



CITY OF ST. HELENS

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ST. HELENS HOSTS SECOND HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

St. Helens, Ore. - St. Helens is participating in a recently-launched statewide initiative to address the major housing availability and affordability problems being experienced across Oregon.

The St. Helens community is invited to attend the second Housing Needs Analysis Advisory Committee meeting on Tuesday, February 12 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the St. Helens Council Chambers, 265 Strand Street. This meeting will be held right before the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting.

The first Housing Needs Analysis meeting in December 2018 established a baseline for the forecasted estimate of the number of housing units needed for the next 20 years. At this meeting, attendees will learn about the methodology used to calculate buildable land for future residential development within the city and urban growth boundary. Draft buildable land maps and estimates of buildable acres will be available for public review.

“Buildable Land” is defined in OAR 660-008-0005(2) as land that is “suitable, available, and necessary for residential uses.” The definition specifically excludes land constrained by natural hazards, containing protected natural resources,

with slopes of 25 percent or greater, within the 100-year floodplain, or which public facilities cannot be provided.

At the end of the presentation, the members of the Planning Commission (acting as the project advisory committee) and the public will be invited to provide feedback regarding the available land supply. These draft buildable land maps and estimates of buildable acres will be revised based on input received during this meeting. The final maps will be used to help reconcile residential land needs and available land supply during the next steps in the Housing Needs Analysis.

Information about the Housing Needs Analysis will be uploaded to the [project website](https://www.ci.st-helens.or.us/planning/page/housing-needs-analysis) (<https://www.ci.st-helens.or.us/planning/page/housing-needs-analysis>) throughout the planning process. The final Housing Needs Analysis document will be completed by June 30, 2019.

Background

The Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) received a special appropriation of funds from the state legislature for 2018-2019 to assist cities in updating their comprehensive plans and land use regulations to promote housing availability and affordability across the state.

The City of St. Helens was selected for this first round of funding from DLCD to complete a Housing Needs Analysis. DLCD prioritized St. Helens for funding because the City has over 10,000 residents, has never completed a Housing Needs Analysis, and is classified as severely-rent burdened. Severely rent-burdened means that over 25 percent of renter households in St. Helens spend more than 50 percent of their household income on gross rent for housing.

According to U.S. Census Bureau data from 2016, 27 percent of the renting population in St. Helens is considered severely rent-burdened.

The overall purpose of the Housing Needs Analysis is to increase the supply and affordability of housing within the boundaries of the city. The consultant will complete products needed to update comprehensive plans and zoning codes, or adopt other housing strategies, to help ensure that the city has an available land supply to accommodate housing needs over the next 20 years. The consultants will also provide a code audit and a code update to help ensure the zoning code allows, and does not include barriers to, development of needed housing.

Anyone interested in receiving updates on the Housing Needs Analysis is encouraged to follow the [City's Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/cityofsthelens/) (www.facebook.com/cityofsthelens/) and subscribe to the [City's e-Newsletter](https://www.ci.st-helens.or.us/community/page/newsletters) (www.ci.st-helens.or.us/community/page/newsletters) where future meetings will be announced.

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For further information regarding the Housing Needs Analysis, please contact Associate Planner Jenny Dimsho at jdimsho@ci.st-helens.or.us or 503-366-8207.