



To: Budget Office, County Manager and County Council

From: Ken Lader, Public Works Director

Date: August 11, 2025

Subject: 2026 Annual Budget Process – Executive Summary of General Fund Needs

Issue or Issues that Need to be Considered by Council

Requesting approval of one-time expense authority in the amount of \$63,000 to support the development and delivery of a comprehensive leadership and management training program for Public Works. The proposed budget of \$63,000 (approximately \$1,400 per participant) is based on a preliminary vendor quote for a nine-month training program for all Public Works Funds. And the General Fund portion impact equates to \$560 for 2026.

Public Works is entering a critical phase of organizational growth and transformation. After a period of leadership transition, the department has stabilized and is now focused on integrating a wave of new employees while maintaining high performance and service standards. This evolving workforce spans a range of job classifications, work settings (remote, hybrid, and in-person), and diverse backgrounds—including age, ethnicity, neurodiversity, and more.

Currently, management practices across teams are inconsistent, leading to avoidable challenges in supervision, communication, and performance management. Without a shared foundation of leadership and organizational development, the risk of inefficiencies, employee disengagement, grievances, and legal issues increases. A structured management training program will provide Public Works managers and supervisors with the tools they need to lead effectively, resolve conflicts, communicate clearly, and develop cohesive, high-performing teams. This investment will improve internal alignment, promote a more inclusive and responsive management culture, and support the long-term sustainability of the department's workforce.

This change request is only a \$560 impact to General Fund.

Rule
N/A

Analysis

The program would serve 45 managers and leaders, organized into three cohorts of 15 participants. Each cohort would participate in six instructor-led workshops (two hours each), six peer coaching sessions focused on real-world applications (e.g., coaching, conflict resolution, progressive discipline), and optional one-on-one coaching for targeted support. This training is not only an investment in individual leadership skills but also in building a unified management culture across the department.

If not approved, Public Works will continue to face inconsistent management approaches, reduced employee engagement, and increased risk of operational inefficiencies and labor grievances. Managers, particularly newer or less experienced ones, may continue to struggle with essential tasks such as performance feedback, conflict resolution, and team development. This can lead to higher staff turnover, lost productivity, and potential legal exposure.

Conclusion

A one-time investment in structured leadership development will deliver lasting organizational benefits: stronger teams, improved service delivery, fewer conflicts, and a more resilient, future-ready workforce



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Requesting approval of one-time expense authority in the amount of \$150,000 from General Fund 0001 for the Chelatchie Prairie Railroad for cleanup of illegal camping dump sites within the railroad right-of-way along the Cold Creek drainage and supplies to help deter establishment of future camp sites.

Rule

Clark County Code Title 12 – Roads and Bridges

Analysis

Since 2024, Public Works has been coordinating with Washington Department of Transportation, Bonneville Power Administration, City of Vancouver Police Department, and the Clark County Sheriff's Office to trespass several illegal camp sites within the railroad right-of-way in the Cold Creek drainage area from the BPA Ross Complex downstream to Interstate 5. These illegal encampments have left behind large amounts of waste and refuse. BPA and Clark County began cleaning one illegal encampment east of Highway 99, and the county spent approximately \$25,000 without completing the work. WSDOT started cleaning an encampment west of Highway 99 in 2025.

The requested funds will serve two purposes. First, Clark County will hire a cleanup contractor from an available state contract for encampment remediation services to clean up portions of encampments within railroad right-of-way. The responsibility for this cleanup falls outside of the railroad lease. Second, Clark County will work with WSDOT, BPA, and internal forces to install items such as barricades, rocks, and fencing to help deter future encampments from establishing in this location.

Contracted encampment remediation services are anticipated to cost \$100-125,000. Deterrent supplies and installation are anticipated to cost \$25-50,000.

Conclusion

If not approved, large quantities of refuse left behind by illegal camping activities will continue to pollute the Cold Creek drainage and attract vermin, resulting in a nuisance for the Hazel Dell community.