

**YAMHILL COUNTY  
ROAD IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
2019 ANNUAL REPORT**

This report summarizes the activities of the Yamhill County Road Improvement Advisory Committee (RIAC) for 2019. RIAC meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month.

**RIAC Purpose**

RIAC was created in 1976 for the purpose of holding meetings as necessary to:

- develop a master plan for the construction, maintenance and improvement of County roads, considering traffic patterns and anticipated resources;
- to review crash rates on each of the County roads;
- to hear complaints about County roads and identify road deficiencies throughout the County;
- to consider petitions affecting any County road; and
- to study the existing location, condition, and use of the County roads.

The Committee is to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners (BOC):

- a priority for correcting road deficiencies identified by the Committee;
- criteria to be used in prioritizing road improvement projects;
- division of effort between paving new roads and maintaining the existing roads; and
- other such advice as the BOC may request.

**Membership**

Membership on the RIAC is intended to provide representation from all parts of Yamhill County to the extent possible. Casey Kulla was the BOC liaison; Deputies Wilkinson and Ingram and Cadet Morrissey attended several meetings as liaison with the Sheriff's Office in 2019. Following is the RIAC membership for 2019:

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| • Adam Zabinski, Chair    | NW Yamhill County (Newberg-Yamhill area) |
| • Gordon Cook, Vice-chair | NE Yamhill County (Newberg area)         |
| • Jeff Brown              | SW Yamhill County (Willamina area)       |
| • Matt Dunckel (thru Oct) | SE Yamhill County (McMinnville area)     |
| • Dave Hanson (after Oct) | SW Yamhill County (Sheridan area)        |
| • Rocky Losli             | NW Yamhill County (Yamhill area)         |
| • Donald Martsof          | SE Yamhill County (McMinnville area)     |
| • John Mercier            | SW Yamhill County (Willamina area)       |
| • Tony Roos               | NE Yamhill County (Newberg area)         |
| • Michal Wert             | NE Yamhill County (Newberg area)         |

**2019 Accomplishments/Discussions**

- Chair Adam Zabinski and Vice-chair Gordon Cook presented the RIAC 2018 Annual Report to the BOC.
- Celebrated with the Public Works Department (PWD) on completion and occupancy of the new PWD building. Throughout the building project, provided assistance with

interviewing and selecting potential contractors, reviewed the status of building construction, and toured the progress of the new building.

- Member Michal Wert coordinated PWD and the Native Plant Society of OR to design and establish a native plant garden to landscape the front of the new building.
- Provided comments and recommendations on the PWD annual budget and priority Maintenance Improvement Projects (MIP) list. This included Old Parrett Mountain as the only gravel-to-paved road project because of issues with Ribbon Ridge and Stag Hollow Roads.
- Recommended to the BOC that the County enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with McMinnville for the city to assume ownership of the Old Sheridan Bridge road, with PWD to cooperate for inspections. McMinnville accepted the bridge for maintenance and will return the pedestrian path to the County.
- In addition to the proposed tourism kiosks at Mineral Springs and Hendricks Roads, recommended that a kiosk be installed at the intersection of Albertson and North Valley Roads, to be designated as the “Dewey Corners Kiosk”.
- Members Tony Roos and Michal Wert researched a possible guardrail policy. It was agreed that a policy to inventory and install guardrails would be expensive and not practical, but it should be part of a broader asset management discussion. In the interim, new PWD overlay or paving projects should include a safety evaluation to determine if a guardrail should be part of the planned improvement.
- Discussed whether it should continue to meet monthly or start to meet quarterly. Recommended that if it is to do research, debate, and advise on issues, RIAC should continue to meet monthly.
- Recommended approval of a Cooperative Road Improvement Program (CRIP) application for Bayliss Road.
- To streamline the process, recommended that the BOC authorize PWD to install signs in accordance with the Federal Highways Administration Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards and rules for routine signage without having to seek prior approval from the BOC.
- Safety concerns at the North Valley-Chehalem Road intersection were discussed.
- Recommended that RIAC members be included on the selection committee for the new PWD Director. Chair Zabinski and Vice-Chair Cook were invited to participate.
- Recommended several updates to the PWD website.
- Updating the gravel road prioritization policy was discussed and tabled until 2020.
- Discussed the condition of the County’s bridges and how the County will address significant deficiencies.
- It was affirmed that PWD will implement recommendations of Dr. Paul Hammond for maintenance of Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) sites. Dr. Hammond’s 2019 report showed a large increase in Fender’s blue butterfly.
- Dave Hanson was recommended by RIAC and appointed by the BOC to replace Matt Dunkel on the HCP Advisory Committee.
- Concurred with the Roadside Vegetation Management Technical Advisory Committee (RVMTAC) recommendation to continue to fund a shared position between PWD and the Yamhill Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) to

control invasive weeds in the County and to participate in the roadside vegetation management inventories.

- Concurred with the RVMTAC and recommended that PWD hire two interns to continue the roadside vegetation survey started in 2017.
- New members were solicited to replace Matt Dunckel and to fill two RIAC vacancies. Several applications were received and applicants were invited to attend a RIAC meeting. Jeff Brown, John Mercier, and Dave Hanson joined RIAC in 2019.
- RIAC welcomed new Director Mark Lago. With Director Lago and Commissioner Kulla, developed a project and program priorities list. The list was discussed and priorities assigned to help focus PWD and RIAC in 2020.

### **Informational Items**

- Director Phelan/Fleet Manager Russ Heath/Commissioner Kulla/Director Lago provided information and regular updates to RIAC on several topics:
  - Personnel, management, and general PWD operations, including staff changes and new hires. Key PWD positions included County Engineer and Road Master.
  - Status of tourism kiosk installation.
  - Updates on evaluations and ongoing status of actions to correct bridge conditions and deficiencies, including Palmer Creek, Ballston/DeJong Road, the Old Sheridan, Hill Road, Laughlin Road, Riverbend Road, and Oak Ridge bridges.
  - MIP project bids and on-going status, including paving projects, budgets, schedules, striping, spraying, and signage.
  - Construction of a bike path on Hill Road.
  - Process for complying with House Bill 2017 for Pavement Condition Indexing.
  - The need for a County policy for private gates on public roads.
  - Equipment and vehicle replacements and purchases, including the need for PWD to purchase additional ditching equipment.
  - Reservation management being returned to the Parks Department.
  - Continuation of the George Fox College internship program.
  - County application for Federal Lands Access Program funds to improve roads leading to Bureau of Land Management properties; and consideration of Westside Road to Meadow Lake Road for construction of a bike lane.
  - Status of the new Yamhill County road map. The map was completed in 2019!
  - Efforts to find funding and to prepare the road to pave Ribbon Ridge Road.
  - Staffing efficiencies, including hiring flaggers instead of using road crew employees who could be doing paving or road/roadside prep work, and more effective work shifts.
  - An open house to provide tours of the new PWD building and to introduce the new PWD Director.
- The Sheriff's Office provided reports on road and traffic issues at several RIAC meetings. This office provides a good perspective on road safety and issues and they are encouraged to attend as many RIAC meetings as possible.
- A weekly crew schedule and citizen request summary is posted on the PWD website and is emailed to RIAC members and the BOC.

### **Citizen Appearances/Letters**

- Mary Bryant regarding private gates on public roads.
- Dan and Kathy Warnshuis, Michael Lichenwalter, Stephen Styring, and Jeff and Heather Meader discussed Ribbon Ridge Road and requested that it be included on the 2019-20 MIP list. RIAC agreed that there should be a review of some road classifications for purposes of choosing the 2020-21 MIP projects.
- Luke Westphal, Executive Director of the Greater Yamhill Watershed Council, discussed the proposed Lamprey E-DNA sites for a fish passage project for the summer of 2019. The project includes landowner outreach with an objective of preempting liability for fish obstructions.
- Former RIAC member Jeff Kizer reminded RIAC that the road system is the County's largest piece of infrastructure serving the most people, and maintenance of roads and ditches should be a top priority.
- Tom Lenon requested safety measures at a dangerous curve on Gopher Valley Road.

### **Presentations**

- The George Fox University (GFU) senior design team presented their final recommendations to address recurring flooding and drainage problems, and to improve sight distance and safety issues on Stag Hollow Road; they completed design for half the road so this may be assigned to a future GFU team.
- A second GFU design team made a presentation on options for redesigning the Stoller Road/McDougall Road intersection. RIAC discussed the options, suggested modifications, and recommended one option to take forward for more detail on traffic patterns and cost projections.
- PWD staff Tami Garvey discussed the need to focus on ditching and the need for more dump sites for materials excavated from ditches.
- PWD staff James Craver discussed the need for a full-time bridge crew.
- Susan Aldrich-Markham, member of the RVMTAC, gave a presentation on the findings of the roadside vegetation inventories conducted during the spring and summer. The interns built on the protocol and continued surveys of invasive plants, significant native plant communities, and erosion within County rights-of-way. The interns completed surveys on all paved and most gravel roads throughout the County.

### **Roadside Vegetation Management Technical Advisory Committee (RVMTAC)**

#### **RVMTAC Purpose**

The BOC appointed the RVMTAC in 2014 to update policies and Best Management Practices to guide and assist PWD to manage roadside vegetation in a consistent, conscientious, and cost-effective manner. The RVMTAC reports to and provides regular updates to RIAC. The RVMTAC developed a Roadside Vegetation Management Plan that was adopted by BOC order in February 2016. Members were appointed for a second term in 2017 to help implement the Plan. An update on RVMTAC activities is included in this annual report since it is a subcommittee of RIAC.

## **Membership**

2018 membership of the RVMTAC includes:

- Michal Wert, Chair      Retired planning consultant, RIAC member/liaison
- Susan Aldrich-Markham      Retired OSU Field Crops Extension Agent
- Dave Hanson      Naturalist/land owner
- Vern Holm      Retired Western Invasives Network Coordinator
- Mark Huff      US National Park Service ecologist/vineyard owner
- Marie Vicksa      Yamhill SWCD Conservation Planner
- Sam Sweeney      Yamhill County farmer
- Luke Westphal      Greater Yamhill Watershed Council Executive Director

## **2019 Accomplishments**

- The focus of the RVMTAC in 2019 was to complete the roadside vegetation inventories and provide PWD and SWCD with a management tool and data to make decisions on roadside vegetation management. Meetings of the RVMTAC were to provide oversight and to receive findings and recommendations from the inventory program.
- Chair Michal Wert provided regular updates on RVMTAC activities to RIAC. RVMTAC member Susan Aldrich-Markham managed the roadside vegetation inventory; she coordinated an inventory team presentation on results for RVMTAC members, and she gave a presentation on findings to RIAC.
- Recommendations from the RVMTAC included:
  - Continuation of PWD funding for the position shared with SWCD to control invasive weeds.
  - Continue hiring interns to conduct the native plants/invasives/erosion roadside inventory. In the future, interns should be jointly managed by a dedicated PWD staff person, in partnership with the shared SWCD staff person Justin Cooley. The Greater Yamhill Watershed should continue to be engaged as needed to continue the program. They should begin work in May to include early blooming plants.
  - Several demonstration projects were identified from the inventories, both to protect native plant communities, and to begin to address the serious erosion problems along County roadsides. These should be evaluated by RIAC and PWD staff and be implemented in partnership with SWCD and adjacent property owners.
  - It is timely for management of the roadside vegetation inventories to be assumed by PWD and this responsibility should be clearly assigned to an individual in the Department.

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