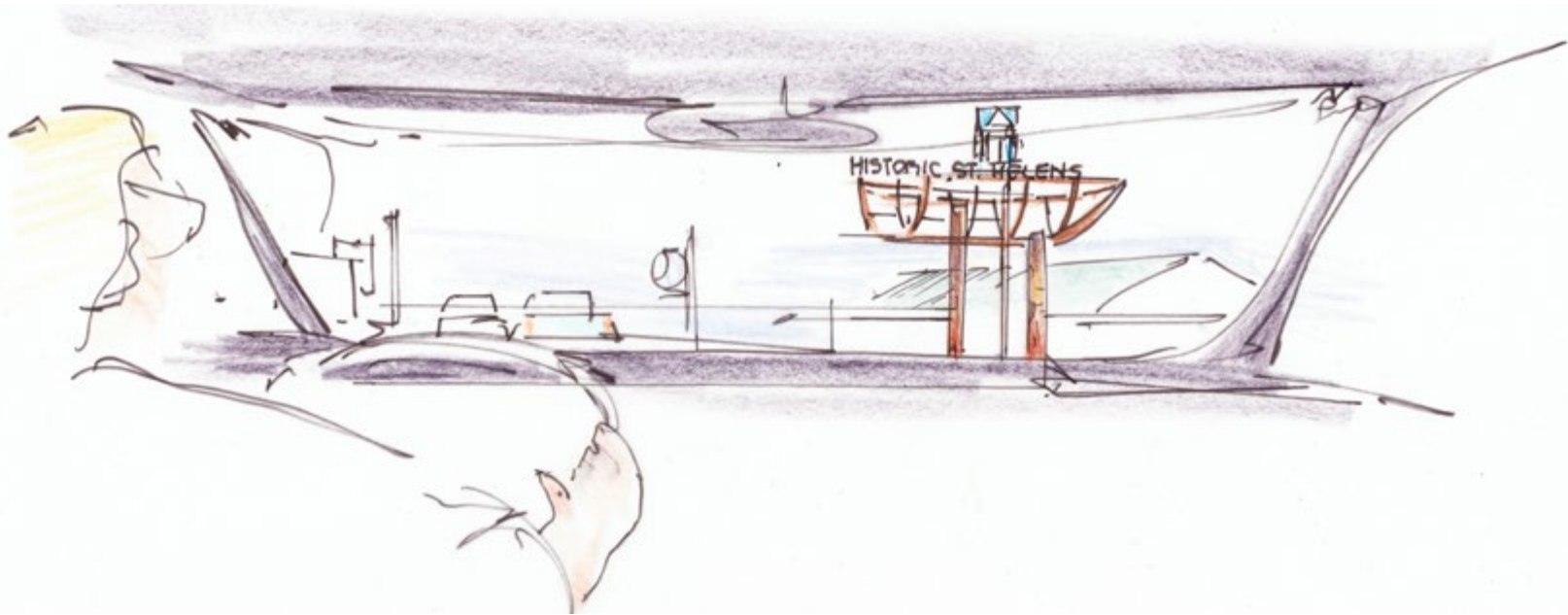
Achieving such a route will require the City to emphasize this as a priority in the regional transportation plan. County and ODOT support can greatly assist with this prioritization. Conceptual development of a new Old Portland Rd/Plymouth intersection should also be developed. This concept should coordinate with the overall business route promotion and assist with attaining funding for intersection and node improvements will ensure that the entire route is functional at the time of implementation. Each of the intersections and improvements should contain a high degree of landscaping to emphasize the quality of the St. Helens community.

Columbia Boulevard should be improved to take on the elements of complete street boulevard. The roadway has more than sufficient right-of-way to accommodate a landscaped median throughout the corridor. Concepts for this approach have already been incorporated in the St. Helens Corridor Plan. This element of the business route is ready to move forward to design

An immediate investment should be made regarding the feasibility of an underpass or overpass for the intersection of Columbia Boulevard and U.S. 30. The current situation of trains blocking access to mid town and old town is unacceptable. Blocking of access can negatively impact both short term and long term decision making regarding the choice of traveling to the heart of town for goods and services. If this barrier is not rectified it will be very difficult to see the full potential of the old town and waterfront areas. The cost analysis associated with the feasibility study can assist with communication to the railroad about pursuit of other alternatives.



Locating a destination development on the St. Helens veneer parcel will require the site to be served by a clear vehicular circulation loop thus preventing traffic from being trapped in the "dead end" circulation that exists today. The SDAT team suggests First Street be extended through the site and connected to Plymouth Street via lower 6th street. This would allow traffic to enter the site from Old Portland Road and Plymouth Street and exit via Columbia Boulevard – or vice versa. This loop, however, would increase the levels of service at several intersections along Old Portland Road, requiring their signalization and/or redesign.



Iconic images of the historic St. Helens community are embodied in an entry marker set on heavy timbers along highway 30. This three dimensional image includes the diminutive images of the basalt county building on the plaza and a skeleton of a wooden ship both of which will be re-encountered on arrival at the river front.

One potential resolution is to request a relocation of the switch to a location between St. Helens and Rainier where it is less likely to prevent access to City businesses and services. The Port of St. Helens should assist with this coordination considering the industrial activity supported by the rail line.

Recommendations:

- Improve Old Portland Plymouth intersection with landscaped node
- Implement boulevard approach from St. Helens corridor plan
- Prioritize underpass/overpass for Columbia
- Pursue relocation of switchline for trains

Implement Bicycle trail from U.S. 30 to Old Town

The interest in alternative transportation at the national level and in the Pacific Northwest should not be underestimated. Trends for bicycle tourism and commuting are on the rise and St. Helens should be prepared to take advantage of this opportunity. Already there is active cycling for both purposes through the St. Helens area, however, this traffic will simply pass through and avoid old town of adequate cycling and trail routes are not provided. As with the business route a bicycle trail route should be implemented connecting south of the City to U.S. 30. There is ample

opportunity to have cyclists enter town with a memorable natural experience that brings inspired riders in along the Columbia River. The trail experience should take advantage of the existing trestle to access the Veneer Site. The northern section of the trail should follow the business route and be incorporated as a separated trail or lane along Columbia Boulevard.

Recommendations:

- Prioritize southern route as separated trail
- Access Veneer Site via trestle
- Northern bike trail per St. Helens Corridor plan (Columbia Blvd)

Improve public transit from U.S. 30 to waterfront and Old Town

A more formal and consistent transit loop should be created to ensure there is ample connectivity to Houghton and Old Town from those areas west of U.S. 30. Administrators should anticipate low ridership numbers for the first few years, but, once established the growth of the route will coincide with other citywide improvements. The provision of cycle racks on the buses will further enable support of the route.

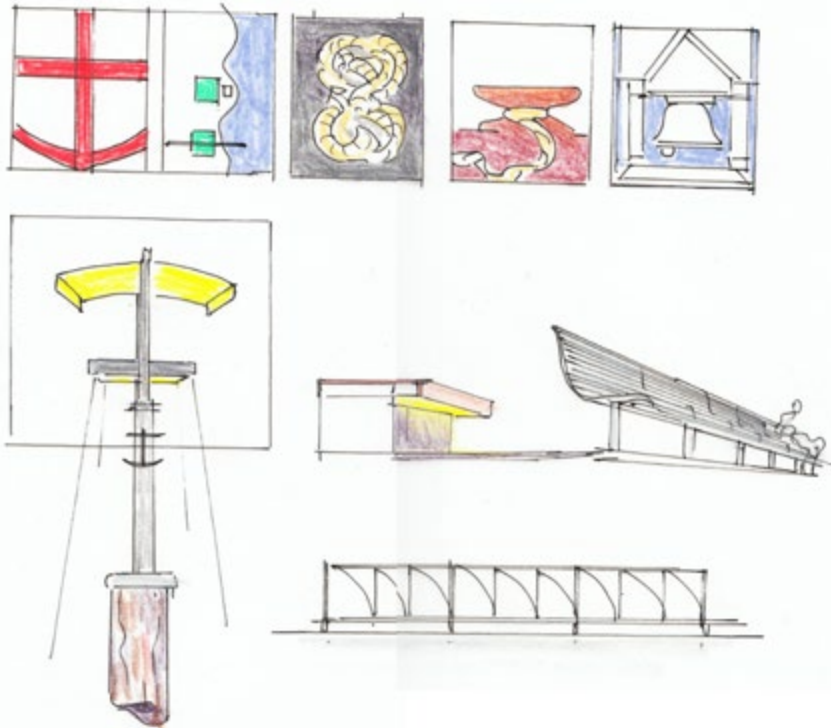
- Incorporate transit loop connecting U.S. 30, Olde Towne, Houlton, & New Town.

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

A consistent message should be communicated to those visiting the community. All signage along U.S. 30 should be evaluated to ensure it is necessary and up to date. Un-necessary signage can result in clutter that detracts from key messages informing visitors how to access City destinations. The City should pursue the development of a wayfinding program and signage policy. These details should be incorporated into a signage and wayfinding manual. The manual should list all destinations of community importance. Signage should be prioritized along primary access corridors including the intersection of U.S. 30 and Old Portland Road and the intersection of U.S. 30 and Columbia Boulevard.

Recommendations:

- Remove unnecessary signage
- Create policy for placement of new signage
- Develop a wayfinding manual
- Implement along primary access corridors



Signage and way finding need to be part of a comprehensive system of image building for St. Helens. The system includes street furniture, lighting standards, and public and private signage that reflect a nautical flavor and easy access to the river at St. Helens. Continuous bench structures along the river make a more sociable barrier than chain link.

PARKS & TRAILS

Although more acreage of Community Parks and Nature Parks are still needed to comply with the Level of Service Guideline (LOS) of Oregon, the City of St Helens currently has a fairly substantial system of existing parks and trails to build from.

The City staff are currently spearheading an effort to create a Master Plan of parks and trails, which will assist in the identification of future design opportunities and potential connections in the area. Expanding the trail system to facilitate everyday commuters and branding it as a unique destination in the area for tourism is highly recommended.

With its beautiful natural setting along the Columbia River and its great nature parks, the City of St Helens has the opportunity to become a regional and national destination, especially for cyclists. The City could make their trail system unique to the surrounding region, through the creation of branded maps and signage, in order to attract visitors who are seeking a distinctive and meaningful nature discovery experience.

The SDAT Team identified an opportunity for the City to develop two comprehensive and connected trail systems: a system of "nature trails" that would connect parks, open spaces and river access points and a network of "urban trails" that connect schools, retail establishments, and civic institutions.





Create a system of "nature trails" and "urban trails".

EVENTS

Events that attract visitors from outside the community will have a large benefit to the local economy. They will ensure that outside dollars are being spent in local businesses. This trend will improve long term business sustainability and help to balance out leakage that occurs when residents choose to shop in the Portland metropolitan area. It is important to ensure that the events are spread evenly throughout the year to prevent a limited seasonal impact. Start by securing one successful event for each quarter of the year. Successful events should be ones that result in a lasting memorable experience that is accredited to St. Helens.

When it comes to new community events, creativity is very important. St. Helens would be benefited by a market analysis to determine the probability of attraction from around the region. Know and understanding the customer is also important. A reliable starting point is a focus on the Portland area taking advantage of consumer propensities in the Portland area. Events that allow escape from the urban setting and enable popular recreational activities will be important as well as those events that build upon St. Helens' unique heritage and character.

Recommendations:

- Portland and Back Bicycle/Kayak event – Building upon kayaking and bicycling interests in the Portland area create an event that builds upon the sports enabling visitors to see the upland and water views of the St. Helens area.
- Basalt day festival – St. Helens has distinct basalt formations that create a memorable vision of the local landscape. These formations and the historic structures created out of the local basalt should be celebrated. The interest in geology and rocks has created numerous events throughout the nation. An event could be built around this uniqueness that includes tours of these local assets and potentially add a rock show where geologists come to share and sell collections.
- Columbia river bird festival – As a result of the pacific flyway the Columbia River is rich in bird life and there is national and international interest among birdwatchers to improve their birding checklist of species observed.
- Tribal Canoe Journey – In the Pacific Northwest there is a canoe journey among local tribes on an annual basis. St Helen's should work with local tribes to ensure they are a stop along the journey. The stop will educate residents on cultural heritage and inform visitors as to the accessibility of St. Helens.
- No Commute Week – An event dedicated to bring together local residents should be created. It could build upon the environmental benefits of not commuting for a week long period. The event should invite residents from all parts of the community for eating and entertainment opportunities in Old Town and on the waterfront.
- The great raft up – There is high potential for St. Helens to benefit off boating activity on the Columbia River. Already raft up parties are common in summer

months. St. Helens could consider a unique event that results in a large contingency of boaters gathered for an event on the St. Helens shore.

- St. Helen's/Ridgefield Festival – Presently there is limited communication between the communities directly across the river from one another. A festival that enhances awareness of sister communities across the river from one another could have long term benefits. The concept would result in a weekend long festival that alternates activities from each side of the river.

POLICY & INCENTIVES

An overall focus needs to be attributed to policy development. Where possible provide incentives to businesses to achieve the desired outcomes rather than regulatory requirements. Incentives can range from waiving fees on certificates of occupancy to matches for façade improvements. Codes should be reviewed to identify barriers. One option is to hire a local architect to do design scenarios under the current code. This will visually and conceptually demonstrate whether a developer or business can be successful under the current regulatory climate.

Regulations ensure public access to the water is maintained. Trade offs can be provided in the form of additional density or minor building height adjustments in return for the provision of public access. A building height analysis should inform decisions to increase height in order to demonstrate impact to views are minimized.

As drafted the current overlay zone is an improvement to standard development code options. The overlay code itself is a bit bulky and may appear intimidating to a developer. Additionally, the ordinance overly stresses a developer's agreement. Such an agreement is very dependent upon the individuals who negotiate and draft the agreement itself. It may remove the approach from public oversight and water down the intended public outcome and vision for the sight.

One key to success is that local businesses have the access to the support they need. Support services can help existing and new businesses overcome policy related barriers. The City should compile a list of local support services. These should include economic development entities, financial support services, business plan review, and access to regional investors. Below are some of those noted during the SDAT visit that are currently operating in support of the St. Helens community.

- Business Development Center Network (OSBDCN)
- Oregon SBDC
- Columbia County Economic Team
- SHEDCO Corp

The City should make a clear incentive based effort to encourage the location of

businesses in Olde Towne and Houlton. This may require modifications to area zoning codes that result in development being more cost effective in these areas. Reductions in parking requirements for these areas and improvements to City owned infrastructure in these areas are other options to consider. Placemaking and a façade program can also help focus new development and investment in these areas.

Recommendations:

- Revise and refresh overlay zone
- Ensure regulations protect public access to the water
- Make available a business support services list
- Create a list of Incentives to locate in Olde Towne and Houlton

OLDE TOWNE PLACEMAKING

The National Mainstreet Program is a good way to draw attention and support to the Olde Towne or Downtown area of St. Helens. The program focuses on historic preservation, events, marketing, and redevelopment opportunity. The historic assets of the courthouse and town square should be celebrated and highlighted.

Olde Towne should be the location that represents the primary community image and identity. The image individuals think of when they hear the name St. Helens. Improvements should focus on plaza enjoyment as a treasured community space. The plaza area should be a gathering space that hosts accessibility to food, water, and things happening in town. A quality kiosk identifying important community events can be located on the square.

Special attention should be paid to Olde Towne street furnishings and artwork with an overall thematic approach tying these aspects together. The streetscape should integrate artwork and new capital projects in this corridor should require the involvement of a team artist. A percentage of project cost should be directly allocated to artwork. The National Endowment of the Arts provides opportunity for funding these elements. The local arts commission can aid in the selection of artist and the drafting of necessary requests for qualifications.

A façade program can be implemented using Community Development Block Grant Income. The City can use these funds to match private sector investment. The focus of the program should be on improving the visual and aesthetic appearance of the public realm. Additionally, the investments should result in the overall increase of property values and tax assessments. By making the process competitive the City can ensure that designs are characteristic of the desired look and feel of the Ole Towne Area. Primary roadway facades and signage of these buildings should be included in the program. Below are some of the cities in Oregon that have a façade improvement

program that can be used for modeling the St. Helens approach:

- Beaverton
- Canby
- Coos Bay
- Corvallis
- Dallas
- Milwaukie
- Monmouth
- Sandy
- Sherwood

Such programs can use a loan or grant based approach or a combination thereof. Ensure that applicants are making improvements of substance beyond just paint and landscaping. Recognize that the program may need periodic adjustments to coincide with local community needs.

Recommendations:

- Utilize Mainstreet approach to market and promote Olde Towne Businesses and Events
- Encourage façade improvement program
- Integrate artwork in the streetscape
- Engage art commission in Olde Towne renewal
- Pursue National Endowment of the Arts grants
- Build a team artist into capital projects
- Primary community image/identity
- Incorporate a family of street furniture
- Thematic sense tying district together



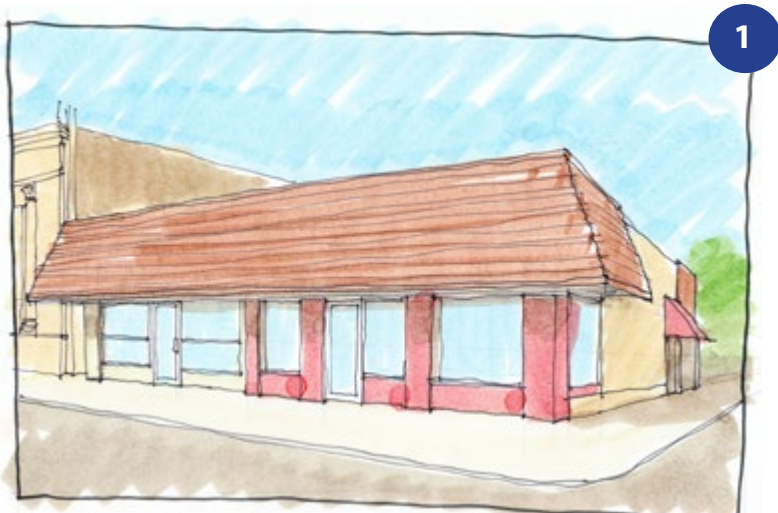
The square is the iconic center of the historic community. As the symbol of the community it can also be its living room - a place where people come to meet and people watch. Efforts should be made to open sociable activities onto the space. This might include closing the street for ritual events. A good plaza includes a water feature, food and lots of places to sit.



The Strand, with a defined urban landscape, becomes an urban place that terminates in the historic county building. Façade improvements to historic buildings along its edge reflect the local basalt color and use sail like rigging for awnings and signage. Retail demands large transparent openings and continuity at the street level to showcase product.

The building in the photo occupies an important site on the corner of The Strand and Cowlitz Street. A two-story building in close proximity to the Columbia County Court House and the veneer parcel, the property has great architectural potential. But its painted stucco finish and arched window openings are out of place in St. Helens' historical context.

The sketch below shows how this building could be renovated. Storefront bays are opened to their full width and height. The building is given a strong architectural base, and the upper floor is re-clad in basalt veneer. Upper story windows are squared-off and topped with lintels, and the façade is completed by a tall architectural cornice.



Storefront and signage improvements are some of the most effective strategies for repositioning a historic commercial district. First, a downtown merchants' association or non-profit neighborhood group such as a Main Street secures an agreement from a corporate partner or municipality to match investments from commercial property owners for capital improvements to their properties made in conformance with pre-established design guidelines. Design guidelines should be developed by design professionals and committed business owners, commercial tenants and residents so that the district's overall "theme" relates to the City's sign plan and regional identity.

Matching funding for façade improvements can be as simple as signage and storefront renovations. In the sketches, a historically inappropriate shingled mansard roof is removed and the parapet behind is renovated with a sign band and decorative lighting. In the second sketch, new awnings are added and storefront entries are relocated to give the façade a more orderly appearance. In the last sketch, a second story is added to the building – or the property is redeveloped at a more appropriate height and scale.

First preference for matching funds for façade improvements should be given to commercial property owners that are likely to follow-through with construction and are strategically located within the commercial district. Six or eight façade improvements within a few blocks and over a short period of time can do a lot to change peoples' perception of a commercial district.

BOISE SITES

Comprising approximately 200 acres of additional Columbia Riverfront land, the Boise White Paper Mill sites offer expansive opportunity for the community of St. Helens. Recognizing that a scaled-down paper mill still functions on the site and there is a strong State-level interest in keeping some industrial uses here, the SDAT team agreed to take a very preliminary look at how development parcels on this land could also be configured. Understanding that the veneer site, Olde Towne, and the Columbia Boulevard corridor are the top priorities for the City of St Helens, the SDAT team's findings for the Boise sites are only speculatively viable and their development is very contingent on economic growth first happening outside these parcels.

A cursory survey of existing conditions shows very little of this land still being used by the Boise Mill. In our walk-through, we were told that all unused buildings had been demolished, but it was clear that a further consolidation of this facility was possible. We noted the nearby residential neighborhood, the actively-used ball fields, the limited vehicular access into the sites, and the dense woodland that occupies the property's southwestern corner.

Understanding that St. Helens' underserved residential market represented perhaps the most viable short-term development opportunity, our first recommendation was to extend the single-family home subdivision pattern north of Umatilla Street southward into the site. In our diagram, we show the existing Umatilla St. widened into a boulevard with a center landscaped median connecting around the lagoon to the Nob Hill nature preserve. Of the two entry roads into the Boise site, the original straight road is maintained and the curved road abandoned. The triangle of land

formed by the new Kaster Road and Umatilla Street may form approximately 150 residential lots surrounding two of the active ball fields.

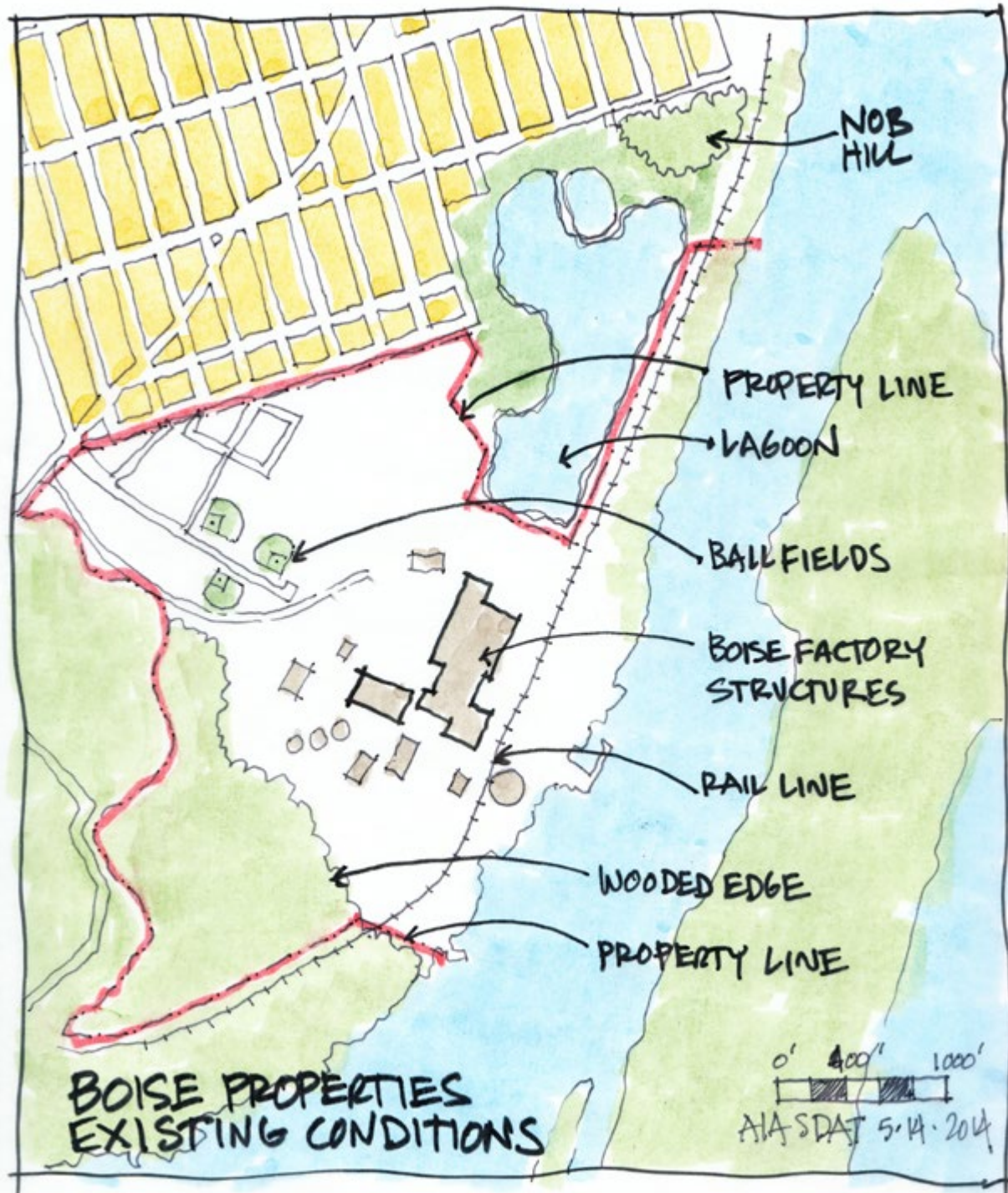
Next, when a closer site boundary is drawn around the active Boise Mill, a new perimeter road can be imagined creating three additional development sites: Site A adjacent to the rail line between the Mill and the River, Site B between the outer perimeter road and the Boise Mill, and Site C across new Kaster Road from the new residential lots. In our community conversations about the veneer site, many suggested uses that were too large for the veneer parcel may fit more easily on these sites.

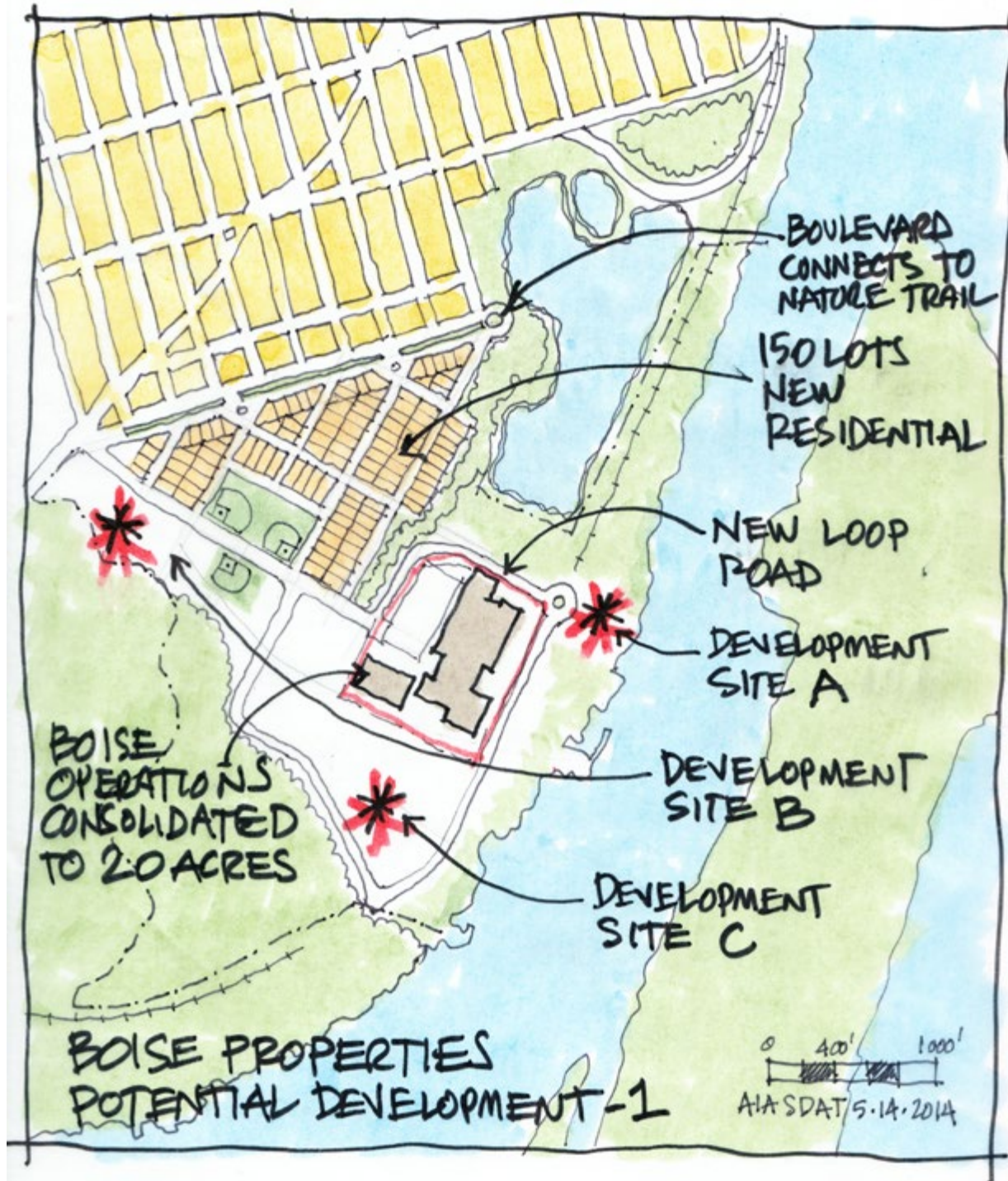
Site A: Assuming three-story construction at a relatively high lot coverage on this approximately 8 acre site could yield approximately 750,000 gross square feet of building area. Multi-unit residential uses or a community college with a mix of building types may work here. A community college in St. Helens would provide an economic boost to its businesses.

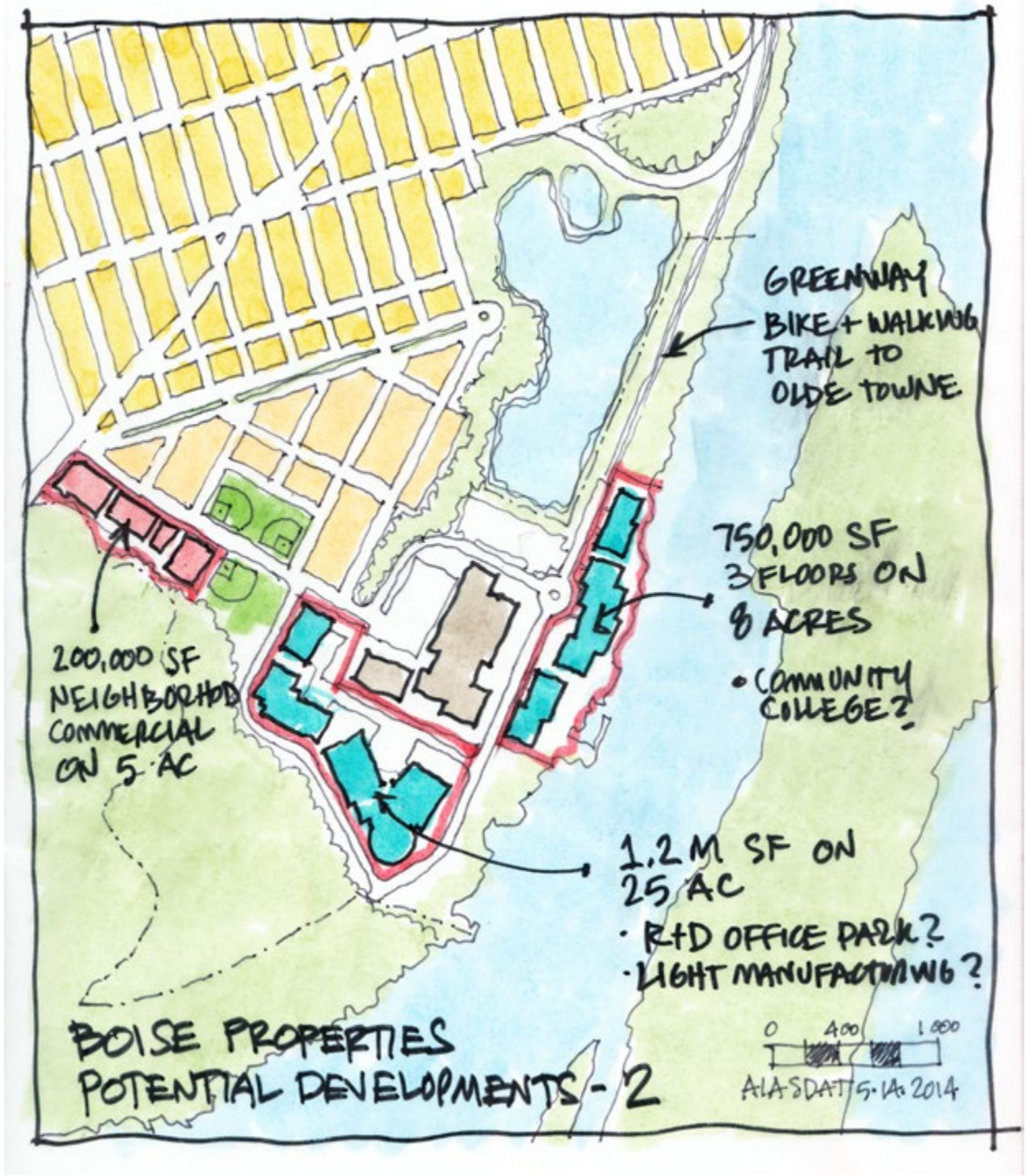
Site B: The largest contiguous development area in our study of 25 acres, this site could accommodate up to 1.2 million square feet of commercial use. Its adjacency to the existing Boise Mill suggest this land be reserved for job-creating uses such as light manufacturing or R&D office.

Site C: This approximately 5 acre strip of land across the street from a potential new housing subdivision would be ideally suited for up to 200,000 SF of neighborhood-oriented retail and services.









VENEER SITE

Plan Overview

After two days of site visits, meetings with city officials and representatives of St. Helens' residential and business communities and independent assessments of the economic opportunities as well as sustainable design challenges of the veneer parcel, the AIA SDAT team was prepared to recommend a development strategy for the 17 acre site.

It is important to note that this diagram is not a fully developed master plan, but could be seen as a series of guiding principles that may inform a comprehensive master plan and program for the site. Additionally, the integrated, multi-disciplinary and community-based design process the AIA SDAT team undertook in order to develop these recommendations can certainly serve as a process model for St. Helens as it considers creating zoning and land use guidelines that will drive this site's eventual development. The guiding principles that informed this plan are:

1. Connect the site to Olde Towne
2. Restore the city's historic connection to the river
3. Make the site publicly accessible
4. Balance private commercial and public benefit uses
5. Re-engage the natural environment and emphasize environmental stewardship

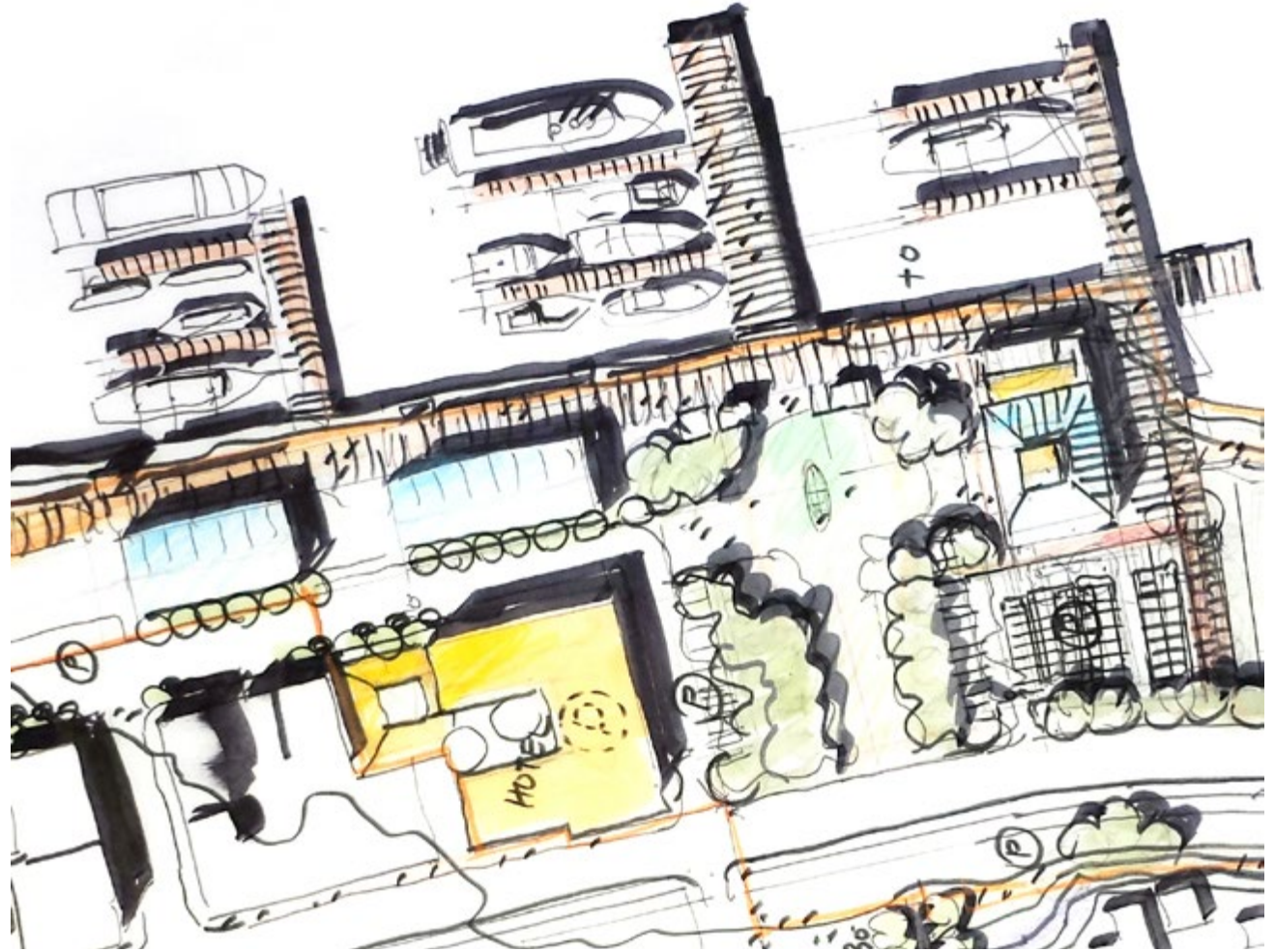
The overall site plan on the following page illustrates principle #1, extending the street grid of First Street and the Strand into the site, and proposing building sites of a shape and mass that are similar to Olde Towne's historic structures. It is recommended that design standards for new buildings be adopted requiring affinity with St. Helens' historical structures so that buildings like the Courthouse addition cannot be approved. Cowlitz Street is also extended towards the river's edge, and an important public stair continues the axis of Tualatin Street onto the site. As First Street follows the curve of the bluff, a more irregular site edge signals an end to the municipal grid.





The Maritime Heritage Waterfront is intended to celebrate – and restore - the city’s historic connection with the Columbia River. But rather than allowing industrial uses to define that relationship, we heard clearly from the citizens of St. Helens that tourism and recreational uses should form the new paradigm. We also heard of very successful maritime heritage museums as nearby as Astoria, Oregon, but the community expressed a strong reaction against museums as being a static, privatized and artificial. Instead, discussion focused on the possibility of permanently mooring restored vessels representing the many types that did and still navigate the Columbia River such as paddle steamers, tugboats, gill netters, lightships, barges, PT boats, recreational and commercial fishing boats and even full-rigged three-masted frigates.

Access to the Maritime Heritage Waterfront would be along a boardwalk along the river’s edge parallel to The Strand. Several building sites associated with the Maritime Heritage Waterfront in between the Strand and the boardwalk would be reserved for multi-purpose structures that could be open-sided in fair weather and closed in poor weather so a variety of commercial or cultural uses could be scheduled year-round. A farmer’ market, fish stalls, art galleries, and commercial arts sales were all described as desirable uses. A primary building site for a three or four story hotel is identified at the end of the new block between The Strand and First Street.



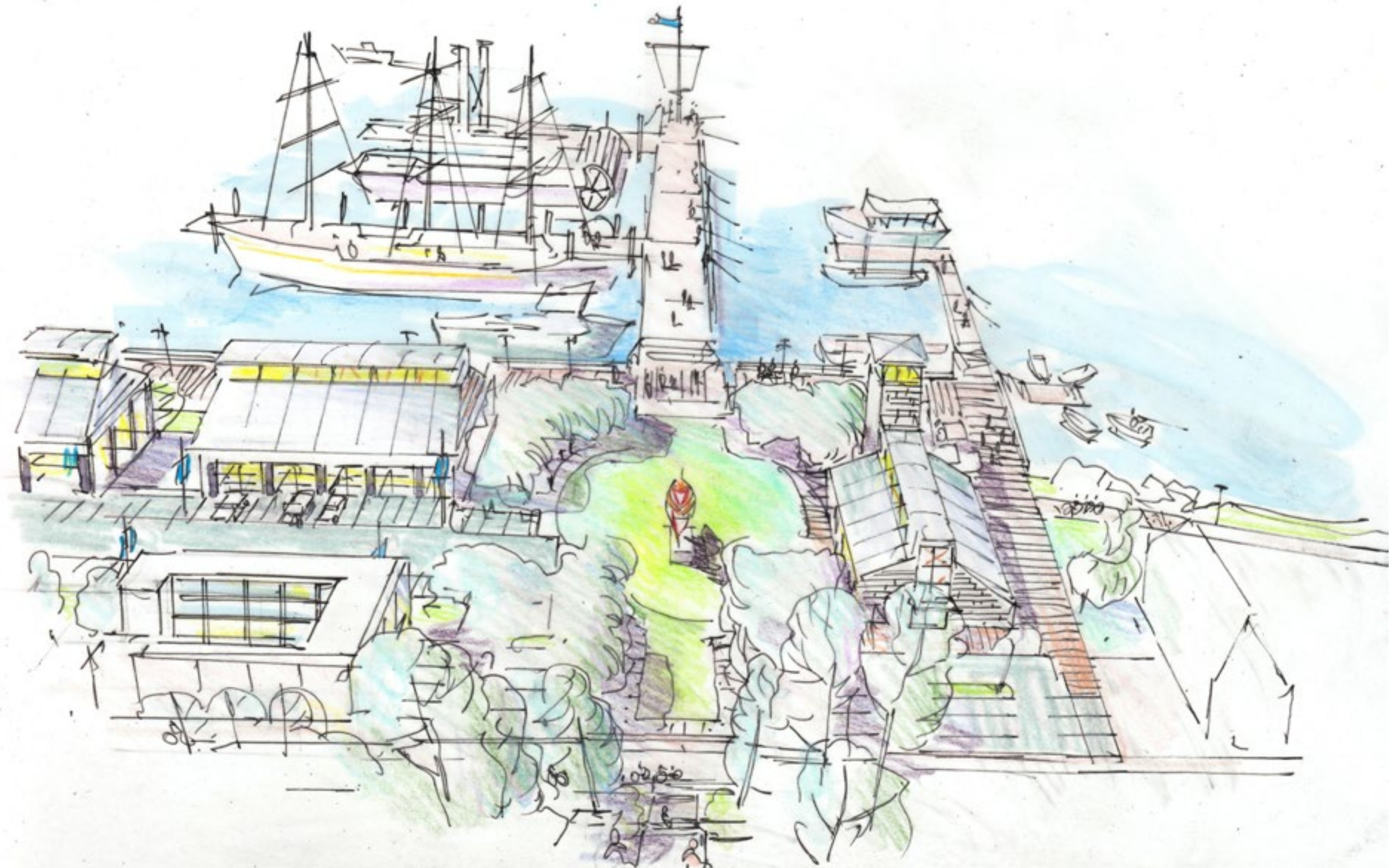
At the very center of the site plan is a new **Civic Plaza**. This plaza is located at the intersection of The Strand and the existing historic stair extending from Tualatin Street. The plaza is sized to accommodate crowds larger than those that attend “Thirteen Nights on the River” and could be seen as a better venue for that type of event. The plaza is flanked by a large exhibition hall that could open on the plaza and contain a variety of food vendors or other event-related functions. At the center of the plaza, we show an iconic sculpture that serves as the genesis for directional signage graphics as far away as Route 30. This structure says “you have arrived!”

At the eastern edge of the plaza is a **public fishing pier**. The SDAT team feels the creation of such a public amenity would be one of the most desirable places to be on the Columbia River front, affording the public an unbeatable view of the Maritime Heritage Waterfront, events in the plaza, new buildings along the river, and the bluffs of Olde Towne.



A heavy timber ship skeleton occupies and marks the center of this park like space on axis with a fishing pier and public steps up the bluff leading to Second Street.





The maritime heritage waterfront defines the purpose for the northern end of the veneer site. A boardwalk along the rivers edge, all weather pavilions and a 150 unit hotel provide activities focused on a central park space.

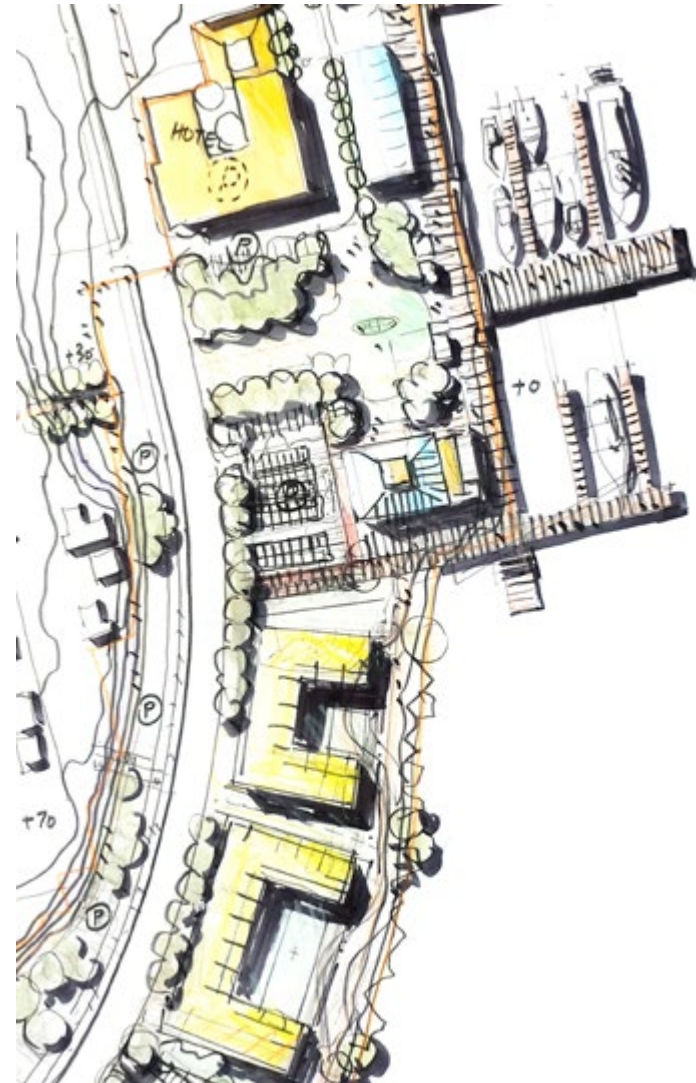


The ship skeleton is again seen at the end of the Strand with the market pavilions forming the enclosing edge. This is an image element that directly links tourists coming from highway 30 with public access to the river.

At the southernmost end of the veneer parcel, the AIA SDAT located one of the most ordinary and practical waterfront program elements: a **public commercial marina**. Associated with the slips and moorings, the plan shows a large public boat launch, a fueling station, a small office and an associated commercial building for boaters' supplies and provisions. Parking at loading docks are also shown. In addition to the marina, this section of plan illustrates the removal of the veneer site's existing constructed sheet-pile edge and the restoration of a more natural riverbank. Below the point where the exiting trestle rail bridge connects to the site, the plan shows a kayak launch. This function – along with a nearby kayak rental shop – would support one of the Columbia River's most desirable public activities.



Finally, the AIA SDAT believes that the veneer parcel needs to accommodate some uses that will drive the economics of private investment. The last programmatic recommendation for this site is **multi-unit housing**. Hearing the concerns expressed by some members of the community about condominiums, we recognize that the site area given over to private development of multi-unit housing must be limited and constrained by a well-conceived comprehensive plan that favors public uses. However, given the current market conditions in St. Helens, housing is the only strong market segment and – if well designed to be contextually responsive and constructed within pre-approved development enveloped – we believe this use would be a welcomed and dynamic addition to the other proposed uses on this parcel.





This rendering was produced in response to concerns for how development on the veneer site may impact views of the Columbia River from the bluffs of Olde Towne. This image presents an advantageous view of the proposed plan from the highest point on the bluff and will vary from different locations. But it is important to point out that site development guidelines can be put in place that could mitigate certain view impacts from development. For example, the four-story residential buildings shown in this plan are sited far from the bluffs on the other side of the proposed First Street extension reducing the apparent mass of these buildings. It is strongly recommended that development be contained to proportionally-scaled building lots to prevent long walls of unbroken facades. Additionally, the ground floor or parking and commercial level of these buildings is shown below the proposed First Street grade. Although buildings on this site will certainly obstruct some views of the Columbia River, the relatively low density of lot coverage illustrated by this plan would maintain important public view corridors from streets and assure that substantial portions of existing river views will still be available to residents of the bluffs. We further recommend that prior to the approval of an actual development plan, building outlines can be mocked-up on site to evaluate their view impacts.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGIES

The SDAT Team's proposal for the site includes several landscape strategies that complement the development of the site and comply with the five sustainable strategies developed by the SDAT Team: the use of renewable energy, the management of stormwater and water uses, the restoration of vegetation and habitat, the promotion of alternative transportation and the use of sustainable materials.

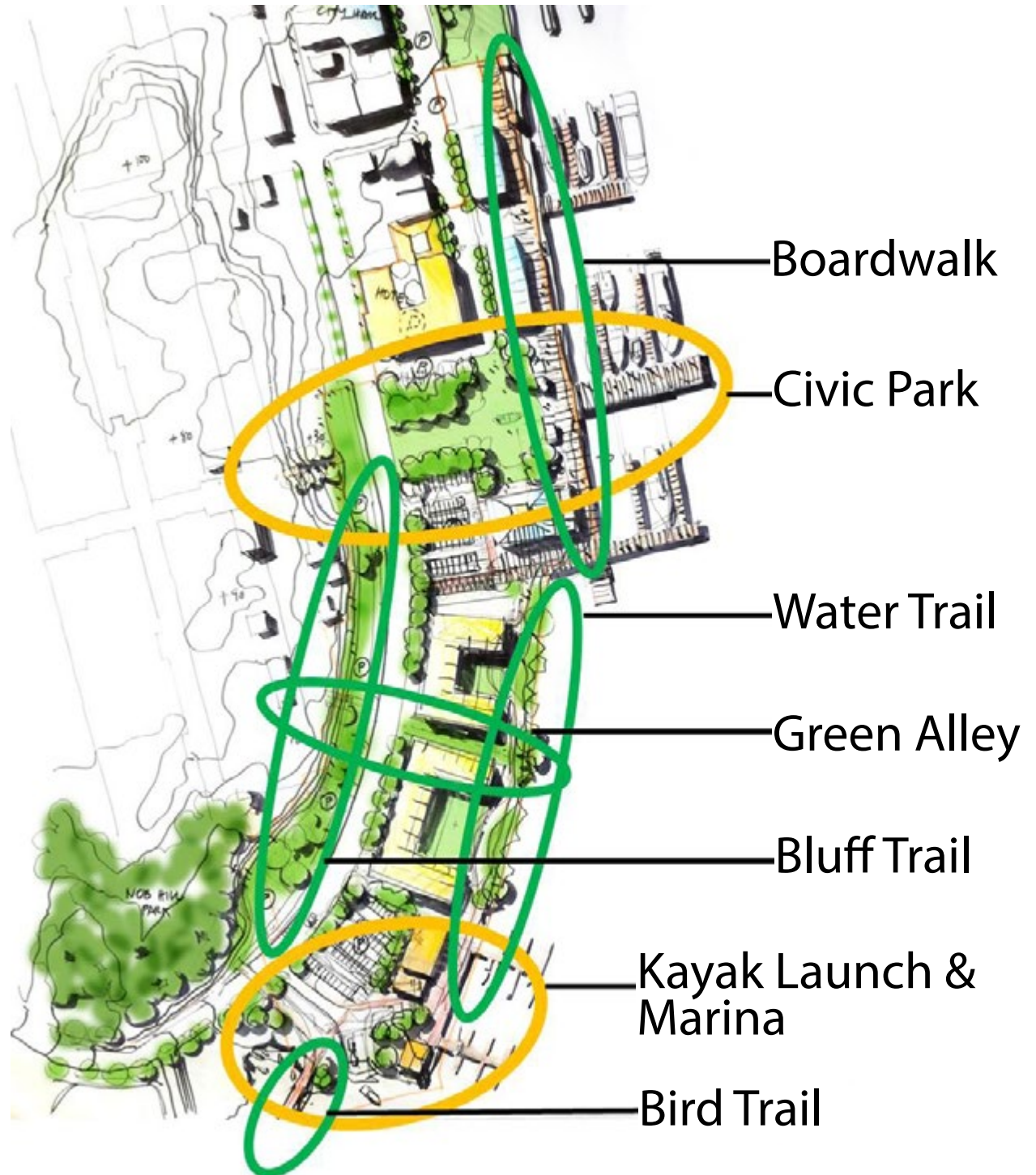
The recommended landscape design strategies embody the concept of a "performative landscape"—one that will treat stormwater on site, improve local habitat, and restore degraded and/or lost ecosystems.

The previous use of the Vener Site and its extensive network of hard surface (e.g. streets, parking lots, roofs), has resulted in the degradation of the coastal wildlife, as well as quality of life and human health along the shore of the Columbia River. This project seeks to rethink the urban infrastructure as a living system that purifies, retains, and celebrates water. The importance of developing innovative landscape design strategies based off ecological thinking is paramount, especially if post-modern urban projects such as this are to prosper along the shore.

Proposed Landscape Typologies for the Vener Site

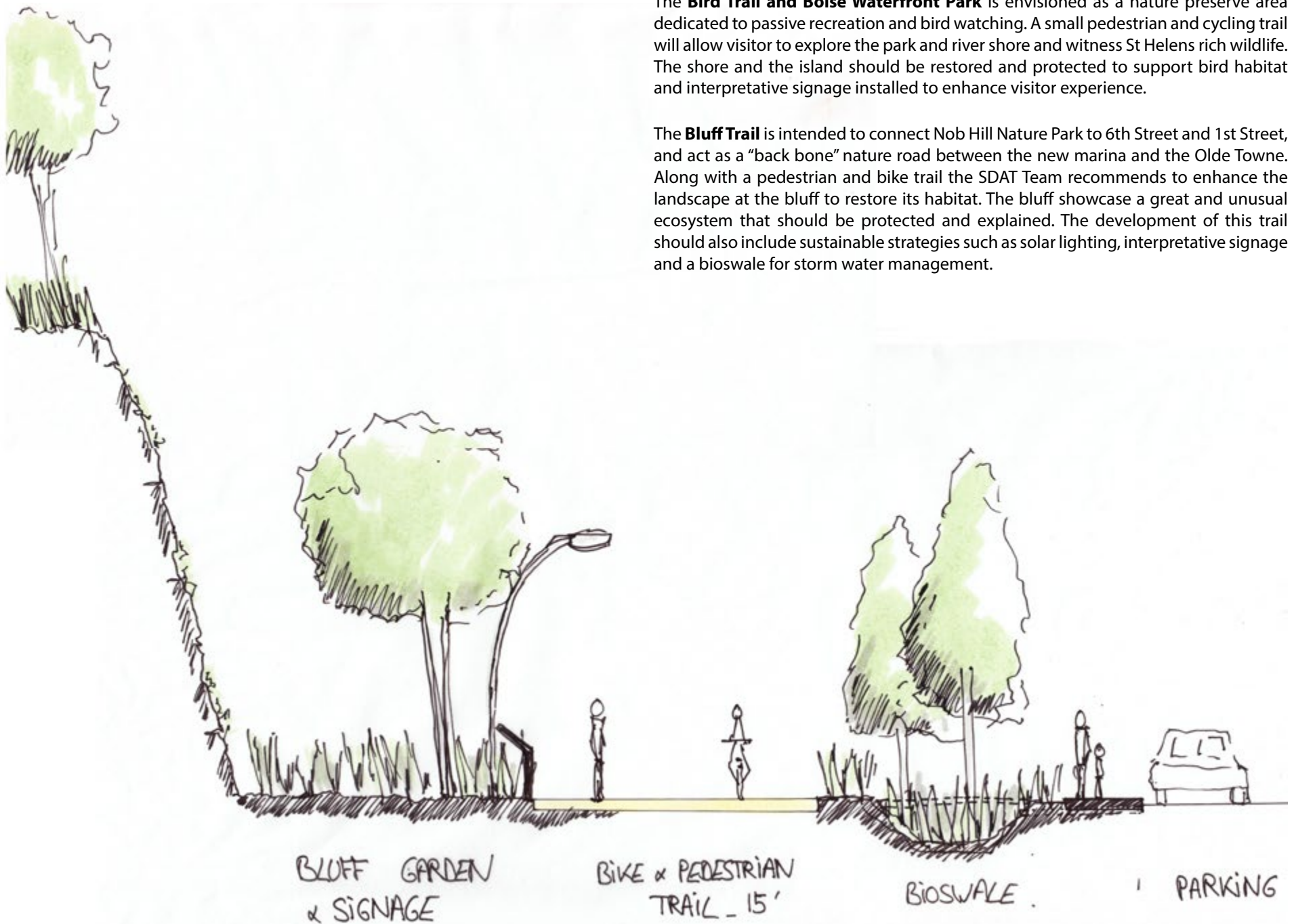
Two main public spaces are proposed on the Vener site: the Civic Park Plaza on the northern end and the Marina at the Southern end. These two main public spaces will create focal gathering spaces and act as gateways into the site, stitching together the existing fabric of St Helens.

A series of trails and connections are also proposed throughout the site to support bicycle and pedestrian circulation. Such trails (which are described in more detail subsequently) include: a Boardwalk along the pier, a Water Trail along the river shoreline to ensure public access of the water edge, a bluff trail along the cliff to connect Nob Hills Nature Park to the site and to Olde Towne, a Green Alley that connects 2nd Street to the river through the site and a Bird Trail that starts at the Marina and takes visitor to the Boise Island via the existing trestle bridge.



The **Bird Trail and Boise Waterfront Park** is envisioned as a nature preserve area dedicated to passive recreation and bird watching. A small pedestrian and cycling trail will allow visitor to explore the park and river shore and witness St Helens rich wildlife. The shore and the island should be restored and protected to support bird habitat and interpretative signage installed to enhance visitor experience.

The **Bluff Trail** is intended to connect Nob Hill Nature Park to 6th Street and 1st Street, and act as a “back bone” nature road between the new marina and the Olde Towne. Along with a pedestrian and bike trail the SDAT Team recommends to enhance the landscape at the bluff to restore its habitat. The bluff showcase a great and unusual ecosystem that should be protected and explained. The development of this trail should also include sustainable strategies such as solar lighting, interpretative signage and a bioswale for storm water management.

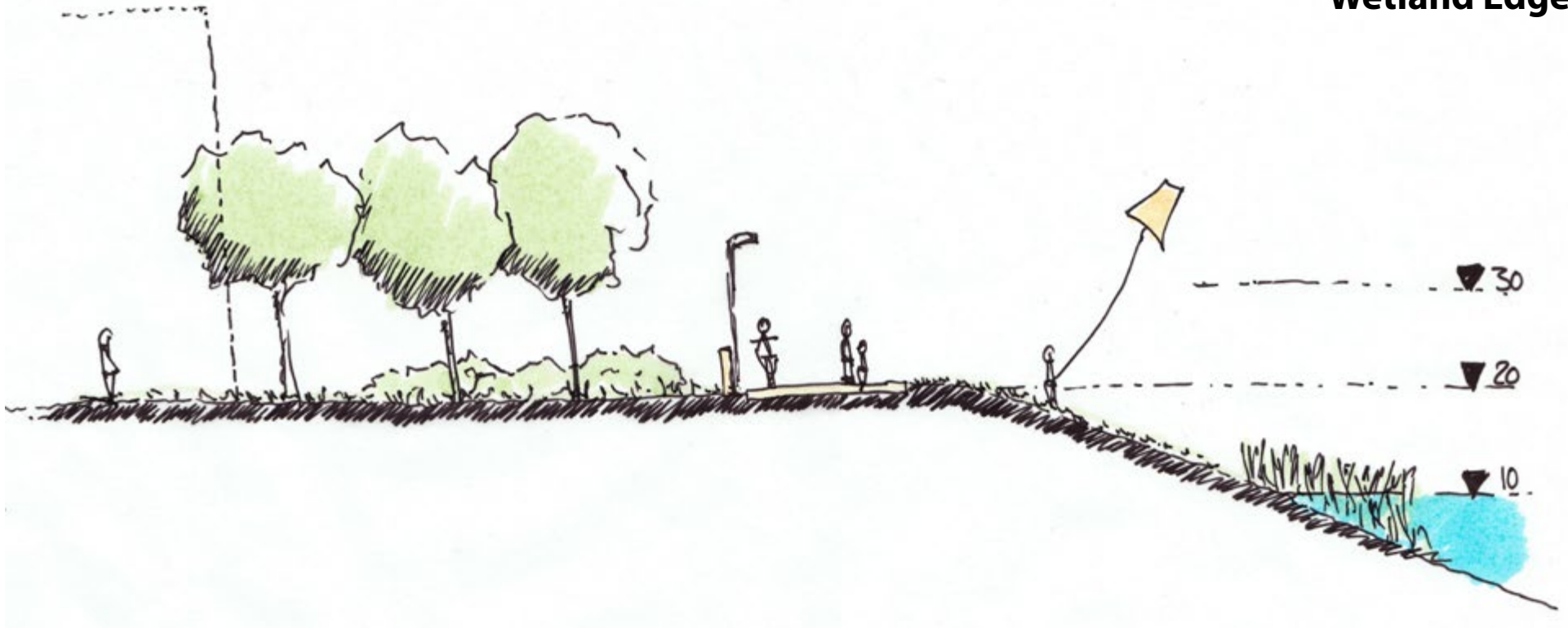




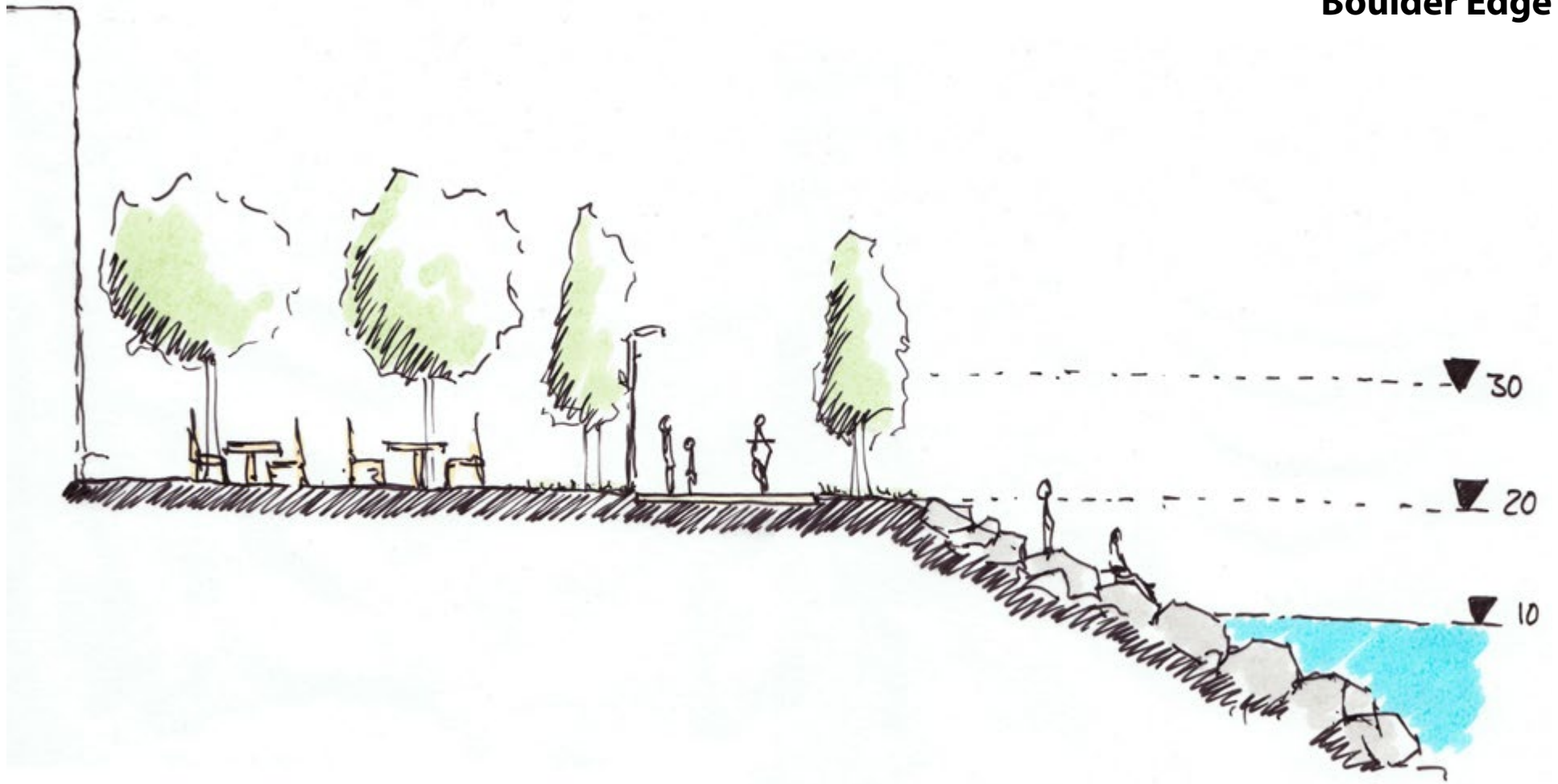
The high bluff at the south end of the site overlooks a confluence of trails and activities connecting bikers, walkers and boaters to river access for kayaks, a commercial marina and two story live work housing units. A bike path that follows the bluff begins here.

The **Water Trail** will serve as a linear public space along the river, ensuring that public access to this natural resource is increased and maintained. The trail will provide both passive and active recreational opportunities, with various edge conditions along the way. The water's edge should be lined with boulders that inhibit bank erosion while allowing for informal access and places to sit. Constructed wetlands along the way will also aid in the restoration of this riparian ecosystem. Seasonal flooding must be considered when designing the Water Trail. Incorporating a setback along the river will also create public outdoor space, such as cafe terraces or landscaped areas, and help activate the river front. The trail should use incorporate sustainable materials and elements (such as lighting and interpretative signage) where possible, enhancing the visitor experience and creating a more sustainable landscape.

Wetland Edge



Boulder Edge



The Boardwalk extends the Strand and Columbia View Park and creates a social setting along the pier. The boardwalk is intended to have a more urban feel, and support various activities such as outdoor dining, people watching, shopping and gathering. The Boardwalk will also serve as the place to celebrate the maritime history of St Helens and welcome boaters to the City. Trees and benches placed along the Boardwalk at regular intervals will create a comfortable and attractive destination and experience.

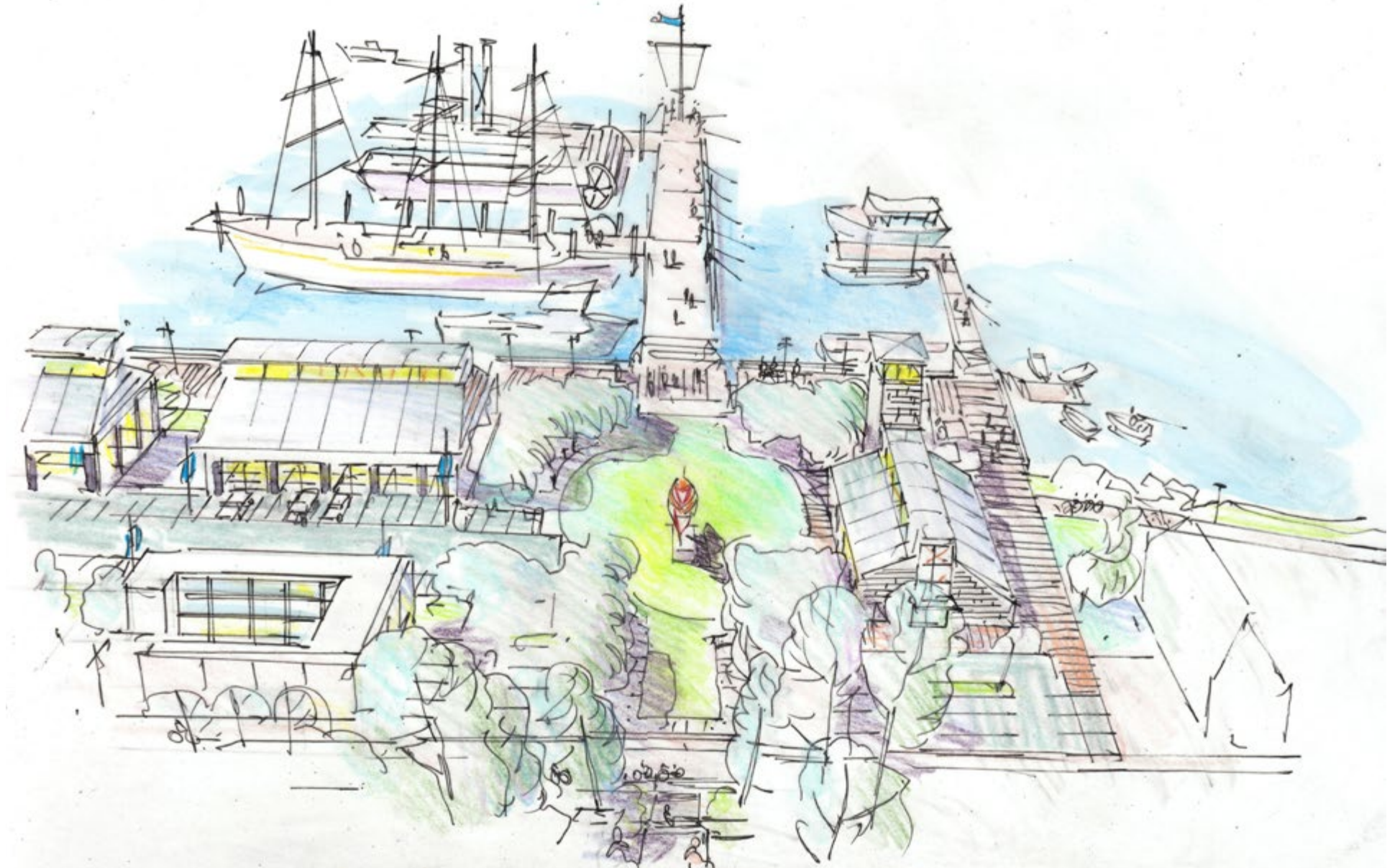


The board walk brings the public along the rivers edge and permits close interaction with the historic boats.

A **Green Alley** will provide pedestrian access from 1st street to the Water Trail, while simultaneously serving as an ecological corridor—treating stormwater via a series of bioswales and providing ecological connections for wildlife. The SDAT Team recommends the extension of this access to 2nd street via a set of stairs.



The **Civic Park Plaza**, located between 1st street and the Strand, will be a focal point and destination for all. The Plaza will create a flexible space to be used for large to small public gatherings and events. The Plaza will also serve as a community park, providing the public with places to play and exercise. Parking on the south of the park will allow easy access and the stairs to 2nd street will provide access to the community.



The bluff trail, waters edge path, stairs, roads and boardwalk all lead to landscaped parking plazas and the iconic central park.

The **Marina and Kayak Launch** is intended to provide a place for residents and visitors to enjoy the river's recreational opportunities. A kayak launch area and rental facility is proposed at this location, alongside of a small café and marina-oriented retail. Parking will support the incoming traffic. The Marina and Kayak Launch will allow people to experience St Helens by boat, and provide additional recreational opportunities, offering a place for children and adults to engage with and explore the wonderful islands and river edges in the area.



Rocky edges and wetland edges alternate along the south end of the riverside trail. The bluffs can just be seen over the live/work residential units.

NEXT STEP – SITE ANALYSIS & LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

The SDAT Team’s proposal for the site includes several landscape strategies that complement the development of the site and comply with the five sustainable strategies developed by the SDAT Team: the use of renewable energy, the management of stormwater and water uses, the restoration of vegetation and habitat, the promotion of alternative transportation and the use of sustainable materials.

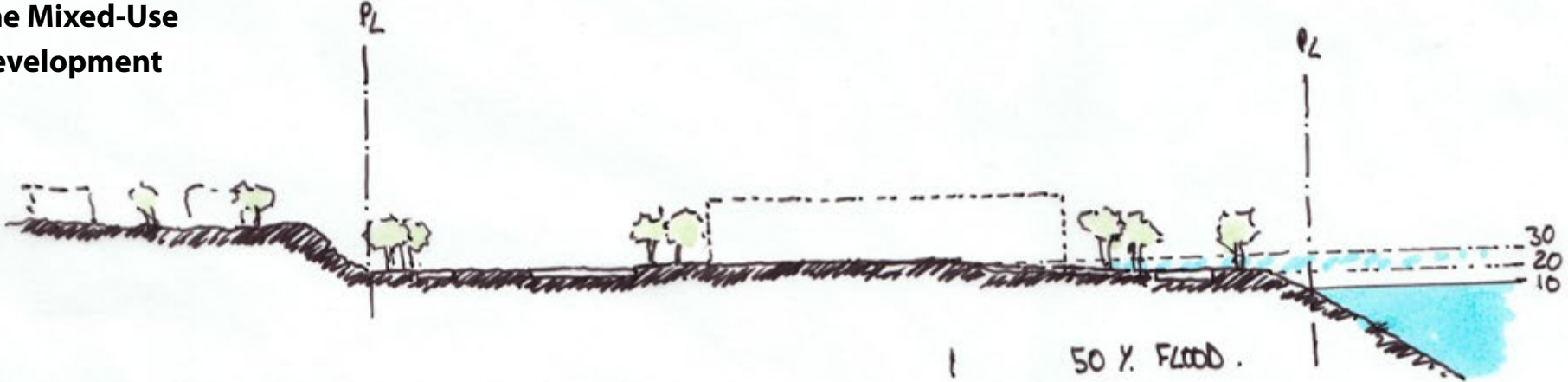
The recommended landscape design strategies embody the concept of a “performative landscape”—one that will treat stormwater on site, improve local habitat, and restore degraded and/or lost ecosystems.

The previous use of the Veneer Site and its extensive network of hard surface (e.g. streets, parking lots, roofs), has resulted in the degradation of the coastal wildlife, as well as quality of life and human health along the shore of the Columbia River. This project seeks to rethink the urban infrastructure as a living system that purifies, retains, and celebrates water. The importance of developing innovative landscape design strategies based off ecological thinking is paramount, especially if post-modern urban projects such as this are to prosper along the shore.

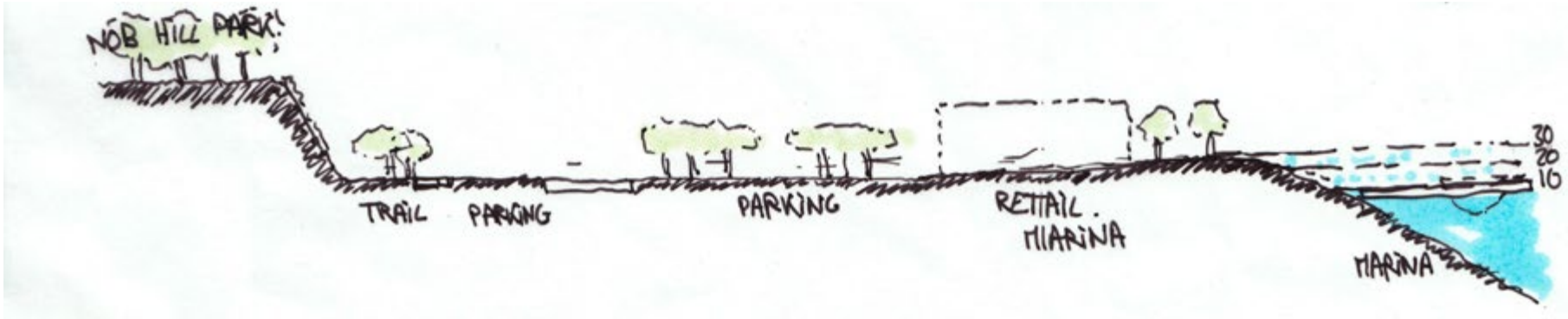
The Park



The Mixed-Use Development



The Marina



Next Steps



veneer site

As a brownfield site, there are a number of important steps to implementing plans in this location. The first is due diligence for all future uses. Environmental phase 1 and phase 2 assessments should be completed and shared with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). To the extent feasible, the City should strive for a written clean bill of health from DEQ. Dealing with any issues early will ensure seamless development of the site into the future.

The process of purchasing a brownfield site can be lengthy and frustrating. The City should maintain focus on closing the deal and doing so quickly to avoid spending on process rather than capital improvements.

Even before the property transaction closes the City can begin saving funds to use as grant matches for the Boardwalk, trail system, and other capital improvements. Once capital improvements are developed conceptually, the City should seek comprehensive permitting for all phases of development. Permitting along the river can require hundreds of thousands of dollars in consulting services. It is important that the City strive to achieve all permitting simultaneous to ensure smooth and rapid implementation on the site.

Once implemented, the City should highlight its successes and market them to developers. As the site develops the City should be flexible as to whether they lease or sell the land to an interested developer.

In preparation for developer interest the City should put together a list of desired water related and water dependent uses. Additionally, municipal purposes should be identified that could be integrated in the form of public/private partnerships.

Recommendations:

- Close the real estate transaction on the Veneer property
- Identify matching funds for City boardwalk and other capital improvements
- Seek comprehensive permitting capital projects
- Highlight your successes and market to developers
- Principles for Private Sector Development:
 - Be flexible on lease vs. ownership
 - Prioritize water related and water dependent businesses to prevent competition with Olde Towne and Houlton
 - Consider municipal purposes for public/private partnerships

Implementation

During the SDAT visit, it was very noticeable that a lot of excellent planning has been done for the St. Helens community. In order to maintain public confidence in these plans, the City needs to demonstrate follow through in the form of implementation. As a starting point plan elements should be categorized into low hanging fruit, medium effort items and longer term items. Once these categories have been established all plan elements should be prioritized. The City should start with the completion of a few easy to implement priorities.

Accountability will be extremely important in ensuring these items are actually constructed on the ground. It will be important to have one individual with the authority and drive to make these things happen. The individual should be backed by a committee of supportive citizens committed to the same goal. The Committee's role should be to assist with challenging decisions that may be political or controversial in nature. The individual and the committee supporting them will need to be resilient and focused as there will be numerous impediments and challenges along the way.

After the first few items are implemented it is critical to keep the momentum going. If done right, this momentum can continue for many years. Other ingredients to successful implementation include a level of passion and excitement among members of the public. The City should be driven to keep this excitement alive through new investments and responsiveness to public comments. By taking this on the City can inspire private sector investment and re-invigorate community pride. Citizens will empower the implementation if that maintain a positive together we can attitude.

Recommendations:

- Create categories of implementation items based on low, medium and high levels of difficult and cost.
- Prioritize those items that are most important to the public.
- Assign one individual accountable for the implementation of plan elements
- Establish a positive and supportive committee to back up controversial and politically sensitive decisions.

LESSONS FROM THE DESIGN ASSISTANCE PROCESS

The team was asked to provide some comparable cases that might offer lessons for St. Helens, and the preceding report contains numerous examples of design interventions, policy models, and other best practices that can be applied to many components of the community revitalization process. However, the team felt it would also be instructive to offer a couple case studies from the design assistance experience which can help inform the design of an implementation process for St. Helens. Each case reinforces the preceding framework described for St. Helens, as each community has overcome challenges with scarce public resources by engaging the whole community in the process of revitalization and development successfully.

Port Angeles, Washington (pop. 17,000)

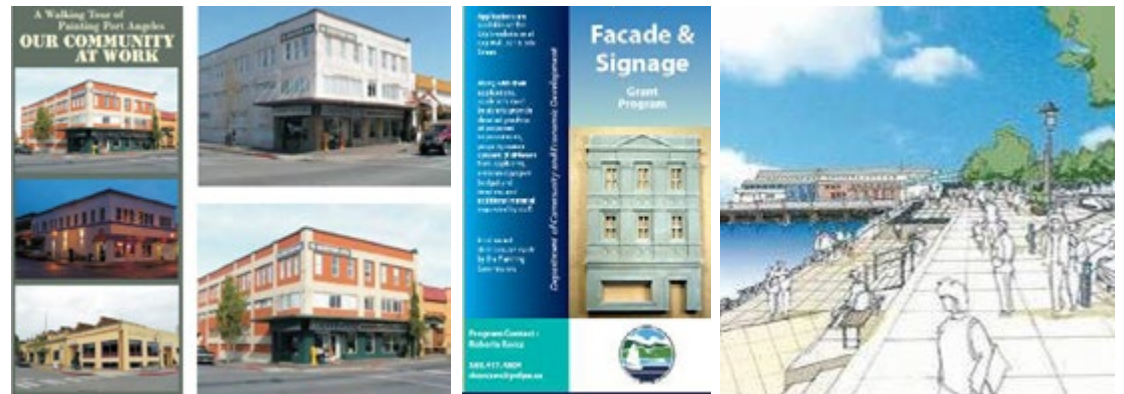
Building Community Pride through a Public Revitalization Process

Port Angeles, Washington provides an example of how to inspire pride in change by creating a truly public revitalization process. Their success has been built around involving everyone in the process. In 2009, Port Angeles hosted an SDAT to focus on downtown revitalization and waterfront development. Port Angeles had suffered declining fortunes as the result of mill closures and reduced productivity from natural resource industries. The three-day charrette process created enormous civic energy to pursue a vision for the city's future. "Just two weeks after the SDAT presented more than 30 recommendations, the Port Angeles Forward committee unanimously agreed to recommend 10 of those items for immediate action," said Nathan West, the City's Director of Community and Economic Development. "Public investment and commitment inspired private investment, and, less than a month later, the community joined together in an effort to revamp the entire downtown, starting with a physical face-lift. Community members donated paint and equipment, and residents picked up their paintbrushes to start the transformation."

During the first summer of implementation, over 43 buildings in the downtown received substantial upgrades, including new paint and other improvements. This effort led to a formal façade improvement program that extended the initiative exponentially. The city dedicated \$118,000 in community development block grants (CDBG) for the effort, which catalyzed over \$265,000 in private investment. The city also moved forward with substantial public investment in its waterfront, which had a dramatic impact in inspiring new partnerships and private investment. Three years later, the city had over \$75

million in planned and completed investments and had turned the corner by producing huge civic momentum across the community. In June 2012, Port Angeles was recognized with a state design award for its waterfront master plan, designed by LMN Architects. The city will break ground on construction in the fall.

As West concluded, "The City of Port Angeles SDAT experience was far more than just a planning exercise. This opportunity for our community was a catalyst for action, implementation and improvement. Three years after the SDAT team arrived, the progress and excitement continue. A primary outcome has been that the process awakened community pride and inspired a "together we can" attitude. Today the inspiration remains and the elements and recommendations of the program continue to be the driver for publicly endorsed capital projects and investments in our community. More importantly this sustainable approach has tapped into the core values and priorities of our citizens to ensure a better and more balanced future for our City."



Newport, Vermont (pop. 5,000)

The Power of Leveraged Actions

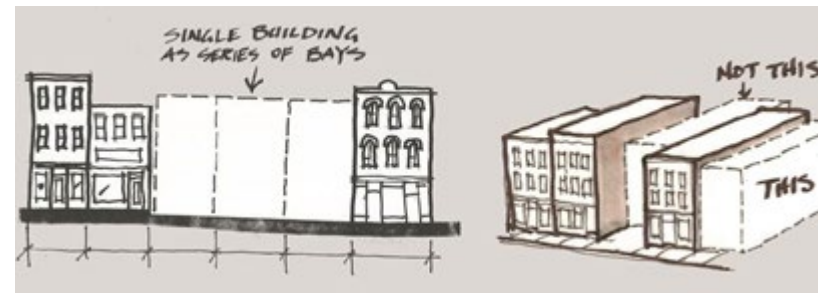
In 2009, Newport, Vermont brought a Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) to town to help build a revitalization strategy. Patricia Sears, the Executive Director of the Newport Renaissance Corporation, described the town's dilemma a few years ago: "We were the last city in Vermont to achieve downtown designation from the state. We had some of the highest unemployment in the state. We decided we were done being last. We decided, 'we are going to be first.'" Newport hosted the first R/UDAT in state history. Hundreds of residents and stakeholders participated in the process. As Mayor Paul Monette said, "it wasn't the usual political process. Everyone was heard during the R/UDAT."

Within two years of the project, the R/UDAT had built so much momentum that the town had over \$250 million in new and pending investment, including 2,000 new jobs in a town of just 5,000 – an incredible achievement in the midst of a severe national recession. Like Port Angeles, Newport was able to achieve success through broad partnership and involvement. It also leveraged small actions to build momentum for larger investments. For example, the R/UDAT team included a recommendation to create a community garden downtown, something that has been suggested for Springfield as well. Newport created a community garden with over 32 organizational partners. They took advantage of existing capacity – a downtown parking lot that was donated – and not only created a garden, but programmed it to have a transformational impact.

Out of the community garden, the "Grow a Neighborhood" program was created, teaching neighborhood residents about urban agriculture, providing space for family plots, and engaging local restaurants in a farm to table initiative. Six new restaurants opened in the downtown during the first two years of implementation. Newport also took advantage of widespread community participation in the R/UDAT to engage citizens in code changes, designing a participatory process to create the first form-based code in the state. New investments include boutique hotels, a tasting center featuring regional agriculture, and a waterfront resort. The city also created the state's first foreign trade zone, attracting a Korean biotechnology firm and other businesses.

The City has undergone a fundamental shift in its thinking since the R/UDAT process. In 2009, the public dialogue was dominated by

nostalgia about the city's past. As one resident exclaimed, "I've seen Newport come, and I've seen it go." Two years later, the R/UDAT team conducted a follow up visit to assess progress in the community. As the Mayor stated, "I attribute our success to the successful R/UDAT in 2009 followed by the great public/private partnerships which have developed." The sense of change reaches all levels of the community. A citizen described the civic "attitude adjustment" that had occurred: "When you have people working together, things can happen and do happen. That's the most important change that has occurred – a change in attitude. All of a sudden, nothing is impossible." Today, communities across New England are visiting Newport to learn the 'secrets' of its success.



Team Roster





MIKE DAVIS, FAIA- TEAM LEADER

Michael R. Davis, FAIA, LEED AP, a Principal and Vice President at Bergmeyer Associates, Inc., is a practicing architect, an educator, and an advocate for sustainable public policy. Mr. Davis advises the Boston Redevelopment Authority as Chair of the Boston Civic Design Commission and served on Boston Mayor Thomas Menino's Green Building Task Force and Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick's Net Zero Energy Building Task Force. He was 2013 President of the Boston Society of Architects and is a former Co-Chair

of the AIA Massachusetts Government Affairs Committee. For the American Institute of Architects, Mike has led AIA Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) charrettes in Ithaca, NY, DeKalb County, GA, Augusta, GA, Tremonton, UT, and St. Helens, OR, and currently serves on a national AIA Material Transparency working group.

Mike's recent projects include a new LEED-Registered facility for Hostelling International Boston in an adaptively-reused historic building and a deep-energy retrofit of public housing units for the Boston Housing Authority at the Cathedral Family Development, which achieved LEED Platinum certification. He blogs about his firm's work as signatory to the AIA 2030 Commitment at <http://mikedavisfaia.wordpress.com>.

Mike is a Trustee of the Boston Foundation for Architecture and an Overseer of the Boston Architectural College. He holds a Bachelor Degree in Architecture from the Pennsylvania State University and a Master of Architecture from Yale University.



STEVE BENZ, PE, HON. ALSA, LEED FELLOW

As Partner and Director of Green Infrastructure, Steve Benz advances OLIN's research and implementation of sustainable design strategies. A licensed civil engineer, Steve has contributed to several award winning green infrastructure design commissions including the LEED® Platinum-certified Kroon Hall at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Ray and Maria

Stata Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts. More recently, Steve drove many of the environmental strategies for Washington Canal Park, a pilot project for the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES™).

In his pursuit of continually evolving research, practice and policy, Steve co-led two competitions with other OLIN partners exploring ways to approach implementing

scalable green infrastructure strategies within urban environments. OLIN's winning entries in both the Infill Soak it Up! Design Competition and the Living City Design Competition demonstrated targeted, achievable solutions that show how various stakeholders can come together to realize change—developers, city governments utility companies, designers and residents alike.

Steve was recently named an honorary member of the American Society of Landscape Architects and a LEED Fellow by the U.S. Green Building Council in recognition of his contribution of performative landscapes. He is the immediate past Chair of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) National Sustainable Sites Technical Advisory Group (TAG) where he led the development of sustainability criteria for site development within the LEED program. He was also two-term and founding Chair of the Massachusetts Chapter of the USGBC, and currently serves on the USGBC's LEED Water Efficiency TAG and the Sustainable Sites Initiative's Technical Core Committees.



THOMAS LAGING, FAIA, NCARB

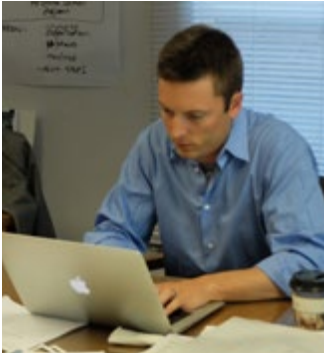
Professor Laging has recently served as the director of the Architecture Program at the University of Nebraska and as the Killinger Distinguished Professor of Urban Design and Architecture. His teaching specialties include urban design and architectural representation. He has taught or been an invited critic at numerous universities both nationally and internationally—including the Isthmus School in Panama in 2013 and Tianjin University in 2008. He was a Fullbright Scholar at Simon Bolivar University in

Caracus.

As a skilled environmental visualizer Professor Laging has informed his teaching though an urban design consulting practice. He has been involved with numerous mixed-use urban retail projects, town center planning developments and campus-planning efforts.

Laging was the 2013 Chairman of Nebraska State Board of Engineers and Architects where he has served for over twelve years and was a member of the NCARB education committee.

He is a charter member of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission a member the Centennial Mall design team. He was elevated to fellow in the AIA for his service to communities. He holds a Masters Degree from The Harvard Graduate School of Design.



MICHAEL LATHAM, PHD

Michael Latham is a Senior Economist and Project Manager with Catalyst Commercial. He received a Master's Degree in Applied Economics and a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Political Economy from the University of Texas at Dallas. Dr. Latham is experienced in utilizing statistical analysis and Geographic Information Systems to identify beneficial insights for both commercial and residential markets. His research interests include the economic development initiatives, urban planning, and neighborhood impacts on the economy.

As an Economist with Catalyst Commercial, he has conducted numerous economic impact analysis, feasibility studies, and market analysis for both private and public. Prior to working with Catalyst, Dr. Latham worked as a Research Scientist with the University of Texas at Dallas where he worked on numerous state and federal projects including the Financial Allocation Study for the State of Texas (FAST) for the Texas State Comptroller, and a National Science Foundation Study that examined the impact of executive level leadership on Fortune 500 Companies.



ASTRID SYKES, ASLA

Astrid Sykes is a project manager and designer at ML+A who has been responsible for project design through construction administration on a wide range of projects. Astrid Sykes has led project teams on various urban river projects, civic master plan, urban park design and K12 and higher education projects and mixed-use developments. Ms. Sykes is committed to social justice issues and her approach to placemaking combines innovative strategies, community engagement, and sustainable practices to enhance environments and create meaningful connections.

Ms. Sykes's work focuses on advancing best management practices in projects and brings an international perspective to the design process.

Ms. Sykes holds two masters degrees, one in Architecture and the other in Landscape Architecture from School of Architecture Paris Belleville and University of California Berkeley respectively.

Astrid has been the Caltech Tolman-Bacher facility, 6th street bridge international competition, the Sustainable Schoolyard Guideline for LAUSD, the Ventura Botanical

Garden Master Plan and was involved with the LA river master plan and feasibility study. She is currently working on the Exposition Buffer Park for the city of Santa Monica, and the plan for Ivar Park for the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

Ms. Sykes is also committed to utilize her expertise through other venue and is sitting on the Board of the Elysian Valley Neighborhood Council and the ASLA Southern California chapter.



NATHAN A. WEST, AICP

Nathan has over 18 years of community development experience. He is presently the Director of Community and Economic Development for the City of Port Angeles. In this position, he oversees the Building, Economic Development, Planning, and Cultural Resource divisions of the City. Prior to coming to the Port Angeles Area, Nathan managed the Policy Development Section of the Cayman Islands Government Planning Department.

Nathan has a demonstrated history of policy development and regulatory reinvention by implementing incentive based municipal codes and policy documents. Throughout his planning career he has been responsible for the development of local, regional, and national long range plans in the U.S. and abroad. In Washington State he has worked creatively to address regulatory requirements and land use barriers. In the Caymans, Nathan was part of the Governor's Vision 2008 Round Table developing a strategy for the sustainable development of all three Cayman Islands.

In recent years, Nathan has participated in multiple community assessments including American Institute of Architects Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) and Your Town Design Workshops. He has prioritized the implementation of assessment related recommendations. Presently he is overseeing the implementation of a \$17 million waterfront improvement project for the City of Port Angeles. During his career Nathan has focused on action oriented planning that produces on the ground changes and results.

Nathan has a Bachelors degree in Environmental Science from Willamette University and a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Tennessee. Nathan is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

AIA STAFF:

Erin Simmons

Erin Simmons is the Director of Design Assistance at the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC. Her primary role at the AIA is to provide process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, she works with AIA components, members, partner organizations and community members to provide technical design assistance to communities across the country. Through its design assistance programs, the AIA has worked in 200 communities across 47 states. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Erin is a leading practitioner of the design assistance process. Her portfolio includes work in over 70 communities across the United States. A frequent lecturer on the subject of creating livable communities and sustainability, Erin contributed to the recent publication "Assessing Sustainability: A guide for Local Governments". Prior to joining the AIA, Erin worked as historic preservationist and architectural historian for an environmental and engineering firm in Georgia, where she practiced preservation planning, created historic district design guidelines and zoning ordinances, conducted historic resource surveys, and wrote property nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.

Joel Mills

Joel Mills is Director of the American Institute for Architects' Center for Communities by Design. The Center is a leading provider of pro bono technical assistance and participatory planning for community sustainability. Its processes have been modeled successfully in the United States and across Europe. The Center has been the recipient of a numerous awards recognizing its impact. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field. In 2013, the Center received a Power of A Award from the Center for Association Leadership, and a Facilitation Impact Award, given by the International Association of Facilitators.

Joel's 20-year career has been focused on strengthening civic capacity and civic institutions around the world. This work has helped millions of people participate in democratic processes, visioning efforts, and community planning initiatives. In the United States, Joel has worked with over 100 communities, leading participatory initiatives and collaborative processes that have facilitated community-generated strategies on a host of issues. During the past five years, this work has catalyzed over

\$1 billion in new investment. His past work has been featured in over 1,000 media stories, including ABC World News Tonight, Nightline, CNN, The Next American City, Smart City Radio, The National Civic Review, Ecostructure Magazine, The Washington Post, and dozens of other sources. He has served on numerous expert working groups, boards, juries, and panels focused on civic discourse and participation, sustainability, and design. He has also spoken at dozens of national and international conferences and events, including the World Eco-City Summit, the Global Democracy Conference, the National Conference on Citizenship, and many others.