



## In Case You Missed It: A Quick Recap of the St. Elmo's Hotel Revitalization Feasibility Study Community Meeting

Date: Nov. 16, 2023, 6:30pm

Location: Palouse Community Center

**On Thursday, November 16, a community meeting took place to introduce next steps in assessing the feasibility of redeveloping the former St. Elmo Hotel.**

Share your thoughts!

### **Key Point 1: The St. Elmo is recognized as an endangered historic place**

Friends of St. Elmo, a grassroots group interested in preserving historic spaces in Palouse, worked with the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation to have the St. Elmo recognized in 2019 as one of Washington's [most endangered historic places](#). This designation raised the building's profile and could strengthen its competitiveness for grant funding.

### **Key Point 2: The City has \$262,500 of state grants and local match set aside to assess and study the St. Elmo**

As a public entity, the City has access to resources like state and federal grants that are not available to private entities and individuals. These funds enable exploratory analysis and community planning activities – activities that help the whole community better understand the options that exist for the St. Elmo going forward.

In the last several months, the City has been awarded two state grants to help the community understand what options exist with respect to the St. Elmo's future. These grants are:

- A \$50,000 [Community Economic Revitalization Board \(CERB\)](#) planning grant to determine the cost to stabilize the building and future economic development opportunities. This grant required a \$12,500 match, of which Avista provided \$5,000, and anonymous donors and Friends of St. Elmo contributed more, reducing the City's contribution to the match to about \$4,000. Total CERB contribution with match was therefore \$62,500.
- A \$200,000 Washington State Department of Ecology [Integrated Planning Grant \(IPG\)](#) to support environmental assessment of brownfield properties (see below).
- These two grants, totaling \$262,500, will support structural and environmental investigations, economic analysis, research into potential future funding and community outreach. To implement these grants, the City has hired a consulting team with structural and environmental engineers, economists, and planners.

There is no predetermined outcome of the feasibility studies: data will drive decision making.

### **Key Point 3: Approaching the St. Elmo as a potential brownfield gives the City access to specific resources**

Older buildings like the St. Elmo can contain hazardous materials like lead and asbestos. While many people might not think of these as environmental issues, they pose environmental and human health risks and need to be understood before redevelopment can take place.

By approaching the St. Elmo as a brownfield, or a property where redevelopment or reuse could be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant, the City and its partners can apply for specific kinds of state and federal funding.

Palouse used the brownfield redevelopment process to address contamination at the former Palouse Producers site, which is today TLC Animal Care and the Palouse Brewery. Approaching the former Palouse Producers site as a brownfield helped the City access state and federal grants, loans and technical assistance to support its redevelopment.

### **Key Point 4: Structural engineering assessment to start in early 2024, stay tuned for more news and meetings**

The City's consulting team will start its structural engineering assessment in early 2024. Additional community meetings will take place starting in 2024.

The City will set up a Google form on its St. Elmo webpage, and will share information about next steps virtually and in print. Stay tuned, and join us next time! For more information, contact Palouse City Hall @ (509) 878-1811.