



Below is a speech delivered by Steve Toschi to the Chamber of Commerce, St. Helens Library, October 10, 2024:

A Vote for Steve Toschi is a Vote for a Brighter Future for St. Helens.

For too long, St. Helens has shed its nickname of Paycheck City—it's time to get it back. This election, we must elect a strong leader with exceptional experience and abilities as its mayor.

St. Helens sits upon the nicest riverfront property between Oregon City and the coast. It is the crown jewel of the Columbia. St. Helens Lions: We will realize our potential.

I'm an attorney, a Super Lawyer—voted by my peers top 5% in the state. I've run a successful business with my wife, maiden name Robyn Sharp, for more than 25 years. Solving complex problems is what I do for a living, and legal and financial problems for St. Helens abound.

Salem is passing laws every year that require cities to adopt housing laws that will bring more crowding and more crime to our city. My barber complained to me today about the homeless living in the vacant, blighted building across the street from his shop. Stop Portland Creep.

We have a plan to revitalize the Houlton business district. We should get the police station built in its current location. The Columbia Food Bank, the Houlton Hollow, the Fire Department, the Vet Building have all invested in the Houlton. The city should not go backwards and leave our blighted police station right next to two blighted properties. That's how you succeed in business, and how cities succeed—executing planned investments.

The failure of getting the police station built is a prime example of how our internal decision-making is broken. Our decisions are made in secret, and public safety laws are ignored. There is no discussion with our citizen committees. I know—I was on the Planning Commission and the Budget Committee, and I've been studying the decision-making of the city for nearly four years. I know how to change the dynamic to get us to succeed. We need to change the way we plan.

Great leaders lead by empowering others. It's time for transparency. It's time we plan in public by empowering our citizen committees. We must encourage the brightest among us to step forward to help. Remove the gag law. Create a culture of creativity. It's time to bring to an end the culture of fear and bullying that is crippling us and preventing our problem-solving. More freedom.

Here are just some of the issues facing us: We have a budget crisis, we need a parking plan for downtown, we need to work with the Governor's Office and PGE to bring power from Bonneville so we can succeed to get a company like Hiperion Solar here, with good-paying jobs. We need to embrace and explore the work-from-anywhere economy and tech, improve our sewer infrastructure, and we need to have a credible, honest reputation so developers will feel comfortable building on the waterfront. We need a mayor with the ability to successfully solve these problems simultaneously. Team-building and transparency are what I'm going to bring to St. Helens—competent leadership.

A new contract with the police union will be negotiated in 2025. I don't have any conflicts of interest. Public safety can only be protected by an objective mayor who can represent our entire city in a fair contract with the police, offering generous compensation while cutting waste.

I believe in expanding the tax base, not taxes. I alone of the candidates make this pledge: No new taxes, and no raise in your water bill without a vote of the people.

I will be a fair mayor to all citizens. I've rented a mayor's office—it's a place for me to listen to you. My opponents have tried to make someone's place of birth or where they came from an issue in this campaign. The majority of business owners in this room, and the majority of people in St. Helens, were not born and raised in St. Helens. Robyn and I have made St. Helens our home, and we aren't going anywhere. It's time to break the dynamic. It's time to elect someone with a fresh perspective, who brings the life experience and education needed to get the job done for the good of all.

It's not going to be easy to take St. Helens to the next level. But, I'm no stranger to hard work. I'm retiring from active law practice in January 2025. I can be your full-time mayor. St. Helens really needs my help, or I would not be doing this.

So Believe in Steve! Do not fear—we will keep our small-town values. That's going to take planning too. I've lived in places where smart, slow growth was successful, and we can do it here.

**Vote for Steve Toschi for Mayor of St. Helens.**