

Reclaiming the Waterfront

Reconnecting a city to water by repurposing a wastewater lagoon in **St. Helens, Oregon**



Project Summary

Community: St. Helens, Oregon

Technical Assistance: Strategic Action Plan

Former Use: Wastewater Lagoon

Future Use: Developable Land Parcel

In the early 2000s, the timber industries that once drove economics in St. Helens, Oregon, began to vacate the area, leaving behind valuable yet blighted waterfront land along the Columbia River and Multnomah Channel. The city of St. Helens has been working to cohesively redevelop this waterfront.

Using a 2015 EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Grant, St. Helens came up with a plan to reconnect the community to the waterfront. Stakeholders identified the redevelopment of a wastewater treatment lagoon that separates the city from the Multnomah Channel as a critical component of this vision. The city was interested in exploring the possibility of repurposing the lagoon as a disposal facility for nonhazardous sediments from nearby Portland Harbor as a revenue-positive solution.

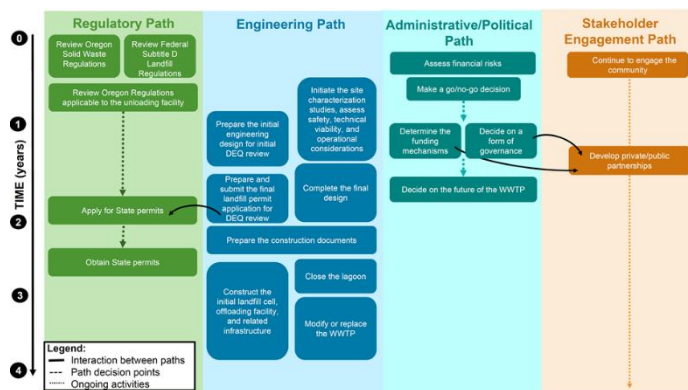
The Community's Challenge

To convert the wastewater lagoon into a safe, permitted, and profitable disposal facility — and ultimately into a developable land parcel — the city first needed help navigating the complex regulatory, engineering, administrative, and stakeholder engagement paths required for success.

EPA's Land Revitalization Technical Assistance

EPA's Land Revitalization Program provided contractor technical assistance to develop a strategic action plan for repurposing the wastewater lagoon. The plan outlines steps to assess the viability of transitioning the current lagoon into a developable land parcel, while discussing local, regional, and statewide opportunities and challenges associated with the project. The plan specifies design considerations and buildout options for the non-hazardous, non-municipal waste landfill. The plan also presents case studies of several successful landfill redevelopment projects with similar challenges to St. Helens, which reveal key lessons to be incorporated into the lagoon-repurposing project.

With EPA's technical assistance, St. Helens now has the tools to pursue the critical path items and accomplish the transition from a blighted lagoon to repurposed land.



Schedule for completion of lagoon-repurposing project

For more information, contact Susan Morales, EPA Region 10 Brownfields Program, at Morales.Susan@epa.gov.