

MEMORANDUM

TO: Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners (BCC)
FROM: Dan Johnson, Director of Department of Transportation and Development (DTD)
RE: Board Order to authorize a Local Access Road Bridge program
DATE: June 4, 2024

REQUEST: Direction from the Board regarding the use of County Road Funds on Local Access Road Bridges.

BACKGROUND: Local Access Roads are public roads that are not County Roads and have never been accepted by the County for maintenance. Although the County has jurisdiction over them outside cities per ORS 368.031, the County is not liable for failure to improve them or to even keep them in repair. Also per ORS 368.031, the County can only spend County funds on Local Access Road bridges if the BCC determines that the work is an emergency, or if the BCC enacts an order or resolution based on the Road Official (Director of DTD) recommending an expenditure that is justified by the public use of the road.

There are hundreds of Local Access Roads in Clackamas County, but only three of these have bridges (each on a dead-end road) that are at least 20 feet in length:

- Goose Creek (Suter Road) Bridge
- Salmon River (Island Road) Bridge
- Hacket Creek (Broken Bridge Drive) Bridge

All public bridges that are 20 feet in length or greater in the United States are required by the Federal Highway Administration requires to be inspected every two years. In Oregon, this is accomplished by the Oregon Department of Transportation who then submits the inspection reports to the County. These inspection reports often have maintenance or repair recommendations based on deterioration or stream flow changes. Oftentimes these recommendations are also relatively low-cost activities. Most recently, ODOT notified the County that Salmon River (Island Road) Bridge must be load posted, which could result in emergency vehicles not being able to use the bridge. However, with less than \$15,000 worth of work to install additional deck timbers, the load posting can be removed.

Given the uniqueness of bridges as critical links in the public road system and to avoid future emergencies, staff proposes that the BCC consider an order or resolution that authorizes the Road Official to expend County Road funds on Local Access Road bridges as part of a continuing program with the following constraints:

- The Road Official recommends that the expenditure is justified based on the public use of the bridge.
- The authorized expenditure is less than \$100,000.

Alternatively, the BCC could consider an order or resolution only authorizing DTD to spend up to \$15,000 one time only on the Salmon River (Island Road) Bridge to remove the load posting. The BCC could also decline to consider this request, in which case DTD will keep the bridge load posted and not perform any other work on it.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff respectfully recommends that the BCC direct staff to bring back an order or resolution that authorizes the Road Official to expend County Road funds on Local Access Road bridges as part of a continuing program with the following constraints:

- The Road Official recommends that the expenditure is justified based on the public use of the bridge.
- The authorized expenditure is less than \$100,000.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Johnson

Dan Johnson
Director