

Northeast Area Commission on Transportation (NEACT)

**July 9th, 2026
9 a.m.-noon
3012 Island Ave.
La Grande, OR
In-Person and virtual/Teams**

NEACT Board Meeting Minutes

Members and alternates present:

Daniele Schuh, Aaron Palmquist, Tom Fellows, Tim Simons, Larry Wightman, Tim Helbig, Mavis Hartz, Kane Lester, Noodle Perkins, Commissioner Paul Anderes, Patty Perry, Kyle Carpenter, Doug Wright, Steve Burkett, Michelle Kaseburg, Jacob Cain.

Guests present:

Andy Perry, Patrick Keely, Steven Davis, Walter McAllister, Mary McGowan, Kim Curley, Darla Linker, Kari Carper, Steve Chrisman, David Van Atta, Jared Tesch, John Doherty, Chuck Larsen, Melinda Miller, Commissioner Jeff Baker, Jack Howard, Mark Hagedorn, Wade Rynearson, CallieJo Hardiman, Justin Walker, Courtney Crowell, Brenda Engbretson, Jeff VanSchaick, Ryann Gleason, Eddie Engleman, Jared Jungman.

ODOT Staff:

Ken Patterson, Sean Maloney, Michelle Owen, Angie Jones, Teresa Penninger, Sarah Morris, Jane Kerr, Sheri Folsom, Mary McGowan and Walt McAlister (guest presenter).

Opening Meeting:

- 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Paul Anderes called the meeting to order
- Roll call of voting members – Quorum present
- Announcements:
- January Minutes: Motion made to approve, Seconded. Approved.

Public and/or Shareholders Comments:

- Commissioner Baker reported that Chris Warner is the new Interim Director of ODOT; monthly meetings are being held to discuss the transportation budget and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP); the Transportation Vision Group is well represented by NEACT, including Commissioner Dan Doran, Commissioner Baker, and Noodle Perkins. Everyone was encouraged after reviewing the Transportation Safety Action Plan to submit ideas and public comments before the deadline of July 31, 2026.

Presentations:

- Transportation Safety Action Plan – Mary McGowan, ODOT Senior Transportation Planner
- Connect Oregon projects – Project applicants
 - Baker Airport - RW 17-35 Rehab.
 - Burns Airport - Water system improvement.
 - Columbia Rail - track repairs/upgrades.
 - Eastern Oregon Airport (PDT) - UAS "sky highway".
 - Grant County Airport – Helipads.
 - Oregon Eastern Rail - track upgrades.
 - Port of Morrow -

Region Updates – Sean Maloney for Ken Patterson, Region 5, ODOT

- Region 5 has projects for consideration for the Capital Improvement Plan; there are 30 total CIP submissions.
- R5 Chip seal work is in progress along U.S. 26, OR 7 and OR 203 and are progressing well.
- Wildfire season has begun and crews are preparing for closures and response.
- Recruitment for winter seasonal maintenance positions are underway.
- Local Hazmat contractors are no longer accepting ODOT highway work due to unpaid services, which is delaying cleanup efforts and lengthening road closure durations.
- The Region 5 Interchange Safety Study is underway; staff are prioritizing high priority improvements.
- Staff are preparing and providing training for the upcoming nuclear waste transport shipment traveling through Oregon this summer, including emergency response planning and coordination.
- The Swiveling Traffic Signal in Pendleton has been installed and is operational. It is designed to swivel to accommodate oversized loads and has received significant public attention.

Current Construction Projects- Sean Maloney, Area Manager ODOT

- Current and upcoming projects for 2026 include:
 - [Tower Road Interchange Bridge over I-84](#). Due to be completed at the end of the month. (Has pushed into early August.)
 - [I-84: Eastern Oregon Durable Striping](#). Project complete.
 - [I-84: Rieth Interchange and Umatilla River Bridges](#) due to start in fall.

Northeast Area Commission on Transportation (NEACT)

- [I-84 Roadway Illumination Project](#). Project complete.
- OR 11 chip seal. Project complete.
- [I-84: Bridges over North Spruce Street \(La Grande\)](#) due to start in fall.
- [OR 86 Guardrail Project](#) is complete.

Local Projects – Michelle Owen, ODOT

- Small City Allotment Program
 - The program received 23 applications in Region 5, 12 of these are eligible, typically 5-6 grants are awarded in the Region, and recipients will be announced at the end of July.

City/County/Tribal/Transit Updates-City/County/Tribal/Transit Representatives

City updates

- Tim Simons, Pendleton – ADA curb ramp projects are finishing up. Grinding and overlay work throughout town is currently underway. Coordinating with Michelle Owen on the Gode Road project, and the city is looking into potential bridge match funding opportunities through FEMA funding.
- Mavis Hart, from the bike program, reports that the Baker City classic was a success and that road cycling participation is on the rise.

County updates

- Umatilla County – Tom Fellows reports that 60 miles of chip seal work is complete, and the Thorn Hollow Bridge project is also complete. A bridge project is in progress for approval.
- Wallowa County – Larry Whiteman reports the county is prepping for chip seal on county roads.
- Baker County – Noodle Perkins reports they have postponed chip seal work, and the county is focusing on road maintenance and assisting with wildfires.
- Union County – Doug Wright reports there are several chip seal projects underway, the county is assisting with wildfire response efforts, and Jet A fuel supply and delivery challenges are increasing. The new waterline to the Union County Fairgrounds is complete. Doug recommended involving local public works directors in submitting data for the Transportation Safety Action Plan, as their input is not currently included. Doug also announced his retirement on July 30 after 41 years of service.

Angie Jones-ODOT Public Transportation

- The Governor has ordered the development of public transportation case studies, CTUIR and CCNO are providing data and information to support the review and analysis.
- Federal formula grant applications and revisions are in progress and scheduled for final review on July 16.

Northeast Area Commission on Transportation (NEACT)

- STIP opens in August.
- STIF Grants have been submitted and reviewed. NEACT has 11 applications that need to be reviewed and scored by August 14th.
- A subcommittee was established to review STIF Oregon Connect project proposals, determine which projects should be funded, and rank approved projects by priority and need. Angie will provide project summaries to the committee. The subcommittee members are Michelle Owens, Noodle Perkins, Tom Fellows, and Paul Anderes.

Courtney Crowell-Regional Solutions

- The Wallowa Lake Dam project has received ODFW approval for the fish passage improvements, and construction is scheduled to begin in fall 2026.
- Work is underway with ODOT on the Boardman City Interchange upgrade and addressing housing challenges in Pendleton.

Next meeting is scheduled for: Sept. 3, 2026.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, Vicki Moles, R5 Community Affairs Specialist