



**PLANNING COMMISSION
Draft Meeting Notes February 18, 2026**

<u>Commissioners present:</u>	Kathryn Schulte-Hillen, David D. Jones, Gary Walvatne, Kris Kachirisky, Liz Dietz, Tom Watton, and Jason Evans.
<u>Staff present:</u>	Community Development Director Steve Koper, City Attorney Ashleigh Dougill, Planning Manager Darren Wyss, Associate Planner Aaron Gudelj, Management Analyst Lynn Schroder
<u>Applicant Present:</u>	Jeff Dunn, Scott Edwards Architecture, Sid Scott, Scott Edwards Architecture, Alex Simpson, HHPR Civil Engineering, Matt Bell, Kittelson Engineers, Najib Kalas, geotechnical engineer, Kimberely Larson, Skansa Construction, Lucas Melac, and West Linn Public Works Director Erich Lais
<u>Public present:</u>	William Relyea, David Dodds, Michael Kapigian, and Jeannie Thompson

The meeting video is available on [here](#).

1. Call To Order and Roll Call

Chair Schulte-Hillen called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Management Analyst Schroder called the roll.

2. Public Comment related to Land Use Items not on the agenda

None.

3. Public Hearing (Quasi-Judicial) Continued from Feb. 4, 2026: [CUP-25-02/DR-25-02/WAP-25-01 Proposal for New City of West Linn Operations Support Facility at the vacant parcel east of the Salamo Road/Greene Street intersection](#)

Chair opened the public hearing for **CUP-25-02/DR-25-02/WAP-25-01** for a Conditional Use Permit, Class II Design Review, and Water Resource Area Permit at 23800 and 23834 Salamo Road that was continued from the previous public hearing on February 4, 2026. She provided an overview of the hearing process.

City Attorney Dougill addressed legal standards and appeal rights. The substantive criteria that apply to the application are Community Development Code (CDC) Chapters 11, 32, 41, 42, 46, 48, 55, 60, 96, and 99.

Dougill addressed Planning Commission conflicts of interest, ex-parte contacts, jurisdiction, and bias challenges. No member declared conflicts of interest, bias, or ex-parte contacts. Commissioner Evans stated that he is familiar with the site because he drives on Salamo Road. He stated that he can be impartial in his decision making on the matter. Dougill asked if any audience member wished to challenge the PC's jurisdiction, impartiality, or ex-parte disclosures of any members of the PC. No challenges were made.

Dougill provided additional guidance on legal and procedural requirements to assist the Commission in its review. It was clarified that, although the City is both the applicant and the reviewer, these roles are separate: the applicant is the Public Works team, while staff and the Planning Commission serve as the reviewing body. She noted that purpose statements in the code describe intent but are not approval criteria. The Commission must base its decision solely on applicable approval standards, not on general purpose language or application completeness. She also explained that the completeness review is a staff-level determination and separate from the Commission's decision-making role. The Commission was advised that decisions must be grounded in the specific criteria of the code, with all findings tied to those

standards. Finally, Dougill emphasized that any decision must be supported by substantial evidence in the record—meaning evidence a reasonable person would rely on and that is consistent with applicable state laws and planning goals.

Associate Planner Aaron Gudelj summarized the proceedings to date. The Planning Commission is continuing a hearing from February 4 regarding a proposed City Operations Facility, the public record remained open from February 4 to February 18, with additional written and in-person comments received. Staff have reorganized the application to improve usability by separating technical reports (e.g., geotechnical, water resources, stormwater, tree preservation).

He noted that received public testimony raised concerns about transportation impacts, particularly the absence of a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA), as well as concerns about operational noise and consistency with Comprehensive Plan policies.

The applicant's transportation assessment Exhibit PCE showed that the trips associated with the existing facility were below the 250-trip recommended threshold to require a TIA and that Salamo Road was operating a level of service A. Similarly, the existing operation site does not exceed DEQ noise standards and is currently located closer to noise sensitive uses than the proposed facility. The proposed facility is expected to operate at the same level and there is not any specific noise-generating use or activity that has been shown in evidence to exceed DEQ standards. He clarified that neither a TIA nor a noise study is required for approval under the applicable standards; however, in response to these concerns, the applicant has voluntarily agreed to prepare and submit both a Traffic Impact Analysis and a noise study.

Public testimony also raised several additional concerns, including geotechnical stability, zoning, tree preservation, natural resources, stormwater management, and the history of the site's purchase.

Staff addressed concerns about a historic landslide from the I-205 construction. Community Development Director Steve Koper stated that the DOGAMI (Department of Geology and Mineral Industries) maps are not regulatory and contain notes in the legend that the determinations on the map are not site specific, and so they should not be taken as dispositive. Additionally, Koper noted that the applicant provided site specific geotechnical analysis (Exhibit PCJ) demonstrating that the site is safe to build on and is not subject to the risk of future landslides. The geotechnical report provided evidence that the site is stable and suitable for development, noting the historic landslide was man-made. Additionally, staff noted that ODOT's prior ownership and sale of the property suggest confidence in its stability.

Commissioner Walvatne disagreed that the state maps are merely informational. He pointed out that they are incorporated into the West Linn Development Code under Section 32.05.D, which requires review of soil maps and DOGAMI maps. Because these maps are referenced in the code, he stated that they can be used for slope-hazard evaluations in West Linn and be used for review and approval of the proposed project. Further he stated that the code states that a geotechnical study may be required to demonstrate that a proposed development will not cause or contribute to slope failure, and that the study must include all necessary measures to avoid or correct any potential hazard. He stated that, at this stage, those corrective measures are unknown, and a second geotechnical investigation would be needed to determine what they are.

Najib A. Kalas, PE Principal Engineer testified that the geotechnical analysis for the site followed industry-standard geotechnical practices for safety factors and seismic considerations. Additional site-specific seismic studies will be conducted to inform design decisions to mitigate potential hazards from earthquakes during the site development and building permit phase. He stated that a geotechnical engineer would be present on-site during construction to observe excavation and make recommendations.

Questions about zoning were clarified by confirming the site is zoned R-10 (low-density residential), where the proposed use is conditionally allowed. Staff explained that previously vacated right-of-way automatically adopts the zoning of adjacent land.

Tree-related concerns were addressed by confirming no heritage trees are present, with conditions requiring tree protection and on-site arborist monitoring. Natural resource impacts to the wetlands and stream were analyzed, with required mitigation and state approval. Stormwater concerns were addressed through submitted plans and a condition for a final report. Additional context was also provided regarding the City's 2021 property purchase. Overall, staff found the project meets conditional use, design review, and environmental standards, with mitigation and conditions ensuring compliance.

Additionally, staff noted that the applicant has demonstrated compliance with the applicable approval criteria of chapter 32, Water Resources Areas.

New and revised conditions of approval include:

- On-site project arborist during tree removal
- Compliance with DEQ standards
- Final geotechnical report before building permits
- State Lands approval for wetland/stream mitigation
- Voluntary applicant commitments:
 - Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA)
 - Noise Study

Staff answered Commissioners questions.

Applicant team member Sid Scott clarified that their testimony is not introducing new information but providing additional explanation on key topics, including project need, site selection, geotechnical conditions, environmental management, construction logistics, noise, and traffic. He noted that site acquisition and site selection went to the City Council on July 12, 2021 with the intended purpose of acquiring the surplus property owned by Oregon Department of Transportation to be used for future construction of a new operations facility, and that passed five to zero.

Public Works Director Erich Lais explained that the existing public works facility is outdated, undersized, and inadequate for current operations serving a much larger population, lacking essential space, equipment capacity, and emergency response functionality. The selected site was chosen for its size, location outside residential areas, proximity to emergency routes, and natural buffering.

Geotechnical Engineer Najib Kalas confirmed the site is stable and suitable for development despite a historic man-made landslide, with modern engineering ensuring safety. Stormwater will be treated, detained, and released at or below existing rates, while wetlands and streams will be protected with buffer mitigation and restoration of native vegetation.

Alex Simpson, PE discussed stormwater control. He stated that the project's post-construction stormwater management will meet approval criteria by filtering runoff, detaining it, and releasing it at a rate equal to or less than existing site conditions. The delineated wetland and stream on the site will not be directly impacted or disturbed. However, while the resources themselves remain untouched, portions of the required 65-foot buffer area will be impacted by the development. This area is currently covered in wood chips and blackberries but will be replanted with native plants as mitigation for the impact.

Kimberly Larson, representing the general contractor for construction, noted that the construction impacts

will be temporary and carefully managed, with limited vehicle staging and no spillover into neighborhoods. The new facility will consolidate existing operations—not expand them—reducing trips and improving efficiency by eliminating multiple satellite sites.

Sid Scott noted that the applicant is committed to conducting both a noise study and a traffic impact analysis, despite not being required, to address public concerns. Overall, he emphasized the project modernizes existing services, improves efficiency, and reduces impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.

Matt Bell, transportation engineer, noted the concerns about traffic and stated that the applicant would accept as a condition of approval, the requirement to complete a traffic impact analysis.

Commissioners asked questions of the applicant team regarding landslide risk calculations, the potential Cascadia subduction zone event considerations, the earthquake resiliency of the proposed buildings, undocumented fill, site grading, stormwater management, Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue review of the proposed plans, and the wetland boundaries and buffer disturbance mitigation.

Oral public testimony was provided at the hearing by William Relyea, David Dodds and Michael Kapigian. Concerns raised include the zoning classification related to the proposed facility, enforcement of conditions of approval, procedural concerns, noise studies, City Council decision related to the site selection, geotechnical issues, transportation impacts, and stormwater management.

Mike Kapigian requested a continuance stating that additional time was needed for review of additional items in the record submitted by members of the public and staff since the initial evidentiary hearing.

Applicant team responded to concerns about stormwater management, geotechnical issues, site selection process, and purchase of the property.

Steve Koper, Community Development Director, provided clarification about the site zoning. City Attorney provided guidance on the CDC related to zoning classification.

Commissioner Jones moved to: 1) close the public hearing, 2) leave the record open for additional written testimony for an additional 7 days to February 25, 2026 at 5:00 p.m., 3) allow the applicant an additional 7 days, to March 4, 2026 at 5:00 p.m., to submit a final legal argument, and 4) and to continue deliberations to March 4, 2026. Dietz seconded. **Ayes: Walvatne, Jones, Watton, Dietz, Kachirisky, and Schulte-Hillen. Nays: Evans. Abstentions: None. The motion passed 6-1-0.**

4. Planning Commission Announcements

Planning Commissioners discussed the format for receiving large staff reports. Commissioners expressed mixed opinions on the effectiveness of document organization for meeting materials. Staff acknowledged challenges with large documents and will seek to balance future staff reports between organization and accessibility.

5. Staff Announcements

None.

6. Adjourn

Chair Schulte-Hillen adjourned the meeting at 9:32pm.