



**MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION**

Engineering standards Update
Minutes

Wednesday, May 6, 2026, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Commissioners' Boardroom
Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Suite 5231
Salem, Oregon 97301

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Danielle Bethell and Colm Willis.

Board's Office: Kendall Hall, Jonathan Sanford, Toni Whitler, and Matt Lawyer.

Legal Counsel: Steve Elzinga.

Public Works: Scott Wilson, Carl Lund, Ryan Crowther, Max Hepburn, and Lani Radtke.

Commissioner Colm Willis called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

1. Welcome & Introductions

-Commissioner Colm Willis

2. Road Operations Training Site

-Scott Wilson

- Use McLeod property off Macleay as expanded road operations training site:
 - Adding heavy equipment to current erosion control and chainsaw training.
- Respect Williams high pressure gas pipeline easements:
 - Training areas and access roads will be located outside pipeline corridor.
- Construct gravel access road and defined training/excavation areas:
 - Activity will be intermittent and seasonal:
 - Primarily late summer and early spring, limited winter use.
- Nearby neighborhood is very sensitive and distrustful due to past siting issues:
 - Early, direct outreach and clear messaging that this is a training use:
 - Not a new permanent facility, are essential.
- County has 10-acre property near Mill City that may be used:
 - To supplement training and environmental work.

3. Policy for Private Paving of Public Roads

-Max Hepburn & Scott Wilson

- Create policy allowing parties to pave parts of county-maintained gravel roads:
 - Provided they build to county standards and connect to existing pavement.
- Aim to avoid scattered islands of pavement that complicate maintenance:
 - Creating mixed gravel-asphalt segments.
- Clarify policy applies only within county-maintained right-of-way:
 - Not on private driveways or private roads.

- County engineers have discretion to decline maintenance of non-standard sections.
- Applications include Bunker Hill Road and Turner area access road to future winery:
 - Policy should accommodate these if built to standard.
- Legal recommends “may” instead of “shall” in key language:
 - To preserve board and staff discretion.
- Move forward via separate board order:
 - Later incorporation into full engineering standards update.

4. Engineering standards Bundle #2 Follow-Up

-Max Hepburn

- Culverts / Drainage:
 - Goal:
 - Landowners repair/replace failing culverts and drainage pipes without triggering full access permits or driveway closures.
 - Discussed:
 - Simple, culvert specific drainage repair permit for substantial changes.
 - Permit exempt category of non-substantial work so basic like-for-like repairs are not burdened:
 - No change to hydraulic function, size, slope, or cover.
 - Many existing culverts are outdated materials:
 - Requiring identical materials forces permits where upgraded material would be more appropriate.
 - Standards must prevent unsafe or improvised installations and protect neighbors from diversion or increased flows.
 - Direction is to craft an “Option C”:
 - Clearly defines when no permit is needed:
 - Same or better material, no capacity change, adequate cover.
 - Provides straightforward culvert permit for anything beyond that.
- Bus Pullouts:
 - Need criteria for new development should construct bus pullouts.
 - Options:
 - Require traffic studies to analyze pullout needs once trips exceed certain thresholds.
 - Rely primarily on engineering judgment in consultation with transit.
 - Bus pullout decisions engineering led not driven solely by transit preference:
 - Implement expectations through standards and development review conditions.

5. Superload Proportionate Share

-Max Hepburn

- Superload proposal:
 - About 800,000 lbs.
 - Very long and wide.
 - Will use high standard county roads designed for significant truck traffic.
- Equivalent Single Axle Load (ESAL) analysis shows superload’s contribution to overall pavement wear is extremely small compared to 20-year design traffic:
 - Main concern is immediate damage if something fails during move.
- Existing state law caps weight variance fees at low, fixed amount per trip:
 - County road closure permit fees are also low and outdated.
- Concern of citizens and events paying more than large freight moves:

- Relative to impact
- Raises equity and cost recovery questions.
- Direction is for Legal Counsel:
 - Separate road closures or traffic control permits can be required for such moves:
 - What fees or cost recovery are allowed.
 - What additional terms, limits or conditions can legally be attached to weight variance permits:
 - Insurance, damage recovery, etc.
- Work must be completed within statutory 90-day window:
 - Legal work is underway, with follow-up planned after mid-May.

6. Board Order for Road Acceptance

-Max Hepburn

- Draft order prepared for 2026 acceptance of designated roads into county system:
 - Including 45th Avenue, Evelyn Avenue, Greenlea Way and Holt Loop.
- Draft mirrors past acceptance processes:
 - Will be reviewed by legal before board action.
- Board prefers placing on consent agenda given prior discussion and familiarity.

7. Grant Applications

-Carl Lund

- Railroad Grade Separation:
 - County intends to pursue federal grant for grade separation work:
 - Raise railroad structures or lower roads to improve vertical clearance.
 - High-cost project with uncertain funding prospects:
 - Viewed as worthwhile pursue.
 - Partnering with Portland & Western Railroad and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Rail needed:
 - Meetings are scheduled to refine concept and responsibilities.
- Safe Streets for All (SS4A):
 - Create continuous safety corridor by connecting existing median segments and adding left turn lanes at French Prairie and Case Road.
 - Corridors' prior safety corridor designation lapsed with changes in state law:
 - New board order needed to reinstate designation:
 - So, enforcement and penalties are active.
 - Sheriff's Office will be notified regarding lapses and redesignation plan.
- Grant Consultant:
 - Public Works (PW) has separate limited dollar contracts with CFM/Kirby:
 - Board has broader master contract with same consultant.
 - Concern of overlapping scopes and consultants engaging staff before board direction.
 - Let PW contract expire and consolidate all work under board's contract:
 - Clear carve out for transportation/grant work, including SS4A.

8. Other

-All

- American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Ramps at Gas Station:
 - New gas station intersection improvements included ADA ramps:
 - Initially approved by inspection.
 - Found non-compliant for slope/grade after push button installation.

- One ramp likely can be corrected by grinding:
 - The other will require more substantial reconstruction.
- County shares responsibility due to earlier approval:
 - Must balance cost, fairness, and ADA liability risk.
- Prefer to have contractor perform corrective work with county contributing toward costs:
 - System Development Charge (SDC) refund or Good Neighbor Fund.
 - Tightly define scope and contribution to avoid inflated pricing.
- Inspector training and process changes needed to prevent similar issues.
- Battle Creek Road Closure:
 - ODOT roundabout project tying into Battle Creek Road:
 - Options:
 - One-week full closure.
 - Extended 24-hour flagging.
 - Flagging would create long uncertain delays and increase construction costs:
 - Full closure is more efficient overall despite short term disruption.
 - Direction is a one-week full closure with at least 10 days' public notice:
 - Prominent detour signage.
 - Information on county communication channels.
- Kubler Road / Viewcrest Road Trees:
 - Roadside trees at Kubler/ Viewcrest identified safety hazards:
 - Prior legal opinion confirmed authority to remove without easements.
 - Voluntary acquisition is preferred.
 - Progress slow due to right-of-way consultant changes and owner opposition.
 - Modest value contract for right-of-way services proposed:
 - Using direct appointment to save time.
 - Present owners with two clear compensation options:
 - Standard appraisal/easement purchase.
 - Lump sum equivalent to estimated appraisal/negotiation costs.
 - Make it clear to owners that tree removal will proceed for safety reasons.
 - Legal will provide structured process and template letters:
 - Staff can move forward without undermining county authority.

9. Next Steps

-All

- Finalize outreach and communications plan for Road Operations Training Site and confirm seasonal training schedule.
- Revise private paving policy for board approval as separate order:
 - Integrate into engineering standards.
- Draft culvert/drainage language and codify bus pullout decision criteria in standards.
- Create options for superload cost recovery tools and conditions before deadline.
- Legal review and scheduling of 2026 road acceptance order on consent agenda.
- Advance SS4A and rail grant concepts in coordination with partners:
 - Use board's consultant contract and defined transportation carve out.
- Implement ADA ramp corrections and associated inspector training:
 - Finalize Battle Creek Road closure plan and outreach.
- Engage right-of-way consultant and start owner outreach for tree removal.

Adjourned – time: 4:20 p.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary L. White