

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Department of Public Works



ST. HELENS, OR 97051

1054 Oregon St.
Direct (503) 397-5090
Fax (503) 397-7215
publicworks@co.columbia.or.us
www.co.columbia.or.us

To: Board of County Commissioners
From: Michael Russell, Public Works Director, Roadmaster
Date: November 21, 2025

Subject: Road Vacation request for a portion of Meissner Road, Deer Island

Road Official's Report

Clinton and Ashlyn Teele have petitioned the Board of County Commissioners to vacate a portion of County Road P-222, Meissner Road (approximately 569 feet at centerline, approximately 60 feet wide). Please see the attached Petition for Vacation ("Petition") that includes all of their submitted Exhibits.

This petition was filed pursuant to the process outlined in ORS 368.341. This report is submitted in response to the petition pursuant to ORS 368.346. Since the petitioners did not submit consent forms from one hundred percent of the abutting property owners, a hearing by the county governing body on this proposed vacation is necessary.

The portion of road proposed to be vacated is legally described in Exhibit A of the attached Petition and is depicted in the subsequent exhibit map. It is generally described a corner of the former Meissner Road alignment as it was prior to 1947, between tax lot 6336-00-01700 and tax lot 6336-00-01800.

This portion is more particularly described as:

A portion of County Road P-222 (Meissner Road) located in the Southeast corner of section 36, Township 6 North, Range 3 West, of the Willamette Meridian, Columbia County, Oregon.

The vacation of this portion of the right-of-way will improve the Teeles' options for access to their property (tax lot 6336-00-01700). Without this vacation, any construction of private access or infrastructure that would be within the right-of-way of Meissner Road could trigger additional development requirements.

Notice Posted

Notice of a public hearing regarding this vacation was posted at the site of the proposed vacation on Meissner Road; at the Columbia County Public Works Department, located at 1054 Oregon Street, Saint Helens, OR 97051; and at the Columbia County Courthouse, located at 230 Strand Street, Saint Helens, OR 97051.

Notice of a public hearing regarding this vacation was published in the Columbia County Spotlight on October 31, 2025, and November 21, 2025.

The posting and publishing of this notice meets the requirements of ORS 368.401 to ORS 368.426.

Analysis and Recommendation

Every vacation request has distinct circumstances and should be reviewed thoroughly; however, in general, the Public Works Director does not favor vacating public rights-of-way as a matter of public interest. Once right-of-way is vacated, it is difficult to reacquire, if needed, and must follow prescribed processes that ensure fair value is given in compensation for the acquisition.

In this case, the proposed vacation of this portion of Meissner Road would not hinder the development of or access to any other properties in the area, and it will not landlock any parcels.

Columbia County, similar to other counties in Oregon, has extensive amounts of unused right-of-way – that is, right-of-way that was dedicated for road purposes, but which was never developed or has fallen into disuse. The reasons for this are varied: some is the legacy of subdivisions that never came to fruition, while others represent old road sections that were replaced or which became redundant with the opening of alternative routes. While the origins of these right-of-way segments vary, they can impact development and access to adjacent parcels.

For instance, development within public right-of-way often requires specific permitting from the Public Works Department, as well as restrictions on fixed objects, including fencing and structures. Development along undeveloped right-of-way can also trigger different access standards or construction of road infrastructure. Where the right-of-way is for a County road, this raises questions of maintenance obligations between the property owners and the County.

All of these difficulties are present in the section of right-of-way proposed to be vacated. As described in the exhibits to the Proposal, this portion of right-of-way is an old alignment for Meissner Road that has since been replaced when the road was straightened in 1956. This portion of right-of-way is no longer in use by the County road system for road purposes.

Therefore, I find that there is no compelling need for the right-of-way of this portion of Meissner Road to remain and support the vacation request.

In the interest of the public, I recommend that the request for vacating this section of Meissner Road be approved.