

Planning Commission Workshop



Community Development • 125 Chehalis, Avenue, Chehalis, WA 98532 • Phone: (360) 740-1146

STAFF REPORT

DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO LEWIS COUNTY CODE

Date: September 3, 2024
Staff: Mindy Brooks, Director, Community Development
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SUMMARY

Currently, all private road reviews are processed through Lewis County Public Works. To streamline the permitting process, staff from Public Works and Community Development are recommending shifting some private road review and approvals from the County Engineer to the Building Official, or their designee. (Note – This does not apply to public roads, only private roads.)

DESCRIPTION

A private road is defined as “private vehicular access provided by an access tract, easement, or other legal means to serve property that is privately owned and maintained.” The design of the roadway varies depending on the projected average daily traffic volume as contained in Standard Detail 3-2, Rural Road Section, for paved and unpaved roadways, contained within [Chapter 12.60, Road Development Standards](#). The required design level is determined based upon number of building lots potentially served by the road.

Detailed plans must be prepared by an engineer. The applicant is responsible for procuring engineering services. The plans, reports, basin maps, and calculations shall be signed, sealed, and dated by the applicant’s engineer. The county reviews the submitted materials to ensure that the LCC standards are met.

The Lewis County Fire Marshall also reviews private roads to ensure that life and safety requirements are met. This may include confirmation with the Fire District that emergency vehicles will be able to access the private road, as is required by Chapter 12.60. Currently the Lewis County Building Official and Fire Marshall are the same staff person.

It is common practice to have staff reviewing documents provided by licensed professionals, including engineers, to determine if standards are met. Staff review building plans, geotechnical reports, wetland delineations and other technical documents. Shifting the review of private roads to the Building Official is in keeping with common and normal practice.

This change would streamline the process because instead of needing both the County Engineer and the Building Official/Fire Marshall to review private roads, only the Building Official would need to provide review.

The County Engineer would continue to serve as the third-party reviewer and the Building Official could assign a review task to the County Engineer if there are any questions about the plans meeting standards. In addition, The County Engineer would still be required to approve deviations from the standards and review private roads that are a part of a full subdivision.

NEXT STEPS

The draft code amendments will be provided to the Planning Commission on September 30, with an anticipated public hearing on October 8. Staff will provide a presentation before the hearing to review the draft code amendments with the commissioners and the public.

After close of the public hearing, the Planning Commission may deliberate and vote to transmit the proposed amendments to the Board of County Commission. After the Board of County Commissioners reviews the proposal, they will hold a public hearing before voting to adopt the amendments.