



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION

Roads and Bridges Update
Minutes

Thursday, August 20, 2026, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Commissioners' Boardroom
Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Suite 5231
Salem, Oregon 97301

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Danielle Bethell and Colm Willis.

Board's Office: Jonathan Sanford, Trevor Lane, Chris Eppley, Alvin Klausen, Toni Whitler and Matt Lawyer.

Legal Counsel: Andrew Mittendorf.

Public Works: Carl Lund, Scott Wilson, Lani Radtke, Max Hepburn, and Brian Nicholas.

Commissioner Colm Willis called the meeting to order at 9:42 a.m.

1. Welcome & Introductions

-Commissioner Colm Willis

2. Initial Board Reviews

-Lani Radtke

- Independence Bridge Invitation to Bid (ITB):
 - Structural improvements to Independence Bridge over Willamette:
 - Not the train bridge and the low-clearance bridge where trucks crash.
 - Goal to eliminate current load ratings.
 - Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) reanalysis begun to confirm.
 - Polk County pays portion of maintenance:
 - Structure is Marion County's responsibility.
 - Construction involves one-lane, two-way operations at times:
 - Coordination with ODOT to minimize combined impacts with Center Street/Marion-Polk bridge work.
 - Work expected to begin next year (2027) following bid and contract award.
- Scotts Mills Bridge ITB:
 - Project moving forward:
 - Construction anticipated to begin next year.
 - ITB will be issued.
 - Public Works will return to Board with recommended contractor and contract for approval.
 - Prior work on this structure included scour repair:
 - This phase focuses on structural improvements.
- Center Street ITB:
 - Project limits:

- Center Street east of Lancaster to approximately Mitchell:
 - Not all the way to Cordon.
 - Scope:
 - Left-turn lane.
 - Bike and pedestrian facilities on north side.
 - Rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) crossing in front of bowling alley.
 - Required right-of-way/easements from bowling alley properties have been largely acquired:
 - Condemnation cases were filed to meet funding obligation deadlines.
 - A case likely to be dismissed due to successful easement acquisition.
 - Board will see construction contract for approval.
 - Board requested advance notice when large tree near project is to be removed:
 - Anticipated political/public concern.
- Connecticut Avenue ITB:
 - Project is Safe Routes-style bike/ped project adding bike lanes and sidewalks:
 - Key intersection is Connecticut Avenue and MacLeay Road.
 - Improve safety and give critical school connection:
 - Increased residential development and pedestrian volumes in the area.
 - Project is primarily bike and pedestrian safety, not full realignment of road.
 - ITB will be issued and contract will return for Board consideration.
- Connecticut Avenue Amendment:
 - Amendment details were intended to be included in packet but were omitted.
 - Will distribute amendment to the Board.
 - Item will return at a future meeting for discussion and action.
- Silverton Road/Desart Road ITB:
 - Safety project at three-leg intersection on Silverton Road:
 - Adds a left-turn lane.
 - Identified as a safety improvement.
 - Board familiar with project with no additional concerns raised.
 - ITB will be issued and construction contract brought back for Board approval.
- Hazelgreen Road High Water Gate(s):
 - County has 23 high water gate locations:
 - Focus here is Hazel Green Road at Hazel Green Bridge.
 - Railroad-style gate installed with bridge project on one side was vandalized and destroyed:
 - Interim control has been Type 3 barricade which drivers have ignored.
 - Plan to replace vandalized gate and install matching gate on opposite side:
 - Lesson that paired gates should be done concurrently.
 - Specific location will move into design and contracted installation:
 - Review will serve as Board's authorization to proceed toward design and construction contract.
 - No need to return before bid.
 - Serve as model for future high water gate replacements elsewhere in county.
- School Flashing Equipment:
 - Effort to expand and modernize school zone flashing beacons county-wide.
 - Next location is Grim Road and Boones Ferry road:
 - In response to a resident who previously raised concerns.
 - Plan to install pair of beacons on Grim Road and pair on Boones Ferry Road:
 - Allows removal of static "7 a.m. to 5 p.m." school speed signs.
 - Focuses on school start/end times.
 - Equipment will be purchased

- Procurement over \$100,000.
 - Installation by in-house forces where possible.
- Smaller contracts may be used as needed:
 - Would not return individually for Board approval.
- Next step is a formal procurement taken directly to Board session.
- Silverton Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) – James Street/ Western Avenue:
 - American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and crossing improvements by high and middle schools.
 - City is building sidewalk along James Street on private property adjacent to middle school.
 - County is responsible for crossing and associated ADA ramps:
 - Including an RRFB.
 - To accelerate delivery and maximize public benefit, county requested that city include at least one ADA ramp and RRFB foundations in its contract:
 - County will reimburse approximately \$32,000.
 - Western Avenue has already been transferred to the city:
 - James Street remains a county road.
 - IGA triggers Board initial review due to dollar amount:
 - Execution will be by Public Works Director.
 - No further Board action anticipated once approved.

3. Transportation Funding Bill 2027 – 50/30/20 Split

-Lani Radtke

- Oregon Association of County Engineers and Surveyors (OACES) have warned counties that 50/30/20 state–county–city funding split may again be targeted for change in 2027 legislative session.
- County opposed to altering local share or using local cuts to fill ODOT’s budget holes.
- Concern that threats to split are used to pressure local governments to support tax increases:
 - When a bill passes without changing split, locals are told they won even if main objective was higher revenue.
- Political environment:
 - Past efforts led by Reps. Susan McLain and Mark Gamba failed due to insufficient votes.
 - Future attempts depend heavily on key Senate races.
 - Loss of moderate seats may embolden attempts to change split and agreement that codifies it.
- Marion County’s direction:
 - Defend 50/30/20 split.
 - Oppose packages that raise taxes to backfill ODOT while not delivering meaningful new road capacity.
 - Expect Oregon Association of Counties (AOC), OACES, OASIS, and League of Oregon Cities (LOC) to stay aligned with Boards’ positions and not provide legislative testimony that has not been vetted with member counties.

4. Engineering Updates

-Carl Lund

- Traffic:
 - Safety Corridor 1 Redesignation:
 - County must adopt formal orders to designate new safety corridors under recent House Bill requirements.

- Criteria for selecting corridors will rely on county's Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP) to ensure an objective, data-driven basis.
- Top three corridors identified:
 - McKay / Yergen / Ehlen corridor.
 - Silverton Road/Cordon corridor.
 - Court Street corridor.
- First Board order:
 - Identifies designated safety corridors based on TSAP rankings.
- Second Board order:
 - Sets requirements for those corridors, including:
 - Regular community engagement
 - Heightened enforcement:
 - In coordination with Sheriff's Office.
 - Engineering and infrastructure improvements:
 - Speed feedback signs.
 - Lane widening.
 - Signal timing.
 - Left-turn phasing improvements.
- Sheriff and traffic safety staff are especially eager to begin work on Cordon & Silverton as a safety corridor.
- Safety Corridor 2:
 - Second corridor, also selected from TSAP priorities:
 - Will be designated with the same framework and expectations.
 - Program approach will mirror Safety Corridor 1:
 - Enforcement emphasis plus engineering and outreach.
- Kuebler Boulevard/Viewcrest Road:
 - Longstanding concern about trees within vision triangle that create safety hazards at intersection.
 - Legal analysis:
 - County can remove hazardous vegetation under county code.
 - Such removal is still considered "taking,":
 - Property owner is entitled to equitable compensation.
 - Options considered:
 - Code enforcement with removal only.
 - Code enforcement plus payment for tree value.
 - Full condemnation and acquisition of an easement or strip.
 - Board direction:
 - Move forward and pay owner fair value for those trees.
 - Offer to purchase a narrow strip/easement so county controls vision area long-term.
 - Make clear if owner later plants new trees that re-create hazard, county will remove them again and not use eminent domain or repeat a "blank check" approach.
 - Public Works and Legal will refine strategy and, if needed, return in executive session to address tort risk.
- Golf Club Road Interchange:
 - Studied speeds and safety on Golf Club Road and Shaff/Sublimity Road near Highway 22 interchange.
 - ODOT is receptive to Marion County's analysis due to county's demonstrated traffic engineering competence.
 - Proposal:

- 40 mph transition zone north of Shaff Road approaching Stayton and extend 40 mph across interchange to Mill Creek Road.
 - Reducing speeds from the current 50 mph segment.
 - Board supports proposed speed changes.
 - Intersection safety concerns at Sublimity Road SE/Golf Club Road:
 - Sight-distance issues for drivers on Sublimity looking south, partly due to sign placement.
 - Intersection is ODOT Safety Priority Index System (SPIS) site due to recent serious injury and fatal crashes.
 - Review sign placement and approach geometry with ODOT and consider adjustments to improve visibility.
 - Driver behavior:
 - High speeds from the overpass, long crossing distances, and ambiguous turn lane markings are contributing factors.
- Woodburn & Gervais:
 - Concern of potential Amazon truck traffic impacts through Gervais.
 - County is collecting traffic data; results not yet available at meeting.
 - Crosswalk request near Woodburn City Hall on Third did not meet warrants for an engineering-justified crosswalk due to insufficient pedestrian volumes:
 - Staff offered to explain findings to Woodburn City Council.
 - Woodburn reports no significant complaints specific to Amazon traffic:
 - County will complete its own analysis and bring data to upcoming city-county meetings.
- River Road Low Clearance Structures – 9/3 WS:
 - River Road low-clearance bridge/structure issues are being prepared for a September 3 work session.
 - Planned topics:
 - Clearance constraints.
 - Truck strike history.
 - Potential mitigation options.
 - Funding/engineering strategies.
- Land Development Engineering and Permits (LDEP):
 - Capital Futbol Club Turn Lane Project Update:
 - Construction of widening and curb work for access to Capital Football Club (CFC) is complete and striping is finished.
 - Last item is ditch/shoulder landscaping to stabilize for rainy season.
 - Traffic control for work proceeded smoothly with no major issues.
 - Engineering Standards Follow-Up:
 - Bus Pull-Outs:
 - Draft engineering standards updated to authorize County Engineer to require or approve bus pull-outs on county roads where warranted.
 - Give clear policy backing for requiring turnouts to reduce congestion:
 - Where lane diets or narrower cross sections are.
 - Wording is concise and placed in Chapter 2.
 - Proportionate Shares:
 - County is formalizing a proportionate share policy to replace case-by-case, undocumented practices used in past large developments.
 - Concept:

- Development adds defined share of new traffic to facility that requires improvement, developer pays same proportion of cost of improvement.
 - Draft language simplifies TSP-style calculation to provide more flexibility and transparency.
 - Staff does not anticipate large changes from current outcomes:
 - Policy will be written, consistent, and clear to staff and developers.
 - Board requested to notification when prop share is applied on significant projects.
- Culvert Replacement & Repair
 - Current:
 - Private property owners repairing or replacing access culverts in right-of-way potentially triggering full access review/permit requirements.
 - Operations practice:
 - When failing or plugged culverts under driveways create road or drainage hazards, Road Operations will typically replace culvert at county expense to ensure standard materials and maintainability.
 - Proposed Board order:
 - Define culvert repair or in-kind replacement that meets specified dimensional and material criteria as a non-substantial improvement to rural access:
 - Thereby avoiding additional regulatory barriers.
 - Draft language has not yet been reviewed by Legal:
 - Staff will seek Legal review and then return through management update and Board session for adoption.
 - Board supports approach.
- Draft Interim Access Standards:
 - Existing rural driveway/access guidelines date from 2003.
 - Propose Board order adopting interim rural access standards reflecting modernized widths, radii, spacing, and sight-distance criteria.
 - Proposed interim standards:
 - Align with updated engineering standards.
 - Clarify driveway construction details, including gravel base and treatment near culverts.
 - Discussion points:
 - Six-inch gravel base requirements primarily relate to ensuring structural support above culverts:
 - Not necessarily entire long private driveways.
 - Language will be adjusted to distinguish accesses with and without culverts.
 - Board requested additional time to digest the revised sight-distance table and understand how it changes practice relative to current standards.
 - Item will return to October work session with clear summary of changes for property owners and developers.
- Draft Gating of a Public Right-of-Way:
 - Bring draft policy at future work session addressing criteria and process for allowing or denying gates across public rights-of-way.
- Capital Projects:
 - Resurfacing:

- Current year's resurfacing program is essentially complete:
 - Remaining work is primarily guardrail installation.
- Starting program in June, rather than waiting until July 1:
 - Worked well and will be the model going forward.
- Chip seal program in South Salem hills and elsewhere successful:
 - Generated some complaints about temporary "gravel" conditions and dust during multi-week process.
- Staff explained staging:
 - Apply chip seal oil and aggregate across a system of roads.
 - Apply thinner fog seal over broad area using different oil that goes further.
 - Sequencing is necessary for cost and efficiency:
 - Some roads remain in loose-aggregate state for days to weeks.
- Board acknowledges complaints but recognize long-term benefit and cost-effectiveness.
- Lake Labish Crossings:
 - Will return to work session for a full discussion.
- Right-of-Way Process Changes:
 - ODOT Region 2 right-of-way office concerned some Marion County right-of-way funding agreements included intentionally non-legally-sufficient legal descriptions attached to Board "resolutions of need" for condemnation.
 - Internal practice originally adopted to ensure staff must return to Board before filing any condemnation action.
 - ODOT views as out of compliance with their right-of-way manual and indicated county's federal-aid certification could be at risk.
 - Path forward:
 - Future resolutions of need will include legally sufficient legal descriptions.
 - No condemnation will be filed without explicit Board direction, regardless of what is on paper.
 - Policy remains that condemnation is a last resort, and any such action must come back to them for a clear decision.

5. Other

-All

- Overarching themes:
 - Balance safety and congestion:
 - Especially on key arterials like Cordon/Silverton and around high-growth areas.
 - Concern about lane diets on city streets and their impacts on congestion, transit reliability, and neighborhood cut-through traffic.
 - Focus on data-driven decisions:
 - Before/after data collection on volumes, speeds, and crashes is essential to evaluating success or unintended consequences.
 - Intergovernmental coordination, particularly with City of Salem, City of Silverton, City of Woodburn, and ODOT, to align projects and mitigate cross-jurisdictional impacts.
 - Condemnation, tree removal on private frontage, and similar actions respect both public safety obligations and private property rights:
 - Clear communication and fair compensation where required.

6. Next Steps

-All

- Staff brief and supporting materials for ITB projects as they move to bid and construction contracts.
- Distribute missing Connecticut Avenue amendment to Board and have discussion.
- Draft and bring forward Board orders for:
 - Safety corridor designations and program requirements.
 - Culvert repair/replacement as non-substantial improvement.
 - Interim rural access standards.
- Coordinate with ODOT and City of Salem on:
 - Golf Club/Sublimity intersection safety.
 - Cordon/Silverton signal coordination and safety/capacity improvements.
 - Lessons learned and transit impacts from Silverton Road lane diet and potential State Street lane diet.
- Proceed with legal/engineering work on Viewcrest/Kuebler trees and bring risk analysis to an executive session if needed.
- Complete CFC punch list and finalize documentation.
- Prepare for September 3rd work session on River Road low clearance structures.
- Bring Lake Labish Crossings and gating of public right of way policy back at upcoming work sessions.

Adjourned – time: 11:36 a.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary L. White