



CITY OF ST. HELENS

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ST. HELENS WATERFRONT RIBBON CUTTING CELEBRATION

St. Helens, Ore. – The City of St. Helens is pleased to invite the St. Helens community to attend a Waterfront Ribbon Cutting Celebration on Thursday, June 26, 2025, in recognition of the completion of the first phase of the Waterfront Redevelopment Project. The event will commence at 4:30 p.m. at the Columbia View Circle (Strand and Cowlitz Street intersection) with a formal ribbon cutting ceremony and remarks by City officials and other distinguished guests. The ceremony will be followed by a 13 Nights on the River concert featuring Hit Machine at the Columbia View Park amphitheater. Craft and food vendors, games, and a beer garden will be onsite. Community members are also encouraged to explore the local shops and dine at nearby Riverfront District restaurants as part of the celebration.

This event marks a significant milestone in the City's ongoing efforts to enhance and revitalize the St. Helens riverfront.

About the St. Helens Waterfront Redevelopment Project

The St. Helens Waterfront Redevelopment Project is an ambitious effort led by the City of St. Helens to redevelop 275 acres of prime waterfront property along the Columbia River. Owned by industrial mills for decades, two of these properties sat vacant and remained fenced off from community access when the mills closed in the early 2000s and continued under private ownership.

The City of St. Helens recognized the importance of the properties, which are in an area that unites key elements of historic, cultural, civic, economic, and natural significance for the St. Helens community. The land ties together the City's historic Riverfront District to the north, direct access to the Columbia River and Multnomah Channel to the east, residential districts to the west, and the region's largest remaining piece of available industrial land to the south.

In 2015, the City of St. Helens purchased the two waterfront properties, the former Boise Veneer Mill site which is approximately 24 acres and the former Boise Paper Mill site which is approximately 204 acres. These properties, in conjunction with the City's wastewater treatment plant property -- 50 acres of land which sits between the old Veneer and Paper Mill sites -- make up the City's Waterfront Redevelopment Project.

For seven years, the City worked with consultants on planning efforts and gathered community feedback. A development framework was created that emphasized reconnecting the community to the waterfront, providing cohesive connection, promoting and ensuring the economic health of St. Helens, and improving the environment and health of the Columbia River.

The Streets and Utilities Extension Project: Phase One is the City's largest infrastructure project in modern history. It began mobilization in November 2022 and focused on improving key streets and intersections that already existed in the city's historic Riverfront District and extended utilities onto the former Veneer Mill site. It improved the safety of existing intersections, created inviting pedestrian connections in the Riverfront District, improved traffic flow, and installed benches and other inviting amenities in the area while extending water, sewer, and storm water infrastructure onto the adjacent mill site for future development.

The City is actively seeking partnerships with private developers to bring a mix of commercial and residential uses to the waterfront. This project lays the foundation for future public amenities and private investment across the 24-acre property.

The St. Helens Riverwalk Project's main goal is to improve and ensure public access along the Columbia River from Columbia View Park to Plymouth Street and Nob Hill Nature Park, approximately one-half mile in length. The linear design incorporates a combination of pathways, boardwalks, and overlooks. The design for the St. Helens Riverwalk Project was created with two years of public involvement on key project components. The project is being constructed in phases, with phase two planned for development as funding becomes available.

Phase One of the project mobilized in May 2024. The project constructed approximately 300 feet of ADA accessible riverwalk within the City's existing Columbia View Park, connecting Columbia County's waterfront path to the north and the Columbia View Circle to the south. Project

components also included associated park pathways, water and storm drain utilities, lighting, retaining walls, railings, furnishings, and signage.

Project Funding

Funding for phase one Waterfront Redevelopment construction is primarily from a low-interest loan offered by the Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority (IFA) of the Business Development Department (OBDD) under the Special Public Works Fund. Other contributions to the project have come from a variety of sources and span multiple fiscal years. These include two Oregon Parks & Recreation Grants (one Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant and one Local Government Grant Program Grant); a Travel Oregon Grant; American Rescue Plan Act funding; parks, streets, water, sewer, and storm system development charges; and St. Helens Urban Renewal Agency funding.

More information about the City's Waterfront Redevelopment Project can be found online at www.sthelensoregon.gov/waterfront.

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For further information regarding the St. Helens Ribbon Cutting Celebration, please contact Communications Officer Crystal King at cking@sthelensoregon.gov.