



O R E G O N

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Work Session Summary Minutes

Marion County Speed Zoning

October 2, 2025. 1:30 PM

Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Salem
5th Floor, Suite 5232, Commissioners Board Room

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Danielle Bethell, Kevin Cameron, and Colm Willis.

Board's Office: Matt Lawyer, Trevor Lane, Toni Whitler, and Alvin Kluasen.

Legal Counsel: Steve Elzinga.

Public Works: Brian Nicholas, Carl Lund, and Lani Radtke

Sheriff's Office: Nicholas Hunter.

Citizen: Kathy Rogers.

Commissioner Danielle Bethell called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

Discuss Speed Zone Studies:

- Reviewed ongoing speed zoning efforts in Marion County:
 - Process of creating board orders and the delegation of authority for setting speed limits.
- Requirement for engineers to complete specific training and conduct speed studies under Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) supervision before authority is delegated.
- Updates on road segments under review for speed zone changes:
 - Cascade Highway in Sublimity:
 - Consider extending 25 miles per hour (mph) zone further south due to higher speeds in a small city area.
 - Silverton Road near Silverton:
 - Evaluate extension of the 25 mph zone further west.
 - Summit Loop area:
 - Community concerns about speed following recent board actions.
 - Lake Labish Road:
 - Consider reducing the statutory speed limit to 35 mph due to road conditions and residential density.
 - Orville Road:
 - Study possibility of increasing speed limit from 25 mph to 45 mph.
 - Based on observed travel speeds and curve warning signs.
 - Ferry Road:
 - Plan transition from 25 mph to higher speeds with appropriate transition zones.
 - Golf Club Road:
 - Propose to extend the 25 mph zone northward due to new apartment developments and observed higher speeds.

- Transition zones when entering or exiting municipalities to ensure consistent and safe speed changes across the county.
- Transition zones can be implemented by the road authority without state approval or additional speed studies.

Discuss Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR):

- Legal framework and statutory authority for setting speed limits:
 - Distinction between the roles of the county board, engineers, and ODOT.
- State traffic engineer, not ODOT's director or governor, hold the authority to enact speed zones at the state level.
- Need legal review to clarify the county's authority under the new statute and outline process for setting speed limits.
- Board retains ultimate decision-making authority to change speed limits or not.
- Engineers are responsible for conducting studies and making recommendations.
- Required to submit quality plan to ODOT describing county's process for conducting speed zone studies.

Other:

- Planned development near Cordon and Swegle Roads:
 - Concerns about annexation, city/county jurisdiction, and traffic impacts.
- Communication with East Salem Neighborhood Association regarding development and need for traffic upgrades if new apartments are built.
- Reviewed process for annexation and development applications:
 - Need coordination between city and county and impact on local infrastructure.
- Provision of water and sewer services in the area and the implications for annexation and development.

Next Steps:

- Legal counsel to work with county staff to outline process for setting speed limits and clarify roles and responsibilities of the county and engineer.
- Follow up with East Salem Neighborhood Association regarding planned development near Cordon and Swegle Roads and potential traffic impacts.
- Provide update on status of pre-application for annexation and development on the northwest corner of Cordon and Swegle Roads.
- Continue communication city and neighborhood representatives to monitor development and infrastructure needs.
- Submit or update the county's quality plan for speed zone studies as required by ODOT.

Adjourned – time: 2:09 p.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary L. White