



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

1600 – 13th Avenue South
Kelso, WA 98626
TEL (360) 577-3030
FAX (360) 636-0845

www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/publicworks/

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Brad Bastin, County Engineer

SUBJECT: **Revise Private Roads section in Cowlitz County Road and Street Design Standards**

DATE: October 31, 2018

In order to clarify some areas of the private road standards located within the Cowlitz County Road and Street Design Standards, the Department of Public Works is updating its Cowlitz County Road and Street Design Standards (originally adopted under Resolution No. 99-054) by revising the standards as outlined below:

- Section 1.D Remove the specific types of Private roadways.
- Section 1.E Add a reference to the grading permit.
- Section 1.G Add the definition of the Private Road Types (A, B, C).
- Section 1.I Add a reference to the grading permit.
- Section 1.O Revise to reflect the current practice and responsibilities of sign installation.
- Section 2.C Add a reference to the grading and other applicable permits.

A copy of the revised 'Private Roads' section of the standards is attached.

Adoption of these amendments to the Cowlitz County Road and Street Design standards shall become effective November 6, 2018.

Signed: _____

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brad Bastin", is written over a horizontal line.

Brad Bastin
County Engineer

PRIVATE ROADS

County Public Road and Street Standards do not govern the routine maintenance of private driveways and private roads, including associated ditches and culverts, as long as said maintenance does not expand the driveway or road surface or adversely impact adjacent critical areas. Routine maintenance includes, without limitation, grading out potholes, resurfacing, mowing, re-establishing original ditch line, etc. However, such exemption does not include expanding or modifying any associated drainage system within or linked to a County rights-of-way.

I. General Standards

- A. **Permitting.** It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to construct a new private roadway or alter an existing private roadway or to cause the same to be done without first obtaining a permit for such roadway construction or alteration from the County Engineer. The periodic cleaning and resurfacing of the roadway shall not be considered an alteration and shall not require a permit as long as the specifications under which the roadway was approved are not modified.
- B. **Review.** No private roadway permit or final approval shall be granted unless roadway plans have been submitted to the County Engineer. Plans for private roadways shall be prepared and stamped by a civil engineer licensed to practice in the State of Washington and according to the "Standard Plans for Road and Bridge Construction" as published by the Washington State Department of Transportation and the American Public Works Association, and shall include appropriate erosion control and storm water measures. Two copies of such plans and associated information shall be provided to include a site plan, vicinity map, road plan profile and road cross-section with catch points at 50-foot intervals along the roadway. In addition to the above information, the plans shall be in sufficient detail to demonstrate compliance with all applicable standards of this chapter.
- C. **Plan review fee.** A plan review fee shall be paid for the review and approval of private roadways at the time of application and plan submittal. Permit and plan review fees shall be established from time to time by resolution by the Board.
- D. **Compliance with Minimum Standards and Requirement.** No permit for a private roadway shall be issued unless the proposed roadway is in conformance with these minimum standards and requirements. Unless specifically indicated otherwise, the private roadway standards shall apply to all classifications of private roadways.
- E. **Compliance with Other Regulations and Requirements.** No private roadway permit shall be issued unless and until compliance with other applicable permit requirements and regulations is attained, except as may be permitted by the County Engineer when the sequence of land development activities dictate otherwise. At no time, shall a private road be allowed to start construction prior to obtaining a grading permit when applicable. Private roads shall be accessible at all times for emergency and public service vehicle use, provided: the County Building Official and County Fire Marshal are authorized to approve

alternate materials or methods of compliance, or to modify standards pursuant to local authority under the state fire code for purposes of such ingress and egress.

- F. **Consistency with Comprehensive Plan.** The proposed private road must provide safe and convenient access, promote orderly development, and meet the access requirements for the Comprehensive Plan land use classification.
- G. **Maximum** No individual private road shall serve more than 50 lots, parcels or dwelling units. A Type A road shall provide access to 20 or more lots, parcels, or dwelling units, Type B shall provide access to at least 10 but less than 20 lots, parcels, dwelling units, and a Type C shall provide access to at least 3 but less than 10 lots, parcels or dwelling units. Commercial uses may only be served by a private road if total trips on the private road are less than 500 ADT, the County Engineer approves the use, and the road is improved to a standard appropriate for the traffic proposed, but no less than a Type B paved roadway.
- H. **Easements/Rights-of-Way.** Private roads shall have a minimum easement or right-of-way width of 60 feet. Easements or right-of-way widths shall be expanded in width as may be necessary to include all cuts and fill slopes for the roadway and turnouts or turnarounds as may be required by this chapter. Proof of access rights shall be required prior to approval of any private roadway.
- I. **Grading.** All filling and grading associated with the construction of a private road shall be conducted in accordance with the Cowlitz County Code, an approved grading permit when required, and the most current 'Standard Specifications for Road, Bridge and Municipal Construction' by the Washington State Department of Transportation. A geotechnical report shall be provided for any grading which will incorporate cutting or filling in excess of five feet, cut slopes in excess of one vertical to one and one-half horizontal, or fill slopes in excess of one vertical to two horizontal. Such report shall identify materials to be used, compaction rates and methods, maximum allowable slopes, and erosion control measures as they apply. Changes in vertical profile greater than one percent shall be designed and constructed with a vertical curve meeting standard design criteria.
- J. **Turnarounds.** Turnarounds shall be provided at the end of all private roadways in excess of 150 feet long and at 1,000-foot intervals along the length of a private roadway where no intersecting roadway exists. Turnarounds may be arranged as cul-de-sacs having a minimum radius of 50 feet, or a three point turnaround with each leg having a minimum 20-foot wide driving surface. Each leg shall have a length from centerline of the roadway of not less than 60 feet and in no case less than 30 feet beyond the turning radius. All interior corners utilized in the creation of a turnaround shall have a minimum radius of 25 feet.
- K. **Roadway Width and Surface.** The finished driving surface shall be a gravel or paved surface at all points along the roadway with a minimum width of 20 feet for Type B and Type C roadways, except within areas classified in the Cowlitz County Land Use Ordinance

and/or Cowlitz County Comprehensive Plan as urban or suburban the finished driving surface shall be paved. Type A roadways shall meet current specifications for county public roadways.

- L. **Maximum Grade.** The maximum permitted gradient for a Type B or Type C road is 12 percent for a gravel surface and 15 percent for a paved surface. Transitions in surface materials shall be made at the least possible grade attainable beyond the area that requires paving.
- M. **Loading Design Standard.** Type B roadways shall be constructed to a standard of HS-25 loading. Type C roadways shall be constructed to a load design of 70,000 pounds.
- N. **Drainage.** A drainage report, stamped by a civil engineer licensed in the State of Washington, shall be provided as part of the plans submitted for Type A and Type B roadways. The drainage report shall be written in accordance with the Cowlitz County Stormwater Drainage Manual.
- O. **Signs.** Private roadways shall be designated by a sign stating the proper name of the road. Street name signs shall be installed at all intersections and shall be designed, installed and maintained in accordance with the requirements set forth by WSDOT, Cowlitz County Building and Planning and Cowlitz County Public Works.
 - a. County and City Roadways – Cowlitz County Public Works, or individual municipalities owning the existing public ROW, will install street naming signs at the intersection with existing public roads.
 - b. State Highways – The developer shall be responsible for fabrication and erecting street name signs at the intersection of private roads and a state highway or any ROW owned by WSDOT in accordance with WSDOT standards and requirements.
 - c. Private Roads – The developer shall be responsible for fabricating and erecting street name signs at the intersection of two private roads in accordance with these requirements:
 - i. Signs shall be constructed of not less than .063 gauge aluminum sheets with white reflective background and shall be readable from both sides of the sign:
 - ii. The sign copy area shall be nine inches in height and range in width from 18 to 30 inches. The actual width of the sign will vary due to the length of the road name.
 - iii. The roadway name shall be printed in bold, black four-inch block letters.
 - iv. The term “private road” shall be printed in black two-inch block letters and centered along the width of the sign below the road name.
 - v. There shall be one-inch spacing at the top, bottom and between lines of text on the sign.
 - vi. The sign shall be installed on a steel post. The vertical distance from the road elevation to the bottom of the sign face shall be seven feet with a minimum bury of three feet. The sign shall be located according to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Design.

P. Intersections. Intersections with other roadways shall be constructed as follows:

- a. **Other Private Roadways.** Intersections with other private roadways shall be constructed per the most restrictive requirements of the two intersecting roads for a length of at least 50 feet in each direction and shall be made as level as possible. Inside turning radii for these intersections shall be not less than 25 feet.
- b. **County Roadways.** Intersections with county roadways shall be designed and constructed as follows:
 - i. The interior approach angle of intersections shall be kept as near to 90 degrees as possible and in no case be less than 75 degrees.
 - ii. A maximum gradient of plus/minus four percent shall be maintained for a minimum of 20 feet outside the county road edge of pavement.
 - iii. The approaching roadway structural section shall consist of the following: four inches of asphalt pavement placed in two lifts, over three inches of crushed surfacing top course, over nine inches of crushed surface base course, and underlain with construction geotextile fabric for soil stabilization. This section shall be carried a minimum of 50 feet outside the county road edge of pavement. The paved width at this section shall be 24 feet with one-foot gravel shoulders minimum. The minimum roadway width of 26 feet, roadway and shoulders, may be increased on Type A roadways.
 - iv. The minimum radius at edge of pavement shall be 25 feet.
- c. **State Roadways.** Intersections with state roadways shall at a minimum comply with the requirements for county intersections above and shall require approval by the Washington State Department of Transportation prior to construction.
- d. **Intersection sight distance.** All intersections governed by this section, shall provide adequate sight distance per standard design criteria. This may require improvements to the county, state or intersecting private roadway road by the developer.

Q. Bridges. Any bridge shall be designed and constructed to the most current version of the WSDOT (Washington State Department of Transportation) Design Manual and the AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Official) LRFD Bridge Design Specifications. All bridges shall be approved by the Cowlitz County Building Official and the County Engineer.

II. Duties and Responsibilities

A. Maintenance. Private roads shall be maintained in accordance with these standards by a capable and legally responsible owner or homeowner's association, or other legal entity or legally responsible party for all benefited property owners. The term "benefited property owners" shall include the owners of record and their successors in interest on all properties with frontage, including access rights, on the private road or otherwise have legal access, whether constructed or not, to the private road in accordance with land development approvals. A private maintenance covenant recorded with the County

Auditor and addressing the rights and responsibilities of all benefited property owners will be required for any private road. The covenant shall set out the distribution of expenses, remedies for noncompliance with the terms of the agreement, right of use easements and other considerations. Prior to recording, the covenant shall be submitted to the Building and Planning Department for review to assure the following terms are included:

- a. The covenant shall establish minimum annual assessments in an amount adequate to defray costs of ordinary maintenance and procedures for approval of additional needed assessments.
 - b. The covenant shall include a periodic maintenance schedule.
 - c. The covenant for maintenance shall be enforceable by any property owner served by the road.
 - d. The covenant shall establish a formula for assessing maintenance and repair costs equitably to property owners served by the private road.
 - e. The covenant shall run with the land for so long as the private road is used to serve one or more of the lots subject to the covenant.
 - f. "Maintenance" shall include, but not be limited to, road surfacing, shoulders, signs, storm drainage facilities and vegetation control.
- B. Notice.** The following statement is required on the face of any permit approval, site plan, or binding site plan or within the developer covenants to the County for any subdivision or short plat containing a private road: "Cowlitz County has no responsibility to monitor, improve or maintain the private roads contained within or private roads providing access to the property described in this development. Any private access driveway, road or street shall remain a private responsibility unless it is upgraded to a public street or road standards at the expense of the developer or abutting lot owners to include hard surface paving and is accepted by the county for public ownership and continued maintenance."
- C. Construction.** No construction shall begin until the plans have been reviewed by the County Engineer and approved, a grading and all other appropriate permits have been obtained, and all erosion control and storm water measures are in place. The Department of Public Works shall be notified not less than 48 hours prior to the start of any construction.
- D. Unopened right-of-way.** In various locations throughout the County there are portions of dedicated or deeded public road right-of-ways that have not been officially opened and established as county roads by the County or vacated by the County. From time to time, there is a desire by individuals or corporations to utilize said unopened County right-of-way for road access to private property. The County has provided for such requesting such use through Cowlitz County Code Chapter 12.30. The standards and information contained within this section are to provide assistance and clarification of said Code chapter in relation to such rights-of-way; should there be any conflict between the Code and these standards, the Code shall prevail. Nothing in this section should be construed as to allow other than road purposes for ingress and egress to private lands by permissive use of an unopened county right-of-way.