

Staff Report

April 3, 2024

To: Gearhart Planning Commission

From: Garrett Phillips, AICP City Planner

City File: #24-01 - 2024 Road Naming Procedures and Standards

Local governments use procedures and standards in naming roads to ensure that emergency responders can use road names effectively, to ensure that road names are recorded and mapped consistently, and to ensure that adjacent owners and occupants have an opportunity to participate in road naming.

Typically, new road names are assigned through the subdivision or partition process. Occasionally the City of Gearhart needs to name a road outside of the subdivision and partition process, for example when a new development accessed by an unnamed road increases the number of dwellings served to three or more dwellings or when it is discovered that an existing road name duplicates or is so similar to an existing road name that it can confuse emergency responders.

Staff requests Planning Commission's guidance on procedures and standards for naming roads outside of the subdivision and partition process:

- 1) Use ORS 227.120 alone as the City's framework for naming roads
- 2) Use ORS 227.120 and customize Clatsop County road naming standards for naming roads
 - a. If using the County standards, whether to adopt them by ordinance or use them as administrative procedure
 - b. If using the County standards, guidance on their customization

ORS 227.120 Procedure and approval for renaming streets provides a basic procedural framework for road naming. Clatsop County Title 12 provides an example of additional procedures and standards that the City may consider customizing and either adopting as an ordinance or assuming as administrative procedure. ORS 227.120 is provided below.

ORS 227.120 Procedure and approval for renaming streets

Within six miles of the limits of any city, the commission, if there is one, or if no such commission legally exists, then the city engineer, shall recommend to the city council the renaming of any existing street, highway or road, other than a county road or state highway, if in the judgment of the commission, or if no such commission legally exists, then in the judgment of the city engineer, such renaming is in the best interest of the city and the six mile area. Upon receiving such recommendation the council shall afford persons particularly interested, and the general public, an opportunity to be heard, at a time and place to be specified in a notice of hearing published in a newspaper of general circulation within the municipality and the six mile area not less than once within the week prior to the week within which the hearing is to be held. After such opportunity for hearing has been afforded, the city council by ordinance shall rename the street or highway in accordance with the recommendation or by resolution shall reject the recommendation. A certified copy of each such ordinance shall be filed for record with the county clerk or recorder, and a like copy shall be filed with the county assessor and county surveyor. The county surveyor shall enter the new names of such streets and roads in red ink on the county surveyor's copy of any filed plat and tracing thereof which may be affected, together with appropriate notations concerning the same. The original plat may not be corrected or changed after it is recorded with the county clerk.

Following is a draft procedure based on Clatsop County's Title 12 procedures that the City of Gearhart may consider using:

12.16.080 Unnamed roads.

Each unnamed private road or public road shall be assigned a name in accordance with this procedure if:

- A. The road provides access to three or more buildings; or
- B. The City determines that assigning a name is necessary in order to adequately direct emergency service providers.

12.16.090 Procedures for naming new roads.

- A. The naming of a road may be initiated by the City, or by application of adjacent property owners, developers, or public agencies which may be affected by road names.
- B. An application to name a road shall be submitted to the City and shall include, at a minimum, the following:
 - 1. The name of the applicant;
 - 2. The location of road by description and map;
 - 3. The legal status of road, if known;
 - 4. The proposed road name, with two alternatives;
 - 5. The reason for the name request;
 - 6. The original of any petition;
 - 7. An application fee as established by City Council; and
 - 8. Names and addresses of property owners having access to the road.
- C. Notice of a proposed name assignment shall be sent by the Department to all persons owning property abutting the affected road or having an address on the affected road. The notice shall be sent within 30 days of the receipt of an application or other action initiating the proposed name assignment.
- D. Persons receiving notice shall promptly notify any tenants or other occupants of the affected property of the proposed name assignment.
- E. Any person receiving notice under subsection C or D of this section may comment in writing on the proposed name within ten days from the date of the notice.
- F. The proposed name shall:
 - 1. Not duplicate existing road names, except for continuations of existing roads.
 - 2. Not sound so similar to other road names as to be confusing.

3. Be limited to a maximum of 15 letters and three words, excluding the suffix indicator; i.e., “Road,” “Lane,” “Loop” or “Drive.”
4. Improve or clarify the identification of the area.
5. Be an historical name or theme name when appropriate.
6. Reflect a consensus of affected owners and occupants when possible, subject to the other standards contained in this subsection.

G. In the following circumstances, a proposed road name shall generally conform to the following additional standards:

1. Roads running in a generally north-south direction shall be called “roads.” Roads running in a generally east-west direction shall be called “lanes.”
2. Roads dead-ending in a turnaround 1,000 feet or less from their beginning points may be called “courts.”
3. Roads of reduced right-of-way or curving roads of less than 1,000 feet may be called “drives.”
4. Roads that begin at and circle back onto the same road, or that are circular or semicircular, may be called “circles” or “loops.”
5. Road designator abbreviations for new and existing roads shall conform to the current standards established by the National Emergency Number Association (NENA).

H. The City shall review road name applications and shall assign a road name after performing the following procedures:

1. Verifying applicant’s compliance with this chapter.
2. Verifying the legal status of the road with the County Clerk’s office, County Assessor’s office, and County Public Works Department.
3. Verifying that the proposed road name will not duplicate or be confusingly similar to another existing road name, with a road name on an approved preliminary land division, or with a road name approved for future use.
4. Performing a field check when necessary.
5. Assisting the applicant or other affected persons to find alternative names when required.
6. Reviewing and considering all comments submitted.

I. Following the assignment of a proposed name by the City, the City shall send notice of the assigned road name to all persons entitled to notice under subsection C of this section.

J. Affected property owners and occupants shall have the right to appeal the proposed road name to the City Council. An appeal pursuant to this subsection must be filed within ten days from the date of the notice provided under subsection I of this section.

K. If an appeal is timely filed pursuant to subsection J of this section, the City Council shall conduct a public hearing on the matter. All interested persons may appear at the public hearing and be heard. The issue on appeal shall be limited to whether the City correctly applied the criteria set forth in this section. If the City Council finds that the City properly applied the criteria set forth in this section, the City Council shall enter an order of approval.

L. If no appeal is timely filed pursuant to subsection J or upon entry of an order of the City Council, the road name shall be deemed approved. The City Council shall send notice of the approval to the applicant requesting the road name, each affected property owner, the County Assessor's office, the County Clerk's office, the County Planning Department, the County Public Works Department, each affected telephone and other utility company, the affected fire department, each affected emergency agency, the United States Post Office, affected school district and adjacent urban jurisdictions.

M. Affected property owners and occupants shall have 90 days from the date of approval of a proposed road name to begin using the road name.

12.16.100 Procedures and standards for changing existing road names.

The procedures and standards for naming roads shall apply to the changing of existing road names, in addition to the following procedures and standards:

A. An existing road name may be changed by the City if the existing name:

1. Duplicates a pre-existing road name;
2. Sounds like or is spelled so similarly to a pre-existing road name as to cause confusion between the two roads;
3. Is known by more than one name;
4. Is different than the name of the road that it is a continuation of; or
5. Is not consistent with City road naming standards.

B. In choosing which road name to change as between two roads with the same or similar names, the City shall consider the following factors:

1. The number of properties, developed and undeveloped, abutting each affected road;
2. The length of time a name has been in use to designate each affected road and whether the name used to designate each affected road has any historic significance;
3. Whether one affected road as named is relatively better known by the general public than the other affected road as named; and
4. Any showing that a proposed road name change would be relatively more burdensome to abutting property owners than if another affected road name were changed