

**Draft Minutes of the Public Meeting of the
Morrow County Planning Commission
Tuesday, January 27, 2026, 6:00 pm
Morrow County Government Center
215 NE Main Ave, Irrigon, OR**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Stacie Ekstrom, Chair
Norm Ayala
Charlene Cooley
Karl Smith
John Kilkenny
Liz Peterson

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Brian Thompson
Tripp Finch

ATTENDANCE via ZOOM:

Stephen Henthorn

STAFF PRESENT:

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director
Michaela Ramirez, Administrative Assistant
Clint Shoemake, Planning Technician
Kaitlin Kennedy, Code Compliance Planner

Staff Zoom:

Stephen Wrecsics, GIS Analyst

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ekstrom called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

2. ROLL CALL

3. PLEDGE

4. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2, 2025, DRAFT MINUTES

Recommended Action: Approve

Action: Unanimously Approved

Presented by: Planning Director Tamra Mabbott

Request: Co-Adoption of the City of Boardman Transportation System Plan (TSP), ATSP-162-26. The application is to co-adopt the Boardman TSP to apply to lands within the urban growth boundary. Criteria for approval include Morrow County Zoning Ordinance (MCZO) Article 8 Amendments.

Chair Ekstrom asked if there was anyone who needed to abstain, declare a conflict of interest, bias, or have any ex parte contact.

Commissioner Ayala recused herself from this item on the agenda.

Director Mabbott: asked the Planning Commission to enter Jonathan Tallman's email correspondence into the record as exhibits 1 and 2.

Commissioner Kilkenny: motioned to enter the exhibits into the record.

Commissioner Cooley: seconded the motion.

Chair Ekstrom requested that those giving testimony or comments to keep their comments to a minimum so that everyone got a chance to speak.

Carla McLane: spoke on how the city had presented the co-adoption to the public throughout the process. She also spoke about the comments given at public meetings and how they responded. She mentioned that other appendices support the co-adopt. She encouraged the Planning Commission to forward the co-adopt to the Board of Commissioners for their consideration for next month's meeting.

Chair Ekstrom asked the Commission if there were any questions for the applicant. There were none.

Chair Ekstrom asked if there were opponents who would like to provide testimony or evidence.

Testifying Parties:

Carla McLane, City of Boardman Planning Official, PO Box 229, Boardman, OR 97818

Cheryl Tallman, 706 Mt Hood Ave, Boardman, OR, 97818

Jonanthan Tallman, 706 Mt. Hood Ave, Boardman, OR 97818

Dawn Hert, Eastern Oregon Regional Representative, 105 Fir St., Suite 210, La Grande, OR 97850

Emily Guimont, Beery Elsner & Hammond, on behalf of the city of Boardman

Cheryl: read from her notes and said she was not there to oppose the project. She would like to request that the project be done with clarity and coordination because impacts are real on the ground, even though plans are described as conceptual. She spoke about businesses affected and that residents would like to see factual plans.

Jonathan: presented and displayed a billboard with attached documents (photos were taken). He stated that the TSP is on hold with NIDA. He mentioned there were particular records he had submitted that were not in the City of Boardman's packet. He spoke on conceptual plans, stated that he would like factual documents, and would like to see all projects put into one submittal.

Commissioner Kilkenny: asked Jonathan if he was talking about the Transportation Plan or the Heritage Trail.

Jonathan: responded that he was going to demonstrate through his props. He also asked that we leave the record open and continue the hearing according to the 7-7-7 rule because of the complexity of the process. He spoke about transmission lines on his property and how they were installed because of demand. He asked that all plans be done in good faith.

Chair Ekstrom asked the Commission if there were any questions for the opponent.

Commissioner Peterson: asked Jonathan what his issue was about a particular map.

Jonathan: responded that it was a conceptual map, not a factual map. Then spoke on a particular road and how it should be made to comply with the city code. He also spoke on a LUBA case he won.

Commissioner Peterson: asked about the conceptual map, indicating they were going to place an RV Park on his property.

Jonathan: responded yes and tried to move on with that plan, but it fell through.

Commissioner Peterson: asked Jonathan if what he was asking the Planning Commission today was that the city of Boardman move ahead with the plan, but he would like to see it done in the correct order.

Jonanthan Tallman: responded that he would like the city to make an ORS 35 offer so that the plan could move forward and be non-confrontational.

Commissioner Peterson: responded that the commission had no control over what happens within the city limits, but if the commission were to approve, we would be telling the city it is ok to go against the ORS.

Jonathan Tallman: stated there was a NIDA on the TSP. He said the city of Boardman should finish the NIDA and then come back to them once it was done. He said he may still take the approved plan to LUBA, he didn't want to pay lawyers anymore, and wanted everyone to work with him.

Director Mabbott: Jonathan submitted a Community Development Notice of Decision of 2021 and an aerial image with an A & B Notice. She asked the Commission to motion to add the exhibits to the record as exhibits 3 and 4.

Commissioner Peterson: made the motion to add the exhibits to the record.

Commissioner Kilkenny: seconded the motion.

Director Mabbott: stated that the Planning Commission meeting tonight was to make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners to co-adopt the City's Transportation System Plan, which would apply to the Urban Growth area. She also wanted to point out that the record would remain open until the February 18th Board of Commissioners Hearing, and materials could be submitted up until that time. She said Mr. Tallman could also ask for the record to remain open until then. She then stated the plans would move forward until approval, then Mr. Tallman could make his appeals. She also spoke on the "Laurel Lane Vicinity Map" and pointed out that it was not near Mr. Tallman's property.

Commissioner Kilkenny: asked to present the Laurel Lane Vicinity Map and asked Jonathan if his objection was to the road going through his property.

Jonathan: he said what was on the map was conceptual and not factual. He stated that the plan was to segment the process.

Commissioner Kilkenny: wanted to understand what exactly he, Jonathan, wasn't in agreement with about the road.

Jonathan: responded that the documentation he had received was not factual and didn't want the city of Boardman to change the plans of where things were going to be placed.

Commissioner Kilkenny: asked Director Mabbott what he meant about the proposed road.

There was a discussion about which map. The map in question was on page 42.

Director Mabbott: stated that the plan was a general alignment and that the maps were conceptual, but at some point, the city of Boardman needed a road that connected.

Jonathan: stated the city of Boardman committed to the road in 2021 and didn't want to take it to LUBA. He did say LUBA remanded the decision on the road, and the city of Boardman gave him a letter of intent, but not according to the ORS-35 law.

Commissioner Peterson: asked to review ORS-35.

Counsel Kearns: gave a brief definition of ORS-35.

Jonathan: claimed that this was an inverse domain because the county was funding it. He claimed there wasn't proper representation.

Chair Ekstrom asked if there were any parties with neutral evidence. There were none.

Commissioner Henthorn: referred to the map on page 29. He asked if the city of Boardman could make plans with county roads before they were annexed into the city. He also pointed out the road that runs north and south and intersects at Anderson and Juniper, which runs through agricultural land. Then, the Planning Commission always prioritized agricultural land.

Director Mabbott: explained that both the county and the city had their own transportation plan and that tonight was about recommending that the Board of Commissioners adopt the plan presented tonight.

Commissioner Henthorn: asked if the Staff had notified property owners about what is being proposed, and that he didn't entirely disagree with Mr. Tallman. His concern was that the plan was conceptual and that the city of Boardman was making plans on county land. He said, if that was the case, why didn't the city of Boardman annex the proposed property.

Director Mabbott: explained that the county transportation plan provides no guidance for future development within the Urban Growth Boundary, and that was why the county co-adopts what the city would like to see. She also said properties are developed in fragments, so that there is some guidance on developing roadways.

Commissioner Peterson: asked if property owners had been notified of their proposed future.

Director Mabbott: explained that the county would follow the city's standards, and it would allow some guidance.

Commissioner Peterson: asked if the city was using residents' property for future plans.

Director Mabbott: responded yes, but it is not site-specific. If the county planned any development, it would confer with the City of Boardman to see how it could connect because any urban-scale development or high-intensity subdivisions would most likely follow city standards and be annexed into the city.

Commissioner Peterson: pointed out that the city of Boardman hadn't annexed the area yet, but was deciding the future of residents' land.

Director Mabbott: reminded Commissioner Peterson that this is not site-specific. She then stated that if someone were to subdivide, they would have to annex into the city, because the county does not have the capacity for high-density development in the Urban Growth Development area to support water and sewer. She then asked Dawn Hert to give a better explanation of why a county and city work together on a transportation plan in the Urban Growth area.

Dawn Hert: explained that it is not a requirement for the county to adopt or acknowledge a city plan, but there are benefits.

Commissioner Peterson: asked why the city couldn't just plan for its boundaries. Why did they have plans for the county's Urban Growth Boundary.

Commissioner Henthorn: also said he felt the same way about the plan.

Counsel Kearns: explained what it meant to adopt in the Urban Growth Boundary, and that counties are required to go along with adoptions. He explained that cities plan for urbanization.

Commissioner Kilkenney: asked what the arrows meant on map figure 4-2 (pg. 29).

Counsel Kearns: replied that it could mean future extension of those roads. He also said that is why the plans are conceptual, because cities try to anticipate how things will progress.

Commissioner Henthorn: spoke on the growth of cities and the rights of property owners.

Commissioner Peterson: asked what was presented was conceptual, it would become factual after development.

Director Mabbott: explained that the plan was conceptual and not precise, but the idea was to provide guidance. She then gave an example.

Commissioner Peterson: asked if, what if the landowner didn't agree, then what would happen. 1:08

Director Mabbott: explained that yes, they could say no. And spoke on what was conceptual and how the county would coordinate roads with the city for safety.

Commissioner Peterson: asked if someone wanted to subdivide, would it have to go through the Planning Commission.

Director Mabbott: replied yes.

Counsel Kearns: spoke about the map presented on page 29. He also explained that developers are required to provide access to serve the development. Developers are also required to demonstrate that public facilities exist and are sufficient to serve the development. He explained that this was a general plan and not a final plan.

Director Mabbott: pointed out that at the bottom of the map, the language stated that the map is a general idea and not a final plan. She also said the plans were conceptual and landowners would be given an idea of the city and county's future interest.

Counsel Kearns: replied that the government cannot acquire the property unless it was part of a development.

Chair Ekstrom asked if the applicant would like to present any rebuttal or evidence for testimony.

Carla McLane: responded that the City of Boardman would be constraining comments to the decision. She wanted to clarify that the city's TSP is not on hold and stated the city would suspend the NIDA until the county's co-adopt process was complete. Cities do have the right to adopt a conceptual plan, and she recommended that the Planning Commission recommend approval.

Emily Guimont: seconded Carla McLane's rebuttal

Chair Ekstrom asked anyone who would like to continue the hearing or hold the record open.

Jonathan: asked said yes, he would like to hold the record open.

Director Mabbott: stated that this was a legislative action and the commission is not obligated to keep the record open. She also said the record would remain open until the Board of Commissioners Hearing.

Counsel Kearns: explained the rules and requirements.

Chair Ekstrom then closed the public hearing. She then asked if anyone had questions for the staff.

Commissioner Smith: asked about a particular road going through property.

Commissioner Kilkenny: responded that what he was speaking about was the Heritage Trail and that was the next item on the agenda.

Commissioner Cooley: asked about the conceptual plan: will the plan come back for approval for county roads.

Director Mabbott: replied that if the roads weren't annexed by the city, then yes.

There was a discussion about the motion to be made.

Director Mabbott: asked Counsel Kearns if the Commission could say they didn't want to make a recommendation.

Counsel Kearns: responded, he thought that was possible, but felt the Board of Commissioners might want to know the reason why the Planning Commission couldn't reach a decision.

There was more discussion about the conceptual plan. 1:38

Recommended Action: The Planning Commission recommend to approve the BOC approve with Co-Adoption of the City of Boardman Transportation System Plan (TSP), ATSP-162-26.

Motion: The Planning Commission recommends that the BOC approve Co-Adoption of the City of Boardman Transportation System Plan (TSP), ATSP-162-26, and respect the rights of all local private property owners.

Motion by: Commissioner Cooley

Seconded by: No one

Vote: None

Action: No action was taken, and the Planning Commission couldn't agree on a recommendation.

Director Mabbott: said she would write up a Memo to the Board of Commissioners about the motion.

Presented by: Planning Director Tamra Mabbott & Planning Technician Clint Shoemake

Request: Comprehensive Plan Amendment to update Chapter 9 Recreation Element and Adopt the 2026 Morrow County Columbia River Heritage Trail Concept Plan, AC-163-26. Morrow County is the applicant. Criteria for approval include Morrow County Zoning Ordinance (MCZO) Article 8 Amendments.

Chair Ekstrom asked if anyone needed to abstain, declare a conflict of interest, bias, or have any ex parte contact. There were none.

Director Mabbott: gave some background on what had been done with the Heritage Trail Plan in the last 18 months.

Clint: spoke about the trail's history and then spoke about the trails on the map presented. He explained the colors on the map on page 161 and then went on to explain the maps presented (pages 163, 165, 167, 169, 171, 173 of the packet).

Chair Ekstrom asked if the Planning Commission had any questions for Staff:

Commissioner Peterson: asked if the staff had spoken to Oregon Potato about the property possibly used in the plan.

Clint: responded that Oregon Potato had responded. They requested references to utilize their property be removed . 1:53:32

Commissioner Peterson: asked if all landowners approved of the trail plan.

Director Mabbott: responded that the majority of the property is public land.

Clint: pointed out the area considered to be private property. He also spoke about the BPA property in the plan.

Commissioner Peterson: asked about the property on the other side of the freeway.

Clint: said he wasn't sure, and they would have to bring that up. He also said he was hoping the Tower Road IAMP would help with that issue and reiterated that they would not move forward without any approvals from property owners.

Director Mabbott: asked the commission if the commission would make a motion to enter the exhibits into the record.

Commissioner Kilkenny: motioned to accept the comments into the record.

Commissioner Cooley: seconded.

All voted: Unanimously Approved

Clint: wanted to make sure it was clear that what he presented before the Planning Commission was only for the Heritage Trail. He referenced the alignment in the vicinity of the map, page 129.

Chair Ekstrom opened the Public Hearing for proponents' testimony.

Testifying Parties:

Stephanie Case, Irrigon, OR

Cheryl Tallman, 706 Mt Hood Ave, Boardman, OR, 97818

Jonathan Tallman, 706 Mt. Hood Ave, Boardman, OR 97818

Stephanie: spoke about how long the county had been working on the trail and loved everything about the project. She also said she represented Gilliam County and that they didn't have any trail connection. She also stated she was at the meeting as an Irrigon resident.

Cheryl Tallman: spoke on behalf of the Farmer's Cup. She specified that she wanted to make a point on agenda item 5.2, the county's recreation element update and adoption of the Heritage Trail Plan. She then spoke about how the plans were conceptual, and funding would move on to function as a real corridor. She asked that the county ensure the record clearly reflects that the trail would not affect private land.

Jonathan Tallman: read from his displayed bulletin board notes. He spoke about property rights and how they were important. He went on to speak about the funding and how the plan was conceptualized. He asked that the plan be presented as factual. His concern was that once the plan was funded, it would be changed.

Commissioner Peterson: asked who had received 2 million in funding.

Director Mabbott: No one had received the money; the county has been budgeting.

Commissioner Peterson: asked if there was a letter of commitment from Threemile or the Port of Morrow.

Director Mabbott: replied no, because the plan is informal and it's just an alignment. She also stated that there is no commitment until the property is developed.

Commissioner Kilkenny: said he assumed property owners were advised since it is a proposed plan.

Clint: responded that the referenced information was included in the packet. He also said Threemile and the Port of Morrow are committed to the concept, but have not committed any development.

Commissioner Peterson: once the plan has been finalized, will it come back to the Planning Commission.

Director Mabbott: responded only if it required a land use permit, and she would have to look at what the underlying zoning requirements were.

Commissioner Peterson: asked if the Bonneville Power Administration easement was part of the plan because she noticed it wasn't mentioned in the plan.

Commissioner Kilkenny: said he assumed that Threemile knew about the proposed line.

Clint: responded that he thought it was referenced in the packet.

Commissioner Peterson: wanted to clarify that the proposed plan did not go through Jonathan's property and that it was a quarter mile from Jonathan and Cheryl's property.

Clint: responded that there is nothing proposed on Jonathan and Cheryl's property.

Chair Ekstrom asked if anyone had neutral testimony.

Commissioner Ayala wanted to clarify that the Parks and Recreation Department holds its meetings every fourth Tuesday of each month.

Chair Ekstrom asked if the Commission had any questions for Staff.

Commissioner Cooley: asked how much the Boardman's Park and Recreation Department been involved with this plan.

Clint: replied that in the year and a half he had worked with the Planning Department, they had been very involved via email, phone, and in person.

Director Mabbott: explained that the Irrigon and Boardman Parks and Recreation have been in communication with planning staff.

Commissioner Cooley: asked about the part of the trail that went from the tugboat down to the marina.

Clint: responded and explained. He also said he and George Shimer spoke yesterday to make sure both of their maps matched.

Chair Ekstrom asked if there were any further questions. There were none.

Chair Ekstrom asked if anyone would like to continue the hearing or hold the record open.

Jonathan responded yes.

Chair Ekstrom then closed the Public Hearing.

She then asked if the Planning Commission had any questions for the Staff; there were none.

Recommended Action: Recommend the Board of Commissioners Adopt the 2026 Morrow County Columbia River Heritage Trail Concept Plan, AC-163-26.

Motion: Recommend the Board of Commissioners Adopt the 2026 Morrow County Columbia River Heritage Trail Concept Plan, AC-163-26.

Motion by: Commissioner Cooley

Seconded by: Commissioner Ayala

Vote: All voted

Action: Approved

Other Business:

Correspondence: November/December Planning Update

Public Comment:

Adjourned: Meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held in Heppner, OR, in the Bartholomew Building.

**Respectfully submitted,
Michaela Ramirez**