

Q. I live on a county road within a city. Why isn't my street a city street?

A. When land is annexed to a city, the jurisdiction for many government services becomes the city's; however, some roads and streets are an exception. County roads do not automatically become city streets upon annexation. The city must formally accept the street as part of its system. (Local access roads, on the other hand, automatically come under city jurisdiction.)

Q. I live on a public road that the county does not maintain. Can my road become a county road?

If a public road can be brought to county standards for right of way width, base course, width of roadway surface, and so on, then it can be considered to be accepted as a county road and be maintained by the county. The local landowners are responsible for bringing the road up to these standards. After this is done, the County Board of Commissioners will consider the request, and make a decision either to accept or not accept the road.

Q. I am considering buying property on a private or local access road; what are my responsibilities?

You are responsible for all road maintenance along your property. This includes things like fixing potholes, gravelling the road, trimming or cleaning away roadside brush, dust control in the summer, etc.

Q. My property is part of a Road District. What does this mean?

A Road Districts are made up of private landowners who group together to maintain the roads serving their property that are not maintained by the county. Each road district has a district board, appointed by the County Board of Commissioners. The district has the power to levy taxes for road maintenance. The district board then determines what road maintenance is necessary, and how to spend the tax money that is collected.

Q. I own property with an unimproved road through it. Can I obtain title to this unused strip of land?

Possibly. To vacate a road, the County Board of Commissioners must find that there is no public need for the road, and that no one's access to the property would be cut off by the vacation. You must petition for the vacation to be considered, and pay a fee to initiate the process.

BENTON COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS

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Brief History of Roads

In 1846, when the county began to be settled, the typical means of travel was by horse or wagon drawn by horses or oxen. The road was where one wished to travel. The first roads were not established until after the organization of the County in 1850, and the increasing number of farms needing access to markets. Their location was determined by the topography and climate of the area. Accordingly, Road No. 1, which generally followed the current location of



Bellfountain Road, was established in the foothills above the wet valley floor. The rapid expansion of a network of roads to all settled parts of the county was made possible through

the collective investment of the communities served. The county paid wages of a road supervisor, but each man along a road was assessed a road poll tax to be paid in cash or labor. Today a majority of the funds for road maintenance comes from the county's share of motor fuel tax and vehicle registration fees collected by the state.

Types of Roads

There are several different types of roads in Benton County, and they fall into two main categories: Public and Private.

Public Roads

Public roads are designed for public use, as the name suggests. All public roads in the county are under Benton County jurisdiction and all work on them requires a county permit. The county sets the standards and specifications for any road work, and issues permits for driveways, utility installations, or any work done in the right of way. The "right of way" includes the travel surface, shoulders, drainage ditches, and utility lines (such as electricity, telephone, gas, water, sewer, and cable TV). There are two different kinds of public roads: county and Local Access.

County Road: A county road is a road that has been accepted into the County Road System. They are typically higher volume roads than local access roads. The County Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining 275 paved and 170 gravel miles of county roads.

Local Access Road: A local access road is a road that has *not* been accepted into the County Road System, but *has* been dedicated to the public. Their main function is to provide access to individual properties. The local landowners are responsible for maintaining local access roads. There are several miles of local access roads.

Private Roads

A private road is a road that is *not* dedicated for public use. This includes private driveways and roads which serve as access to three or more residences. Private *easements* between people can be established also, allowing the easement owner to pass across the landowner's land. All private roads are maintained by the local landowners.

Other types of Roads

Other types of roads in Benton County include state highways, city streets, and federal forest roads. For information on these roads, call the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), City of Corvallis Public Works, Bureau of Land Management, or the Forest Service.

Commonly Asked Questions

Q. What type of road do I live on?

The road number is printed on the front of every street sign. Private roads have 4-digit numbers (3075) and public roads have 5-digit numbers (15390). If the number has a "P" in front (P14110), then it is a local access road. (No "P" means it is a County Road.)

Q. What difference does road status make?

The primary difference is in who is responsible for maintaining the road: state, county, city or local property owners. The status also affects who must be contacted about permits for work done in the right of way.