

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**September 4, 2025 9:00 AM**  
**3012 Island Ave.**  
**La Grande OR**  
**Virtual MS Teams**

**Members and Alternates present:**

Noodle Perkins, Barry Murphy, Comm. Jeff Wenholz, Eric Imes, Brandon Hammond, Aaron Palmquist, Jacob Cain, Comm Dan Dorran, Tom Fellows, Tim Simmons, Comm. Paul Anderes, Kyle Carpenter, Doug Wright Comm. Lisa Collier, Larry Wightman, Dani Schulte, Mavis Hart, Steve Burkett

**Guests Present:**

OTC Commission Jeff Baker, Wade Ryneerson, Mike Hayward, Ryan Moody

**ODOT Staff:**

Sheri Folsom, Michelle Owen, Ken Patterson, Sean Maloney, Angie Jones, Vicki Moles, Ace Clark

**Opening Meeting:**

- Commissioner Dorran called the meeting to order
- Roll call of voting members
- Announcements: N/A
- Approval of Minutes: Approved

**Public and/or Stakeholders Comments:** If Any:

**Standing Items & Reports:**

OTC/Regional Updates – Ken Patterson

- ✓ Bryan Strasser has been promoted to CPM in the Ontario Construction office and continues to work on the ADA projects as well
- ✓ Roadway Designer, Alex Hymel has passed his Engineer's licensing test
- ✓ ODOT has received approval for Federal repair at Wade Point as well as the Pendleton and Spray rockslides
- ✓ The QPR meeting was held yesterday, they reviewed project details. 2074 ADA ramps have been completed so far with the remaining to be done by 2027. Region 5 leads the state in accomplishing the completion of the project
- ✓ Projects are coming in under budget due to some process changes. We are seeing some consolidation in the construction industry. Our projects are driven by materials use, if the material sources are in the area and owned by one company, they control the bidding. Region 5 has identified several material sources around the region in order to help reduce costs
- ✓ Megaloads running at night continue to have a positive impact on travel and is going well

## North East Area Commission on Transportation (NEACT)

### Construction Updates– Sean Maloney

- ✓ Burns ADA is completed
- ✓ Umatilla/Morrow Counties 2a are completing the punch list
- ✓ Umatilla/Morrow Counties 2b has kicked off, completion date June 2026
- ✓ Pendleton Phase 2 will be complete by end of September
- ✓ North Powder and Halfway curb ramps projected to start September 15<sup>th</sup>
- ✓ OR86 guardrail, completion date of October 31, things are moving along
- ✓ I84 N of Huntington concrete repair is starting now, should be completed by end of September
- ✓ Tower Road to Stanfield will be completed by end of September
- ✓ Umatilla County signal improvements are complete
- ✓ 10<sup>th</sup> St in Baker City due to be completed by end of October
- ✓ OR86 Fish Creek, replacing culvert is underway with completion date of October
- ✓ Camera project is also underway, anticipated completion by end of October

### Local Program Update: Michelle Owen

- ✓ There are a few HB2017 projects still going on, Hermiston and CDA projects have gone out for proposals. Baker City has broken ground on Cedar St. Thorn Hollow Bridge is under construction. Holbrook bridge @ Pine Creek, Little Creek bridge in Union and Caudle Lane bridge in Lostine are in design

### Roundtable Updates - All

- ✓ RST – There are a few projects happening across Eastern Oregon. Oregon Solutions highway project will be hosting a public webinar today which will be recorded. The kickoff is on 9/16 in Juntura. Malheur Counties Reload project is looking to potentially sell to a private company to run. Good progress in Malheur County with Aquatic invasive species inspection sites. Setting up a boat inspection right before Owyhee Reservoir and will look to ODOT for maintenance on the roadway. RST is embarking on an effort with ODFW, ODOT, DEQ and others to start addressing the carcass debris removal issues. The Wallowa Lake Dam rehab project is working on their final design
- ✓ LaGrande – finishing conversation with Consor ADA ramps in 26-27 for downtown. Paving East L and 25<sup>th</sup> St will be a big impact. The city continues to experience issues with UPRR trains stopping and blocking crossing for extended periods of time. The final touches on SRTS project on Spruce are nearing completion
- ✓ Bike/Ped; Seeing more bike tourism coming back into La Grande. There is still concern with gravel over pavement with more E-bike commuters. New housing needs transportation discussion
- ✓ City of Pendleton: Pendleton is preparing for the Round-Up. Work is continuing on the East end connector road to open up for new development. East Goad Road work has started up for new development. Phase 3 for Goad Road reconstruction is getting the design worked out. Adding a RRFB near the Middle

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School and crack seal bid opening will happen today, grind inlay to go out next Spring

- ✓ Morrow Co: Focusing on upgrading roads coming out of canyons, widening the roads and upgrading for heavy loads. Moved to a cold mix design, working on cost per ton data
- ✓ Wallowa: Getting ready for winter operations. They have completed 10 miles of chip seal
- ✓ Baker: Finished up major projects, now cleaning up smaller projects
- ✓ Umatilla Co; Dealing with the loss of the Milton-Freewater bridge, the connection to cemetery is going over a mile of gravel road so working to hard surface the road. Expansion in Pendleton has had opportunity to work with the City of Pendleton on some road transfers. Conversation with other roads that are being looked at for DATA centers crossing.
- ✓ Transit; Experienced 10 layoff notices, current staff was only 42 so this is a significant decrease. In Special Session the hot button is the .01% payroll tax increase, just negative opinions coming out for that. Communicate how this money impacts transit needs to get out via media/social media. I84 bus service is coming, no official notice yet. Vendor has been notified. The money to fund this program will come from 5311F, the Grant is good for one year
- ✓ Tribal: CTUIR has hired a Transportation Planner. Starting internal project kick off for the SRTS project on Misson Road. They are having some hiring challenges and the construction side is quiet

## New Business

### Maintenance Spending Reduction – Ace Clark, ODOT

- ✓ Ace provided an overview of the regional budget, including historical context and current fiscal challenges. The base budget was reviewed back to 2016, highlighting ongoing cost-control efforts such as holding positions open, reducing materials purchases, and minimizing overall spending. Despite these measures, inflation continues to significantly affect expenses related to fuel, repairs, and salaries.
- ✓ Without additional funding, the region faces an estimated 30% budget reduction for FY2026. Even with supplemental funding, operational impacts are expected. Currently, there are 45 vacant positions—the highest number in recent history—with continued resignations despite potential funding relief.
- ✓ Layoff notices were initially issued for July 31, then postponed to September 15, and again to October 15.
- ✓ Reductions made so far: not restriping fog lines on low volume roads, not purchasing fleet, limiting OT, pavement maintenance reduced, suspended chip seal projects, held positions open.
- ✓ Pavement patching program has been eliminated. Incident response will be affected due to staffing. Close roads rather than run pilot cars and staff the area.
- ✓ Graffiti cleanup will be reduced. Litter cleanup will have impacts as well. Abandoned RVs will be left for a longer period of time. The expense of removing the RV can run upwards of \$3000.00

## North East Area Commission on Transportation (NEACT)

- ✓ There are still many unknowns around maintenance at this point.

### Legislative Funding Package Updates – Ken Patterson

- ✓ Budget reductions started in 2019, holding vacant positions, holding off on projects
- ✓ The Highway Fund is hovering around zero balance
- ✓ Despite efforts, the Legislature adjourned late on June 27<sup>th</sup> without passing a transportation funding package
- ✓ Agency-wide impacts include 932 positions across all divisions. This will impact the Level of Service that ODOT provides to the traveling public, Project Delivery
- ✓ The Bill for automating WorkZone speeds and compliance did not pass
- ✓ There needs to be work around housing impacts, more middle housing and proposals to analyze impacts to transportation

Meeting adjourned 12:00pm

Next meeting will be a Joint ACT meeting on November 6, 2025