

**Morrow County Land Use Hearing
February 18, 2026
Don Adams Conference Room, Irrigon Government Center
Irrigon, Oregon**

Present In Person Chair David Sykes, Commissioner Jeff Wenholz, Commissioner Gus Peterson, Matthew Jensen, Valerie Ballard, Tamra Mabbott, Clint Shoemake; non-staff: Aaron Palmquist, Carla McLane, Jonathan Tallman, Cheryl Tallman, Barrett Dash

Present Via Zoom Raymi Cain, Bobbi Childers; non-staff: Jennifer Bragar, Erika Morton, Terra King, Dawn Hert, Stephanie Case

Call to Order

1:31 p.m.

Public Hearing

Amend the County Comprehensive Plan and Co Adopt the City of Boardman Transportation System Plan (TSP) to apply to lands within the Urban Growth Boundary of the City of Boardman

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

Chair Sykes asked the Board if anyone had abstentions, conflicts of interest, or ex parte contact to which there were none.

Staff Report – Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

This is routine legislative action by the County at request of the City of Boardman, Co-adopting the city standards that will be used as guiding documents for property reviews. A few items were submitted after the packet was distributed last week:

1. Seven-page e-mail correspondence dated February 16 from Jonathan Tallman
2. E-mail correspondence with five attachments dated February 17 from Jonathan Tallman
3. E-mail correspondence dated February 18 from Jonathan Tallman.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to enter the exhibits as presented into the record.

Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

At the most recent meeting of the Planning Commission, the Commission did not take final action on this item as there was confusion about items in the record that may or may not be relevant. At one point during the meeting, Michaela Ramirez, Administrative Assistant, asked Mr. Tallman to confirm all his documents were in the packet, to which he confirmed.

Showing a proximity map on the monitors, Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director, explained that local property owner, Jonathan Tallman, questioned if his property would be affected by the Columbia River Heritage Trail (CRHT). The map showed Mr. Tallman's property is within city limits and CRHT is not within close proximity to his property.

Applicant Testimony

Carla McLane, Planning Official, and Brandon Hammond, City Manager, both with City of Boardman – 200 City Center Circle, Boardman, OR 97818

The City of Boardman applied for a grant through the Transportation and Growth Management Program (TGM) which was awarded after a second attempt. The City's requesting Morrow County adopt the City's TSP to make it applicable with the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) – or between the City limits line and the Urban Growth Boundary line.

The proposed Amendment addresses safety concerns and proposes both bicycle and pedestrian projects. The City followed three Statewide Planning Goals (1, 2, and 12) in the process. Planning Goal 1 (citizen involvement) the City appointed a public advisory committee, held an open house, and collaborated with planning commissions and the County. Goal 2 (land use planning) was met by following its own Comprehensive Plan as seen in supporting documents. Goal 12 addresses transportation, and while the City has a transportation plan in place, it is out of date and doesn't have the capacity to address growth seen around the City.

Proponent Testimony

No proponent testimony was provided.

Opponent Testimony

Cheryl Tallman, Boardman, Oregon

Ms. Tallman is owner of the Farmer's Cup on Laurel Lane and is representing her business and family. In 1978, she and her husband Terry moved to Boardman where Terry served as mayor and then county judge. She requested the record be held open under the 7-7-7 process (7 days to review, 7 days to respond, 7 days to ensure public record is complete).

Prior to his testimony beginning, Mr. Tallman stated he missed the opening of the hearing where conflicts of interest were raised and asked what was discussed. He requested Commissioner Wenholtz declare a conflict of interest and offered information on the utility information to support his request. Chair Sykes responded, explaining that citizens could request a conflict of interest, but ultimately it was up to the Commissioner. There is active litigation between Mr. Tallman's company, 1st John LLC, and Umatilla Electric Cooperative (UEC) and Commissioner Wenholtz who has fiduciary responsibility with UEC which conflicts with Mr. Tallman's corporation and land which will be adversely affected.

Mr. Tallman added when he submits material for the record, the digital record changes and isn't accurate.

Jonathan Tallman, Boardman, Oregon

Beginning his testimony, Mr. Tallman stated he received a letter of intent, not an ORS. 35 (eminent domain). Mr. Tallman went on to say whenever he asks questions, responses change and then get rescinded. It is in the record that the City said there are no zoning changes and Mr. Tallman also has information from the Public Utility Council (PUC), where they said it was unpermitted use, but it was permitted use and changed "right before our eyes".

The UGB is a comprehensive plan, subject to Goal 1 involvement and Goal 2 coordination and there is no Goal 2 compliance. For the record, Mr. Tallman submitted two public records requests sent to County Counsel, Justin Nelson, this morning for non-disclosure agreements between city representatives and Amazon.

City representatives have on record admitted that Amazon is funding this and Mr. Tallman is submitting administrative records regarding the County's proposal of co-adoption if the system plan and related comprehensive plan as well as adoption of recreation and Heritage Trail planning material. The City of Boardman has entered into the nondisclosures with the Parks Master Plan.

Mr. Tallman expressed concern that the County has not adopted independent findings, compliant with statewide planning goals and joint management.

He requested meeting documents from October, May 29 Planning Commission, December 2 County Planning Commissioner, January 7, 27th, February 28th, and relevant Boardman meetings discussing this and all versions and drafts of the Morrow County transportation system.

Barrett Dash, Irrigon, Oregon

Barrett Dash has lived in Morrow County for three years after moving from Central Oregon. He is concerned with the trajectory of growth in the area. The Columbia River Heritage Trail runs below powerlines, and Mr. Barrett doesn't think it's consistent with a healthy recreational experience, using Electro Magnetic Fields (EMF) from powerlines as an example.

Mr. Dash said the City's trajectory of growth should be managed, and there are many takeaways from the growth of Central Oregon. While he lived in Central Oregon from 1991-2022, Deschutes County population went from approximately 100,000 to 100,000 in the City of Bend and 250,000 in the entire county. He cautioned against outside interests and developers only interested in money increasing the cost of living for residents.

Neutral Testimony

No neutral testimony was provided

Rebuttal

Ms. McLane stated the request to keep the record open under 7-7-7 is not applicable to legislative hearings, only quasi-judicial matters. The TSP in its current form has been available since at least November 2025 with the watermark and adoption date being the only things to have changed. There is no eminent domain that is a part of the TSP, or forthcoming because of it. She also clarified that the State requires a 20-year plan, but it is to be updated throughout the duration.

Mr. Hammond added that most concerns raised aren't connected to the TSP which is becoming apparent. It is a well thought out plan that has received a lot of input in its development.

Mr. Tallman requested to hold the record open.

Commissioner Peterson asked staff if the plan is adopted, would future road development still need to go before the Planning Commission. Ms. Mabbott explained that it is still subject to permitting and going before the Planning Commission.

Erring on the side of caution, as no counsel was available, *Commissioner Peterson motioned to keep the record open for 7-7-7 as requested. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: 3 in favor (Sykes, Peterson, Wenholz). Motion carried.*

Commissioner Peterson motioned to continue the hearing on March 18, 1:30 p.m. in the Irrigon Government Center. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: 3 in favor (Peterson, Wenholz, Sykes) 0 opposed. Motion carried.

Recess

2:26 p.m.

Resume

2:29 p.m.

Adopt Updated Comprehensive Plan Goal 8 Recreation, Chapter 9, and Adopt the Updated Heritage Trail Concept Plan as an Appendix to Chapter 9

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

Chair Sykes read the opening statement and asked for abstentions, conflicts of interest, or ex parte communication. Mr. Tallman requested Commissioner Wenholz declare a conflict of interest due to his fiduciary responsibility to Umatilla Electric Coop.

Staff Report – Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director; Clint Shoemake, Planning Technician
The Goal 8 update and adopting the Heritage Trail Concept Plan was unanimously approved by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission participated in two work sessions and multiple outreach events were held.

Originally published in 2000, the Heritage Trail Plan's vision was to connect Gilliam and Umatilla Counties and has been updated to identify amenities, check alignment, and look for opportunities for connecting to county lines. This is a conceptual plan showing where trails may go in the future.

An overview map of the trail was shared. Colored lines indicate established trails in place from the trail's beginning, and dotted black lines indicate potential paths for the trail going through Port of Morrow and Three Mile Farms properties. Another map reviewed showed the trail is approximately one quarter mile north of Mr. Tallman's property in Boardman. There has been discussion about utilizing part of the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) easement for the

trail, but there is no intent to utilize the BPA easement to the East, running through the bottom of Mr. Tallman's property.

Proponent Testimony

No proponent testimony was provided

Opponent Testimony

Jonathan Tallman, Boardman, Oregon

Mr. Tallman began by telling Ms. Mabbott he would email his documents to her. Referencing the Statewide Planning Goal for Recreation, He said the County Comprehensive Plan Element Heritage Trail Concept, to the Morrow County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP uses capital funding, and stated once [the plan] is funded, it is no longer conceptual, but factual. Referencing the Boardman City Parks Master Plan and the Park and Recs Master plan, he pointed to figure 9-2 City Projects and Land Acquisition, saying that conceptually, the City of Boardman is already planning to develop on his property. Four years prior, Mr. Tallman received a \$30,000 offer for property, which he declined, and feels he is facing "inverse imminent domain" for this project.

Mr. Tallman requested transparency, stating City of Boardman officials signed non-disclosure agreements (NDA) with Amazon.

Neutral Testimony

No neutral testimony was provided

Rebuttal

Clint Shoemake, Planning Technician with Morrow County, clarified that there is an overlap between the Boardman Parks Master Plan and the Heritage Trail which is clearly defined in the Heritage Trail scope.

Mr. Tallman requested the hearing remain open.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to hold the record open until March 18 at 1:30 p.m. at the Irrigon Government Center. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: 3 in favor (Peterson, Wenholz, Sykes) 0 opposed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Wenholz then said the motion should more accurately reflect the 7-7-7 rule and then continue the hearing to March 18.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to rescind his previous motion. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: 3 in favor (Peterson, Wenholz, Sykes) 0 opposed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to hold the record open according to the 7-7-7- rule. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: 3 in favor (Peterson, Wenholz, Sykes), 0 opposed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to continue the hearing to March 18, 1:30 p.m. in the Irrigon Government Center. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: 3 in favor (Peterson, Wenholz, Sykes) 0 opposed. Motion carried.

Adjourn

2:56 p.m.