

**YAMHILL COUNTY
ROAD IMPROVEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

This report summarizes the activities of the Yamhill County Road Improvement Advisory Committee (RIAC) for 2024. RIAC meets the 2nd Thursday of each month from 6:00-8:00 pm. Meetings are held in person with accommodations available for virtual participation. RIAC did not meet in February, July, or September.

RIAC PURPOSE

RIAC was created in 1976. Its purpose, updated in 2024, includes holding meetings as necessary to:

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

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

- a suggested priority for correcting road deficiencies identified by RIAC by submitting a priority list for all such projects to the Public Works Director on or before December 31st each year, for improvement projects to be scheduled, if approved, in the next fiscal year;
- suggested criteria to be used in prioritizing road improvement projects;
- division of effort between paving new roads and maintaining the existing roads, repairing or replacing bridges, maintenance or improvements to ditches and culverts, and roadside vegetation management; and
- other such advice as the BOC may request.

MEMBERSHIP

Nine RIAC members serve three-year terms and are intended to provide representation from all parts of Yamhill County to the extent possible. Kit Johnston was the BOC liaison in 2024. The Sheriff's Office (SO) is encouraged to attend meetings and provide input on road, bridge, and traffic issues. Membership, with year of appointment, included:

- Adam Zabinski, Chair/2015 NW Yamhill County (Newberg-Yamhill area)
- Michal Wert, Vice-Chair/1997 NE Yamhill County (Newberg area)
- Jeff Brown/2019 SW Yamhill County (Willamina area)
- Dave Hanson/2019 SW Yamhill County (Sheridan area)
- Bruce Hubbard/2021 SE Yamhill County (Amity area)
- Chip Mayes/2022 NE Yamhill County (Newberg area)
- Tony Roos/2008 NE Yamhill County (Newberg area)
- Ryan Webb/2023 SW Yamhill County (Grand Ronde area)

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS/DISCUSSIONS

- Adam Zabinski and Michal Wert presented the 2023 Annual Report to the BOC.
- The SO provided regular crash reports. Locations were mapped by Public Works Department (PWD) staff to allow RIAC to review critical areas. SO staff raise specific safety issues and suggest solutions, especially where crashes were influenced by things that PWD can fix or change, such as signage and vegetation management. Albertson Road traffic has increased as Google Maps directs traffic to use this connector road.
- RIAC continued discussions on dust abatement as requested by several residents.
- A request was made for DLCD to assess the need and possible funding to update the 2015 County Transportation System Plan (TSP). DLCD responded that many conditions have not changed and recommended a limited update. There is significant competition for grant monies that may be available. RIAC discussed how to proceed with a TSP update.
- Teams of George Fox University (GFU) senior engineering students have worked on PWD projects since 2013. A list of projects was prepared to document the projects.
- The increased costs for hiring road striping contractors in addition to contracting with Marion County was discussed. Public Works is evaluating purchasing its own striping truck.
- Michal provided regular updates on the Roadside Vegetation Inventory (RVI) program and activities of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).
- Discussed invasive plants and suggested a policy for utilities to pay for fire mitigation and safety to help fund clearing around poles and vaults.
- Discussed a shared position between Public Works and SWCD for a Native & Invasive Species Specialist position.
- Discussed installing a bench in Deer Creek Park in honor of RIAC/TAC member Dave Hanson who passed away in 2024. He worked on Deer Creek Park restoration and improvements for decades.
- Discussed possible new RIAC members to fill two vacant positions.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Director Lago and Commissioner Johnston provided information and regular updates to RIAC on several topics:

- ODOT program to install emergency vehicle weight restriction signs on all bridges in the state. There will not be ratings on private bridges. ODOT listed 5 bridges for repairs.
- Regular personnel updates, including hiring two new utility workers, a new mechanic, a mechanic's assistant, and a new office specialist technician. GFU student Austin Bennett was hired as a summer engineering intern.
- The BOC adopted the Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance to meet DEQ mercury total maximum daily load (TMDL) requirements.
- Engineering Manager Greg Haffner accepted a national award from Asphalt Emulsion Management for Emulsion Excellence for the scrub seal on Baker Creek Road.
- Regular updates on bridge projects including two Pike Road bridges and two bridges on Ribbon Ridge Road; overlays; other road projects including Albertson Road; upgraded mowing practices; roadside spraying and erosion demonstration projects; and the mercury TMDL project.

- The inventory of about 8,200 culverts was completed. PWD signed an agreement with SWCD and Yamhill Greater Watershed Council to assist in writing and applying for grants to upgrade culverts/cross tiles and fish-bearing culverts, which are expensive and challenging.
- Roadside Vegetation Supervisor Nick Wilkinson prepared a work plan to prioritize replacement of undersized and improperly designed culverts. He upgraded the County's spraying equipment and aggressively sprayed for Italian thistle.
- Updates on the 2024-2025 budget and process.
- Updates on the Kramien Road CRIP project funded by a resident.
- The 2024 Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for Kincaid's lupine and Fender's blue butterfly tour included the TAC, Paul Hammond, ODFW, SWCD, and PWD staff.
- More effective and efficient spray equipment, a new flush truck, and a 2025 17-ton dump truck were purchased by PWD.
- Updates on the Cove Orchard Sewer Service District Capital Facilities Plan, and on the County Parks Master Plan.
- Coordinated with Washington County Public Works to jointly address signing for icy conditions on Bald Peak and Albertson Roads.
- Mark gave a presentation to the Chamber of Commerce Leaders of Tomorrow program, explaining the roles and opportunities in Public Works in the County.
- Updates on ODOT projects on state highways throughout the County.

CITIZEN APPEARANCES

- Jeff Meader, Dan Warnshuis, and Colin Styring discussed continuing requests by residents and winery businesses to use the CRIP program to pave the gravel portion of Ribbon Ridge Road. This significant project that will require surveying and purchase of right-of-way, ditching, culvert upgrades, and tree/brush clearing and will require significant County staff resources. This must be considered during budgeting relative to other demands on County resources. Representatives agreed to get a bid on the cost of asphalt needed as a potential first phase and to get a financial commitment from residents to pay for their portion of the project.

PRESENTATIONS

- Casey Kulla and Phil Higgins gave a presentation on Cycle Yamhill Oregon and its Panther Creek Trail Project.
- Matt Bell, Transportation Planner with Kittelson & Associates, discussed TSP guidelines and requirements, funding options, and the application process.
- The GFU senior design team made a presentation on final designs and cost estimates for North Main Street Road improvements in Newberg.
- Volunteer Susan Aldrich-Markham and interns Cricket Fagen and Avery Campbell gave a presentation on the results of the 2024 Roadside Vegetation Inventory. Particular focus was on the Dupee Valley/Eagle Point Roads native plant community and Deer Creek Park.
- Nick Wilkinson gave a presentation on cooperative erosion control projects on Mineral Springs Road, Deer Creek Flats Road, and Oak Springs Farm Road. The County needs to update its utility permit application process to add soil stabilization after any earth-disturbing activities are completed. He also discussed Italian thistle management, especially within the Dundee Hills, Chehalem Valley, and Carlton and Yamhill areas.

- A second GFU design team gave a presentation on existing conditions, design issues and constraints, and design options for improvement of South College Street in Newberg. The intent is to define the project sufficiently so an agreement can be reached to transfer the road to the City of Newberg.

ROADSIDE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

TAC Purpose

The BOC appointed the TAC 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 TAC reports to and provides regular updates to RIAC. It developed a Roadside Vegetation Management Plan that was adopted by BOC order in February 2016. Members were reappointed in 2017, 2020, and again in 2023 to help implement the Plan. An update on activities is included in this annual report since the TAC is a subcommittee of RIAC. Several PWD projects are supported by members in addition to the work of the Committee.

Membership

The TAC met in August and September. Membership in 2024 included:

- Michal Wert, Chair Retired planning consultant, RIAC member/liaison
- Susan Aldrich-Markham OSU Field Crops Extension Agent
- Dave Hanson/Patricia Ferrell Naturalist/rural land owner
- Vern Holm Retired Western Invasives Network Coordinator
- Greta Holmstrom Greater Yamhill Watershed Council Ex. Dir.
- Keith Nasman/Jordan Anderson Yamhill SWCD Conservationist
- Sam Sweeney Yamhill County farmer

2024 Accomplishments

- Michal Wert provided regular updates on TAC activities to RIAC.
- Nick Wilkinson worked with volunteers Susan Aldrich-Markham and Michal Wert to hire and manage summer interns Cricket Fagen and Avery Campbell.
- The TAC made recommendations on the need for and responsibilities for the shared PWD/SWCD Invasive and Native Plants Specialist position.
- Of significant note, the Roadside Vegetation Inventory program has been successful and will be fully integrated into PWD in by 2025. Accomplishments included:
 - Two interns were hired annually from 2017 to 2024, giving students an opportunity for hands-on GPS and plant identification experience.
 - All County roads have been inventoried, assessed, and photographed for erosion, invasive plants, and significant plant communities at least once.
 - A data collection procedure and best practices were developed, written, and refined to provide useful data for PWD decision-making.
 - A program was developed to aggressively limit the spread of the invasive Italian thistle in the County. PWD upgraded spray equipment for more efficient and quicker invasive species treatment.
 - Special Maintenance Zones (SMZ) were identified for native plants along County roads and signage was placed for milkweed SMZs.

- Protocol for inventorying Kincaid’s lupine was adapted from the Institute for Applied Ecology and provides data to evaluate the effectiveness of County actions for the HCP.
- PWD roadside vegetation staff increased from one part-time FTE to 2 FTE.
- A shared Invasive and Native Plant Specialist position was created with SWCD with a primary assignment to be responsible for continuation of the RVI program.

Presentations

- Susan, Cricket, and Avery gave a presentation to the TAC on the results of the 2023 inventory. Nick included discussions on Italian thistle treatment and erosion management.
 - The inventory was updated for the Dupee Valley Road-Eagle Point Road SMZ. Menzie’s larkspur, sessile trillium, and Tolmie’s cat’s ear are uncommon plants found in this area. A management plan should be developed to protect and enhance the variety of native plants in this roadside area.
 - Inventory of Kincaid’s lupine in Deer Creek Park showed a smaller population than anticipated. PWD sprayed to address invasives and will be doing annual mowing to help control tall non-native grasses.
 - Paul Hammond’s annual Fender’s blue butterfly survey is being integrated with the Kincaid’s lupine survey data to support the HCP.
 - The County treated about 21 miles of road for Italian thistle in 2024. It is difficult to control because there is so much thistle growing on adjacent private property.
 - Erosion mitigation and restoration projects by PWD included Mineral Springs Road, Kuehne-Hendricks Road at Abbey Road, and Deer Creek Flats Road.
- Susan gave an expanded presentation on Kincaid’s lupine monitoring in Deer Creek Park and results of the Fender’s blue butterfly counts for each SMZ. Precise data on lupine population size and location provides an essential baseline for starting a restoration project and to measure impacts to meet HCP requirements.