

PORT OF HOOD RIVER
Resolution No. 2026-27-1

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE PORT OF HOOD RIVER SUCCESSION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Port Commission recognizes the importance of maintaining leadership continuity, preserving institutional knowledge, and supporting stable operations during planned or unplanned staffing transitions; and

WHEREAS, staff has prepared a Succession Plan to provide a flexible framework for organizational continuity, leadership development, and operational preparedness; and

WHEREAS, the Commission reviewed the Plan at their June 16, 2026 Regular Meeting and suggested changes related to multiple resignations and accountability; and

WHEREAS, the Port Commission finds it appropriate and in the best interest of the Port to formally adopt the Succession Plan attached as Exhibit A;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE PORT OF HOOD RIVER BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The Port of Hood River Succession Plan attached hereto as Exhibit A is hereby adopted.

Section 2. The Executive Director is authorized to implement and administer the Succession Plan consistent with Port policies and operational needs.

Section 3. The Succession Plan is intended to serve as a guiding framework and may be applied with reasonable flexibility based upon operational circumstances and organizational needs.

Adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the Port of Hood River on this 21st day of July 2026.

SIGNED:

Signed by:

BEA85189B16A4FF
Heather Gehring, President

ATTEST:

Signed by:

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Kristi Chapman, Secretary

PORT OF HOOD RIVER SUCCESSION PLAN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Succession Plan is to promote leadership continuity, preserve institutional knowledge, and support the development of future leaders within the Port of Hood River.

Succession planning helps ensure the Port can continue fulfilling its mission and maintaining effective operations during leadership transitions, retirements, or unexpected personnel changes. Maintaining continuity in key roles supports the Port's ability to serve the community, implement major infrastructure projects, and responsibly manage public resources.

This plan is intended to provide guidance rather than rigid procedures, allowing the Port Commission and leadership team flexibility to respond to specific circumstances. Nothing in this plan creates a contractual right, expectation of promotion, or guarantee of continued employment.

2. Alignment with Port Governance and Policies

This Succession Plan aligns with the Port of Hood River's governance structure, policies, and strategic direction.

Relevant governing documents include:

- Port of Hood River By-Laws (Ordinance No. 28)
- Mission, Vision, and Values Resolution (2023-24-10)
- Organizational Restructure Resolution (2025-26-12)
- Internal Personnel Committee Resolution (2025-26-19)
- Port of Hood River Employee Handbook (2025-26-8)
- 2021-26 Strategic Business Plan

This plan supports the Port Commission's governance role by providing a structured framework for leadership continuity, ensuring that transitions in key positions occur in a consistent, transparent, and well-managed manner. It also supports the Commission's oversight responsibilities by identifying how critical roles will be maintained during periods of transition.

This plan works in conjunction with the Port of Hood River Employee Handbook and does not replace existing personnel policies. Recruitment, hiring, promotion, and employment practices will continue to follow the procedures outlined in the Employee Handbook and applicable laws.

This plan also supports implementation of the Port's Strategic Business Plan by helping ensure that leadership capacity, institutional knowledge, and staffing continuity are maintained to carry out long-term projects, infrastructure investments, and operational priorities. The plan also supports the organizational objectives established through the Port's Organizational Restructure, including cross-training, reduction of single-position dependencies, and long-term organizational resilience.

3. Guiding Principles

Succession planning at the Port of Hood River is guided by several key principles.

- **Operational Continuity:** The Port must maintain stable operations even when key leadership positions change.
- **Leadership Development:** The Port encourages professional development and leadership growth among employees to build internal leadership capacity and strengthen the organization over time.
- **Transparency and Fair Hiring Practices:** Leadership positions will be filled using fair and transparent recruitment processes consistent with personnel policies.
- **Institutional Knowledge Preservation:** Maintaining documentation and cross-training helps ensure important operational knowledge is retained.
- **Organizational Flexibility:** Because the Port is a relatively small organization, staffing responsibilities and leadership assignments may be adapted as needed during transitions. Internal candidates may not always be available, and the Port may utilize external recruitment or specialized expertise to meet operational needs.

4. Scope of the Succession Plan

This plan applies to key leadership and operational positions whose responsibilities are essential to the Port's ability to operate effectively.

A critical position is defined as a role whose vacancy could significantly affect the Port's operations, regulatory compliance, financial management, or delivery of services.

Succession planning supports organizational preparedness and leadership development but does not guarantee internal promotion or appointment to any position.

Critical positions will be reviewed periodically, including during organizational changes or updates to the Port's staffing structure, to ensure alignment with operational needs. Department directors and managers may identify additional critical roles within their areas of responsibility as needed.

5. Identification of Critical Positions

Critical positions are those that provide leadership, technical expertise, or operational oversight essential to Port functions.

Examples of positions that may be considered critical include:

- Executive Director
- Director of Capital Development & Planning
- Director of Real Estate & Asset Management
- Director of Finance

- Airport Manager or aviation operational leadership responsible for FAA coordination, compliance, and airport operations
- Marina or operations management roles

These roles involve responsibilities such as financial oversight, infrastructure planning, regulatory compliance, property management, and coordination with external partners.

The list of critical positions may be updated as the Port's organizational structure evolves.

6. Emergency Leadership Succession

Unexpected vacancies may occur due to illness, resignation, retirement, or other circumstances. In these situations, the Port will take steps to ensure continuity of operations.

Temporary leadership assignments may include:

- Designating an interim leader from existing staff
- Temporarily redistributing responsibilities among department leaders
- Utilizing consultants or contract support if specialized expertise is needed
- Temporary delegation of selected operational responsibilities to multiple staff members when appropriate

Interim leadership assignments are intended to maintain operations until a permanent staffing decision is made. Potential interim coverage for key leadership positions is identified in the Leadership Continuity Matrix included as Appendix A.

Interim leadership assignments will be documented as appropriate to ensure clarity of roles, responsibilities, and reporting relationships during the transition period.

Department directors and managers are responsible for maintaining operational documentation and cross-training that support continuity within their respective areas. Temporary leadership assignments should, whenever practical, be supported by documented delegation of authority and communication to affected employees and stakeholders.

7. Workforce Continuity During Multiple Vacancies

The Port recognizes that multiple employee departures, retirements, extended absences, or unexpected vacancies may occur simultaneously. In such situations, the Executive Director may implement temporary workforce continuity measures to maintain essential operations and public services.

Potential measures may include:

- Prioritizing critical operational functions and regulatory responsibilities
- Temporarily reassigning duties among existing staff
- Utilizing cross-trained employees to support essential functions
- Adjusting workloads, project schedules, or service levels as necessary

- Utilizing temporary employees, consultants, contractors, or other external resources, including assistance available through professional organizations such as the Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO), the Oregon City/County Management Association (OCCMA), the Oregon Public Ports Association (OPPA), or other professional networks, as appropriate to maintain continuity of operations.
- Delaying non-essential projects or initiatives until staffing levels stabilize
- Implementing accelerated recruitment efforts for critical vacancies

The Executive Director, in consultation with department directors and managers, will determine appropriate staffing and operational adjustments based on organizational needs, available resources, and the impact on Port operations.

These measures are intended to support continuity of operations while maintaining flexibility to respond to the specific circumstances of a staffing shortage.

8. Temporary Absences

During temporary absences of the Executive Director, including vacation, professional travel, training, or short-term leave, the Executive Director may designate a qualified employee to serve as Executive Director Pro Tem. The designation shall be communicated to staff and the Port Commission as appropriate and shall remain in effect only for the duration of the absence. The Executive Director Pro Tem shall be authorized to oversee routine operational matters and maintain continuity of Port operations, subject to any limitations established by the Executive Director.

9. Executive Director Succession

The Port Commission retains authority for appointing and evaluating the Executive Director in accordance with the Port's By-Laws. If the Executive Director becomes temporarily unavailable, the Commission may designate an Interim Executive Director to ensure continued leadership of the organization. The Commission may select an interim leader from existing staff or consider external candidates depending on the circumstances.

If a permanent vacancy occurs, the Commission will determine the appropriate recruitment process, which may include:

- Establishing a search committee
- Engaging a professional recruitment firm
- Conducting a regional or national recruitment

During this period, the Interim Executive Director will provide operational leadership, ensure continuity of Port operations, and support the transition process. The Port will ensure appropriate communication with staff, partners, and stakeholders during leadership transitions to maintain transparency and continuity of operations.

10. Key Leadership Functions of the Executive Director

During any temporary or permanent vacancy, the Interim Executive Director will ensure the continuation of the Port's most critical leadership functions.

Key responsibilities include:

- Serving as the Port's chief executive and principal representative to the community, partner agencies, and stakeholders.
- Supporting the Port Commission by maintaining regular communication, preparing Commission reports, and implementing Commission policy direction.
- Providing leadership and coordination across Port departments including infrastructure development, real estate management, airport operations, and financial administration.
- Overseeing implementation of major capital projects, infrastructure planning, and economic development initiatives.
- Maintaining accountability for the Port's annual operating budget, financial reporting, and regulatory compliance.
- Supervising senior staff and ensuring coordination across operational areas of the Port.

These functions represent the minimum responsibilities necessary to maintain continuity of operations until a permanent Executive Director is appointed.

11. Leadership Development

The Port supports employee development and leadership growth as part of its commitment to organizational continuity, operational excellence, and long-term workforce planning.

Consistent with the Port's Employee Handbook and personnel policies, employees are encouraged to pursue professional development opportunities that enhance job performance, expand organizational knowledge, and support the future needs of the Port.

The Port may support employee development through programs and resources such as its Value-Based Compensation Program, employee performance evaluations, professional certifications, continuing education, tuition reimbursement, and other training opportunities approved by management.

Leadership development is an ongoing process that should be evaluated through the Port's annual employee performance evaluation process. Indicators of employee development may include demonstrated job performance, expanded responsibilities, successful completion of training or certifications, participation in professional organizations, cross-training accomplishments, project leadership, mentoring activities, and other achievements that strengthen the employee's ability to assume increased responsibilities.

Leadership development and workforce preparedness may include:

- Cross-training between departments and operational functions
- Professional training, certifications, and continuing education opportunities
- Participation in professional associations, industry organizations, conferences, workshops, committees, and leadership programs that support the employee's

professional responsibilities and organizational development. Opportunities to lead projects, initiatives, or cross-functional teams

- Acting assignments or temporary higher-duty assignments during employee absences
- Knowledge sharing, mentoring, and transfer of institutional knowledge

Department directors and managers should identify opportunities to develop employee skills, support cross-training, and reduce reliance on single-position knowledge where practical. Employee development opportunities should be aligned with organizational needs, employee performance evaluations, and anticipated workforce succession requirements whenever practical. These efforts help strengthen organizational resilience, maintain continuity of operations, and prepare employees for increased responsibilities as organizational needs evolve.

12. Knowledge Transfer and Institutional Continuity

Maintaining institutional knowledge is essential to the Port's ability to operate effectively, manage public assets, comply with regulatory requirements, and carry out long-term projects and Commission priorities.

The Port supports knowledge transfer and institutional continuity through:

- Documentation of key procedures, workflows, project histories, and operational practices
- Shared access to project files, contracts, leases, grant records, financial records, regulatory documents, and other operational records
- Cross-training among employees to reduce reliance on single-position knowledge where practical
- Maintaining continuity of access to critical electronic records, operational systems, financial systems, and organizational data
- Maintaining current contact information for key agencies, consultants, tenants, contractors, legal counsel, financial institutions, and other partners
- Transition planning when employees retire, resign, or otherwise leave the organization

The Executive Director, department directors, and managers are responsible for supporting documentation, cross-training, and information-sharing practices within their areas of responsibility.

Maintaining clear documentation and accessible records helps ensure that critical Port functions can continue during staffing changes, leadership transitions, temporary absences, or unexpected vacancies.

13. Recruitment Strategy

When leadership positions become vacant, recruitment practices will follow the procedures outlined in the Port's personnel policies.

Depending on the circumstances, the Port may consider:

- Internal recruitment opportunities for qualified employees

- External recruitment to attract specialized expertise
- Use of recruitment firms for senior leadership positions

Recruitment decisions will consider the qualifications required for the position, the availability of internal candidates, specialized expertise, operational continuity and the long-term needs of the organization.

14. Governance and Oversight

The Port Commission provides governance oversight of the organization and retains authority for appointing, evaluating, and providing policy direction to the Executive Director in accordance with the Port's By-Laws.

The Internal Personnel Committee (IPC) may periodically review succession planning efforts, leadership development initiatives, personnel policies, and organizational continuity strategies. The IPC serves in an advisory capacity and does not alter the authority of the Port Commission or the administrative authority delegated to the Executive Director.

The Executive Director – with support from human resource professionals - is responsible for implementing this Succession Plan, supporting employee development, maintaining organizational documentation, identifying critical positions, and implementing practices that strengthen leadership capacity and organizational continuity. The Executive Director shall periodically evaluate employee development activities, cross-training efforts, knowledge transfer, workforce continuity planning, and readiness to address anticipated vacancies in critical positions. Progress may be documented and reported to the Internal Personnel Committee and/or Port Commission as appropriate.

Department directors and managers are responsible for supporting cross-training, maintaining operational documentation, identifying potential future leadership needs within their areas of responsibility, and encouraging employee development opportunities.

The Executive Director may provide periodic updates regarding succession planning activities and recommended updates to this plan.

Nothing in this Succession Plan alters the governance responsibilities of the Port Commission or the administrative authority delegated to the Executive Director under the Port's By-Laws.

15. Plan Review

This Succession Plan should be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains aligned with the Port's organizational needs.

The plan may be reviewed:

- At least every two years
- Following significant organizational restructuring
- When major operational responsibilities change
- Following significant staffing transitions or changes in operational responsibilities

Updates to the plan may be recommended by staff to reflect operational or organizational changes. Substantive changes will be subject to review and approval by the Port Commission.

As part of the review process, staff should evaluate progress toward the objectives of this plan. The review may consider:

- completion of employee performance evaluations;
- employee participation in leadership development activities;
- professional certifications, licenses, or continuing education completed;
- participation in professional organizations, conferences, or training programs;
- cross-training accomplishments;
- documentation of critical operational procedures;
- readiness to provide interim coverage for critical positions; and
- workforce continuity planning for anticipated retirements, resignations, or other vacancies.

Opportunities for improvement and recommended updates may be documented and presented to the Internal Personnel Committee and/or Port Commission, as appropriate.

Appendix A: Leadership Continuity Matrix

The following matrix identifies potential interim coverage for key leadership and operational roles in the event of a temporary or unexpected vacancy.

Position	Primary Interim Coverage	Secondary Coverage	Notes
Executive Director	Director of Capital Development & Planning	Director-level member of the management team	Commission designates Interim Executive Director
Director of Capital Development & Planning	Executive Director	Director of Real Estate & Asset Management / External Consultant	May utilize engineering or project consultants
Director of Real Estate & Asset Management	Executive Director	Director of Capital Development & Planning	Responsibilities may be redistributed temporarily
Finance Director	Deputy Finance Manager	Executive Director / External CPA / Contract Financial Services	Ensures financial continuity and compliance
Airport Manager	Director of Real Estate & Asset Management	Executive Director / Contract Aviation Consultant	Supports FAA coordination and compliance
Waterfront / Marina Operations	Director of Capital Development & Planning	Director of Real Estate & Asset Management / Facilities Lead	Operational duties may be shared temporarily
Facilities Operations	Director of Real Estate & Asset Management	Director of Capital Development & Planning / Facilities Lead	Focus on safety and maintenance continuity

Note:

This matrix is intended to support temporary operational continuity and does not represent a permanent reassignment of duties. Interim assignments may be modified by the Executive Director or Port Commission based on operational needs. The matrix is intended as an operational planning tool and does not establish an order of succession or guarantee future appointments.