PETTIS COUNTY

ROAD AND BRIDGE POLICIES

Adopted February 25, 2000

Amended May 26, 2023

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ESTABLISHING AND VACATING ROADS** | **1** |
| **DRIVEWAY AND FIELD ENTRANCE CULVERT POLICY** | **6** |
| **DUST CONTROL POLICY** | **6** |
| **ICE CONTROL AND SNOW REMOVAL POLICY** | **7** |
| **SIGN POLICY** | **8** |
| **BRUSH POLICY** | **9** |
| **RIGHT-OF-WAY DESTRUCTION POLICY** | **9** |
| **ILLEGAL DUMPING POLICY** | **10** |
| **ADOPT-A-ROADWAY** | **10** |
| **GLOSSARY** | **12** |
| **CONTACT INFORMATION** | **12** |

**The following section regarding *Establishing and Vacating Roads* is a summary of the statutory provisions relating to the subject matter. If any conflict exists, the applicable state law will prevail.**

**Establishing and Vacating Roads**

**Article III, Section 40 (17) of the Missouri constitution provides:**

“The general assembly shall not pass any local or special law authorizing the laying out, opening, altering or maintaining roads, highways, streets or alleys.” (emphasis added)

With this language in mind, the Missouri legislature passed a set of laws which embodied local governmental authorities with the power to establish and to vacate public records; namely, Chapter 228 of the Missouri Statutes. This paper will attempt to lay out the statutory procedures to establish and vacate public roads as provided in Chapter 228 as well as to address other collateral matters contained in those particular statutes.

1. **Statutory Procedure in Establishing Public Roads**

Public roads may be established in one (1) of three (3) ways:

(1) Order of the county commission or use by public as a public highway for a period of ten (10) years or more, or use by the public for a continuous ten (10) year period and expenditure of public money or labor for such period;1

(2) By prescription;2 or,

(3) By implied or common-law dedication.3

These ways have been well documented in Missouri case law.4

Section 228.020 RSMo. 1990 is the beginning point of the statutory procedure of establishing a public road. It provides that applications for the establishment of public roads shall be made by petition to the county commission. The petition shall contain the following:

(1) The signature of at least twelve (12) registered voters of the township(s) through which such proposed road shall run; three (3) voters of whom shall be of the immediate neighborhood.

(2) Specific description of the beginning and ending point of the proposed road.

(3) Names of all persons owning land through which the road shall run.

(4) Specific description of the amount of damages, if any, of establishing the road.

(5) Names of all those landowners who are willing to give a right-of-way to the county for the proposed road.

1 Section 228.190, RSMo. 1953. Absent a commission order, the issue as to whether a road has been used for ten (10) years and public money has been expended, is before the circuit court. Greene v. St. Louis County, 327 S.W.2d 291 (Mo. 1959).

2 Prescription is defined as “evidence of open, continuous, adverse public use for at least ten (10) years. See Gover v. Cleveland, 299 S.W.2d 239, 241 (Mo. App.S.D.1957), Wilson v. Sherman, 573 S.W.2d 456, 459 (Mo.App.S.D.1978).

3 “Common law dedication” is defined as “an appropriation of land, or an easement therein, by the owner, and accepted for such use by or on behalf of the public.” “Implied dedication” is defined as “course of cnduct of the owner from which a reasonable inference of intent may be drawn.” Black’s Law Dictionary (6th ed. 1990). For a discussion of Common Law Dedication see Chapman v. Lavy, 20 S.W.3d 610 (2000).

4 Karashin v. Haggard Hauling and Rigging, Inc., 653 S.W.2d 203, 205 (Mo.banc 1983).

The failure to include each and every item as before described in the petition causes the county commission to lose its jurisdiction and any proceedings rendered thereunder are void.5

Once the petition is presented with the county commission, the petitioners shall post notice of the application, whether written or printed, in three (3) or more public places in the township(s); one of which shall be posted at the proposed beginning and one at the proposed end of the road. This notice must be posted at least twenty (20) days before the first day of the regular6 or adjourned7 term of the county commission.8

Once the petition is presented, upon proof of the notice having been given, if no remonstrance is filed, and if the petitioners give the right-of-way for the proposed road or pay into the county treasury an amount equal to the amount of damages claimed by the landowners, the commission must open the road.9 Again, the failure to meet the before described requirement deprives the county commission of jurisdiction to enter any kind of an order.10 If a remonstrance is filed, then the county commission must conduct a hearing and make findings. A remonstrance must contain the same signature requirements as a petition; namely, the signatures of twelve (12) or more residents, three (3) of whom reside in the immediate neighborhood. At the hearing, the commission shall hear witnesses regarding the necessity, practicality, and probable damages, if any, of establishing the road. Upon such hearing, the commission can make appropriate orders.11

If the county commission finds it necessary to establish a public road12, and the petitioners pay into the county treasury the probable amount of damages due the landowners, the commission shall then direct the county highway engineer to mark out the dimensions of the road within sixty (60) days of its order. The engineer shall also take all relinquishments13 of all those who will give a right-of-way and take the names of all those who have not given or are unwilling to give a relinquishment and other collateral damages. After the engineer has done his/her job he/she shall then report the proceedings as well as a survey and plat to the county commission.14 The county commission shall not order the establishment of a public road until the road has been approved by the county highway engineer. Only when the engineer’s report indicates that the right-of-way has been secured, the needs filed and an adequate amount of damages is posted, can the commission order a road established.15 Likewise, the failure to meet all the statutory requirements renders all commission orders void because of its lack of jurisdiction.16

5 Loveland v. Davenport, 188 S.W.2d 850, 852 (Mo.App.A.D.1945).

6 Section 49.170, RSMo. 1985.

7 Section 49.200, RSMo. 1985.

8 Section 49.200, RSMo. 1985.

9 Section 228.040, RSMo. 1985.

10 State ex. rel. Cornelius v. McClanahan, 278 S.W.88, 89 (Mo.App.W.D. 1925).

11 Section 228.050, RSMo. 1990.

12 Expense for the establishment of a public road can be allocated wholly to the county or to the petitioners; or partly to both the county and petitioners. Section 228.060, RSMo. 1949.

13 Once the relinquishments have been obtained, then all relinquishments, deeds and the order of the commission shall be recorded in the office of the recorder of deed. Section 228.090, RSMo. 1949.

14 Section 228.060, RSMo. 1949.

15 Section 228.080, RSMo. 1949.

16 Proctor v. Proctor, 4 S.W.2d 882 (Mo.App. 1927).

1. **Statutory Procedure in Vacating Public Roads**

Under Missouri law, vacation of a public road may be accomplished in one (1) of two (2) ways.17

(1) Abandonment: Nonuse by the public for five (5) years continuously of any public road;18 or,

(2) Formal action by an order of the county commission.19

Generally, once a road is established as a public road, its use inures to and becomes affected by a public interest and the right to use it cannot be abandoned unless all the public concurs.20 For a public road to be vacated by abandonment the nonuse by the public not only must be shown for the statutory period but the nonuse must be clear and entire abandonment. If the road is used infrequently, intermittently or rarely, it is not deemed abandoned. The nonuse must be complete.21 The use of only a portion of a road

by the public during the statutory period does not constitute the entire road as being subject to reopening. The portion of the road that had been abandoned for the statutory period would remain abandoned. Changing the course of a road or other minor deviation does not constitute abandonment or defeat the public’s right of use.22 A public road cannot be abandoned by agreement.23 The Statutory requirements must be satisfied.

Section 228.110 R.S.Mo. (1990) sets out the formal procedure for the vacation of a public road. First, twelve (12) residents of the township(s) through which a road runs make an application to vacate the road. In the petition, the petitioners must allege that the road is useless24 and the expense of repairing it is an undue financial burden upon the county. The petition is then publicly read before the commission on the first day of the term25 at which it is presented. The petitioners must post notice of the petition in at least three (3) public places in the township(s) at least twenty (20) days before the first day of the next

term and a copy of the notice must be served26 on all person(s) whose land touches the road.

On the first day of the next term, the petition shall again be read publicly. If no remonstrance, signed by twelve (12) residents, is made, then the county commission may proceed to vacate the road at the cost to the petitioners. In the event that a remonstrance is filed, the commission shall consider the remonstrance in arriving at its decision to vacate or not. Costs of the remonstrance procedure shall be taxed to those parties remonstrating.27

17 Hedges v. County Court for Ray County, 581 S.W.2d 73, 77-78 (Mo.App.W.D. 1979).

18 Section 228.190, RSMo. 1953.

19 Section 228.110, RSMo. 190.

20 Hedges, 81 S.W.2d at 78.

21 Id., State ex. Rel. Perkins v. Taylor, 666 S.W.2d 853, 856 (Mo.App.S.D. 1981).

22 State ex. Rel. Reynolds County v. Riden. 621 S.W.2d 366, 369 (Mo.App.S.D. 1981).

23 Dodge v. Wiles, 766 S.W.2d 695, 699 (Mo.App.S.D. 1989).

24 “Uselessness contemplated and required to permit vacation must be practical, not an absolute, uselessness.” Burrows v. County Court of Carter County, 309 S.W.2d 299, 304 (Mo.App.S.D. 1958).

25 Section 49.170 RSMo. 1985.

26 Notice in accordance with Chapter 506 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri.

1. Section 228.110, RSMo. 1990.
2. **Collateral Matters**

Chapter 228 contains other relevant statutes relating to collateral matters in the establishment and vacation of public roads. Such matters include the entering of orders, the establishment of county roads on county boundary line, and the delicate issue of condemnation.

1. **County Commission Orders**

Whenever the county commission enters an order to establish a road pursuant to Section 228.080 or to vacate a road pursuant to Section 228.110, a stenographic record of all proceedings must be made if any party requests the record to be made. Costs of the record shall be taxed to the requester. Any such order of the commission is subject to judicial review pursuant to Chapter 536 (Administrative Procedure and Review Act) of the Missouri Statutes.28 A county commission shall not revoke or set aside any order; nor shall the commission entertain a petition to establish or vacate such a road for a period of one (1) year of entering an order pertaining to that road.29

1. **Roads on County Boundary Lines**

The procedure to establish a public road, which runs on a county boundary line, is the same procedure used in establishing any other county public road except for a few deviations.

First, the proceedings to establish such a road may be brought in either county where the commissioners from both counties sit as one (1) commission. A majority of the commissioners shall decide all questions.30 Second, a certified copy of the order and report of the engineer shall be filed in the office of the clerk in the county where the proceedings are instituted.31

1. **Condemnation32**

If the landowner along a proposed public road refuses to relinquish his/her right-of-way or the landowner and the county commission are unable to agree to a specified amount of damages, the commission may institute condemnation proceedings against those landowners based on its granted rights of eminent domain.

When the commission is of the opinion that a public necessity exists for the establishment of the road, it shall order the county highway engineer, within fifteen (15) days thereafter, to survey the road, prepare a map thereof specifying its dimensions, and to file his findings in the office of the clerk. Thereafter, the commission shall cause to be published in a newspaper of general circulation, once each week for three (3) consecutive weeks, a notice giving the dimensions of the road and notice that such land is sought to be taken for public use.

28 Section 228.120, RSMo. 1949.

29 Section 228.130, RSMo. 1949.

30 The statue does not address the situation when the commissioners reach deadlock.

31 Section 228.140, RSMo. 1939.

32 Section 228.100, RSMo. 1949, Section 228.180, RSMo. 1990.

Claims for damages for taking such property shall be filed in the office of the clerk by the owner of the property within twenty (20) days after the last day of publication. Claims for damages shall be heard on the first day of any regular or adjourned term of the commission after the expiration of the twenty (20) day period.

If the parties are unable to agree on the amount of damages or if landowners fail to file a claim for damages, the county commission shall direct that the entire file be delivered to the circuit judge and the office of the clerk. Upon receipt, the judge shall set the cause for hearing within thirty (30) days thereof. If the hearing is set for the condemnation of a road, then it shall be filed in the office of the circuit clerk and the orders shall be served on all interested parties not less than ten (10) days before the date of the hearing. The hearing, itself, is consisted of a jury of six (6) disinterested residents of the county. The jury shall view the land, hear the evidence and determine the question of damages. Five (5) concurring members of the jury may return a verdict. In case of disagreement, another jury may be impaneled.

The circuit court may not inquire into the public necessity of the taking of the land. The only issue that may be addressed is the issue of damages. The judgment of the court is not reviewable on appeal.33

Unlike other legal proceedings, the burden of proof lies with the landowners in proving that the disadvantages incident to the establishment of such road outweigh the advantages.34

**Conclusion**

The Missouri Constitution provides the county commission with the power to establish and vacate public roads within their own physical jurisdictional limits. Even though one can view the statutory procedures to be fairly simple, parties desiring to establish or to vacate a public road must methodically follow each and every step of that particular procedure. Otherwise, the county commission will lose its jurisdiction to enter appropriate orders.

33 Section 228.180, RSMo. 1990.

34 Jackson County v. Waldo, 85 Mo. 637, 638 (1885).

**PETTIS COUNTY DRIVEWAY AND FIELD ENTRANCE**

**CULVERT POLICY**

**Section 1. General**

Per RSMo. 229.150, the Pettis County Commission shall regulate the installation and/or removal of all culverts located on Pettis County right-of-way. Penalties apply to persons willfully or knowingly obstructing or damaging any public roadway as addressed in RSMo. 229.150.

The property owner is responsible for purchasing initial and replacement culverts that meet Pettis County specifications, to include when roads are improved. Installation, including excavation, gravel, fill dirt, etc. shall be provided by the Road and Bridge Department at no additional cost.

**Section 2. Permits**

A permit must be obtained from the Pettis County Road and Bridge Department prior to constructing an initial residential, agricultural, or commercial driveway entrance onto any county right-or-way.

**Section 3. Site Inspection**

Prior to the property owner’s purchase or acquisition of a culvert, a site inspection shall be conducted by the Pettis County Road and Bridge Department to determine culvert size, location and safety/site distances.

**Section 4. Specifications**

All driveway culverts will be new and unused corrugated metal pipe, a minimum of 12 inches in diameter and a minimum of 20 feet in length (with maximum length of 60 feet) unless otherwise authorized by the Pettis County Road and Bridge Department.

**PETTIS COUNTY DUST CONTROL POLICY**

Residents desiring dust control on gravel roads are responsible for the costs of materials and application of environmentally friendly agents. They shall contact the Pettis County Road and Bridge Department one week in advance of agent application to allow the county operators to recondition the road before application.

Once the dust control agent is applied, county operators will not maintain the treated sections of road in order to allow the agent to accomplish its purpose. Regular road maintenance would resume when road conditions indicate normal maintenance is necessary.

**PETTIS COUNTY ICE CONTROL AND SNOW REMOVAL POLICY**

**Ice Control**

Paved roads will be first priority for ice control. Sanding will not normally be applied to gravel roads with the exception of some hills, intersections and curves that may present a public hazard.

**Snow Removal Policy**

It is the policy of Pettis County to initiate snow removal operations to maintain traffic as long as visibility is above minimum and weather conditions are such that plowing can be done safely and be effective for at least five hours.

The Road and Bridge Superintendent, or his designee, has the responsibility for initiating all snow removal actions using his best judgment and considering all prevailing weather conditions, amount of snow fall, type of snow fall, and what areas are affected most including the priority of which roads are plowed and in what sequence.

***Disclaimer***

To the extent that any previous rule, regulation, policy or past practice, written or unwritten, is in conflict with the provisions of this policy, such is hereby withdrawn, voided and all personnel should conduct themselves in conformity with this policy.

This policy is not intended to create any duty to any individual member of the public or to protect any particular or circumscribed class of persons. All or parts of this policy may be affected by at least one or more of the following which will delay all or some of the services provided:

1) Equipment breakdown

2) Vehicles disabled in deep snow

3) Weather so severe as to cause crews to be called in from the county roads

4) Equipment rendered inadequate by the depth of snow or drifts

5) Crew breaks, and breaks required for refueling, refilling of material spreaders and installing chains and new blades

6) Unforeseen conditions and emergencies

The counties obligation to remove snow and/or ice from the roadways of the secondary road system takes precedence over accidental damage to privately owned fences, gates, mailboxes and abandoned or stranded vehicles. Reasonable care will be used to avoid damage to private property but due to the conditions of winter, the county assumes no liability in the event damage occurs unless it can be established that operator negligence was the primary reason for the damage.

The Road and Bridge Department does not assure a completely bare road and will not sand/salt entire section of roadways.

As crews clear a path, snow plowed from roads could possibly block a private drive or entrance for some time. The Road and Bridge Department understands the inconvenience this can cause, but due to limited time and resources, plows can only clear private driveways at the request of local emergency officials.

**PETTIS COUNTY SIGN POLICY**

**Street Signs (Road Name Signs)**

Street signs are placed primarily to assist Emergency Services personnel and equipment within Pettis County.  The County takes the responsibility for repair, replacement, and other required maintenance for these street signs on all roads and streets in Pettis County, not in an incorporated city.  No other person or entity shall be allowed to place street signs without the express written consent of the Road and Bridge Department.

**Road Name Changes**

Petitioner(s) for road name changes shall be responsible for the material cost associated of all required sign changes for the changed road name. The Road and Bridge Department shall determine the number of signs affected and the applicable charge. A check (as a deposit) to cover the expense of replacement signs shall be attached to the petition for road name change prior to being presented to the County Commission for action. The deposit will be returned to the petitioners if the road name change is denied, otherwise the deposit shall be credited to the Road and Bridge Department for the purpose of purchasing said signs and materials.

**Newly Established Roadways or Platted Roadways**

Persons who establish a new roadway through the platting process or otherwise shall be responsible for the expense of all required signs. The County Commission in cooperation with the Road and Bridge Department shall determine the signs required and the applicable charge. This charge shall include the material cost of all street signs, sign brackets, posts, and attachments.  A check (as a deposit) to cover the expense shall accompany the final plat presentation to the County Commission. The Road and Bridge Department shall install street signs and regulatory signs as the streets or roads are completed. The deposit shall be returned to the petitioners if the final plat is denied, otherwise the deposit shall be credited to the Road and Bridge Department for purchasing said signs and materials.

**Regulatory and Warning Signs (Traffic Control Signs)**

The Road and Bridge Department shall be responsible for the placement and maintenance of regulatory and warning signs (stop, yield, curve hazard, speed limit, etc.) on all county maintained roads. The Road and Bridge Department shall install regulatory and warning signs on roads and subdivisions not maintained by the county at the request of a majority of the property owners along such road or in such subdivision.  The requesting party(ies) shall be responsible for the cost of the sign(s), the installation expense and maintenance expense of these regulatory and warning signs and shall be required to sign a statement saving the county harmless from any liability for maintenance or upkeep of said signs on non-maintained county streets or roadway.  All regulatory and warning signs shall meet the guidelines of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). No other person or entity shall be allowed to install Regulatory or Warning signs without the express written consent of the Road and Bridge Department.

Regulatory signs must be recommended by the Road and Bridge Department and approved by the County Commission prior to their placement.  The Road and Bridge Department shall maintain an inventory of all regulatory signs placed in the county.

**Speed Limits**

All county roads shall be forty-five mile per hour (45 mph) unless otherwise posted. The County Commission may post speed limits as necessary, as well as adjust speed limits when it is determined to be in the best interest of public safety.

**School Zones**. Twenty-five mile per hour (25 mph) speed limits shall be reserved for school zones.

**Work Zones**. Fifteen mile per hour (15 mph) speed limits shall be reserved for construction or work zones. (RSMo Sections 304.580, 304.582, 304.585)

**Construction Signing**

Any person performing construction work on or near county roads that will affect the normal passage or sight distance of traffic shall maintain traffic control and construction signing conforming to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and as directed by the Road and Bridge Department.

**PETTIS COUNTY BRUSH REMOVAL POLICY**

Pettis County may clear brush from county right-of-way; however, the county shall not clear brush from landowner fencerows for the landowner’s personal benefit. Pettis County does provide a cost share to any resident willing to remove brush on the county right-of-way. A Cooperative Right-of-Way Maintenance Agreement must be submitted to the Road and Bridge Office and approval granted by the Commission.

**PETTIS COUNTY RIGHT-OF-WAY DESTRUCTION POLICY**

Per Missouri Statute 49.490

Any person who shall knowingly remove, tear up or otherwise destroy or damage a bridge, culvert, ditch, sidewalk, road embankment or dirt, gravel or paved road, crosswalk, stepping stones or traffic signs in or upon any road, street, avenue, thoroughfare or alley within the county road right-of-way of Pettis County, without having lawful authority to do so, shall be deemed to have damaged the property of the county and shall be liable for the penalties stated in Missouri Statute 49.490 which

follows.

*49.490. If any person commit any waste, trespass or other injury in or upon any county buildings or other property belonging to any county, he shall forfeit and pay, to the use of the county, fourfold damages, to be recovered in the name of the county, in such form of action as individuals may maintain for like injuries to their property*.

*(RSMo 1939 § 13731)*

*Prior revisions: 1929 § 12072; 1919 § 9472; 1909 § 3693*

**PETTIS COUNTY ILLEGAL DUMPING POLICY**

Littering is illegal in Missouri and can result in a fine or time in jail dependent on the classification of the crime. Abandoned piles of household garbage, bags of yard waste, discarded appliances, tires and demolition debris can threaten the health of humans, wildlife and the environment. Open dumps create a public nuisance, divert land from more productive uses and depress the value of surrounding land. They can also pose the following health, safety and environmental threats:

* Fire and explosion
* Injury to children playing in or around the dump site
* Disease carried by mosquitoes, flies and rodents
* Contaminate streams, rivers, lakes, soil, groundwater, and drinking wells
* Damage to plant and wildlife habitats
* Decrease in the quality of life to nearby communities and residents

If you witness illegal dumping, please report it to the Pettis County Sheriff’s Office. To report a dumping site, please contact the Pettis County Road and Bridge Office and clean-up of the site will be scheduled.

**ADOPT-A-ROADWAY PROGRAM**

The Adopt-a-Roadway program provides for "Local Resident Control" of litter removal. The following policies shall govern the adopt-a-roadway program and these minimums must be met prior to official designation of an adopted roadway.

1. Minimum length of roadway shall be one-half (0.5) mile and both sides of road; Additional lengths may be adopted provided any additional section is at least one-half (0.5) mile in length or extends to the end of the roadway.

1. An application (available from the Road and Bridge Department) shall be completed and submitted to the Road and Bridge Department.
2. Waiver of Liability must be signed by all participants; parent/guardian must sign for underage workers.

1. Should any section of an "adopted roadway" not be maintained to the agreed upon standard, the county shall provide written notice of such deficiencies to the adopting entity, giving (30) days to correct the deficiencies. If after notification no corrective action is taken, the Road and Bridge Department shall take appropriate action.

The Road and Bridge Department will provide refuse bags and bag collection for disposal.

Signage, naming the adopting entity, shall be developed and installed by the Road and Bridge Department to designate roadways adopted under this program.

The Road and Bridge Department shall recommend roadways to be adopted under this program to the County Commission for their approval. The Department shall provide a semi-annual report to the County Commission on the condition of all adopted roadways.

**GLOSSARY**

*County Road and Bridge Department –* The department responsible for construction, reconstructing, and maintaining County owned roads, bridges, culverts and right-of-ways.

*County Road and Bridge Superintendent* – The official appointed by the Pettis County Commission to be the chief officer of the county in all matters pertaining to roads, bridges, culverts, and right-of-ways, and in responsible charge for all operations of the County Road and Bridge Department.

*County Road or County-Maintained Road* – Any public road for which Pettis County has assumed responsibility for repair, maintenance or improvement.

*County Un-maintained Road* – Any public county road for which Pettis County has not assumed responsibility for repair, maintenance or improvement.

*Public Road* – Any roadway and its associated right-of-way that is dedicated to public use and used by the public without regard to whether it is a county-maintained road or otherwise maintained at government expense. A public road need not be a county maintained road as defined in these regulations.

*Private Road* – a roadway that is not dedicated to public use serving two or more tracts of land.

*Private Driveway* – A roadway used for ingress and egress typically serving a single tract or parcel; or that provides vehicular circulation within.

*Road or Roadway* – That portion of any right-of-way or private road which is paved, graveled or otherwise surfaced by some means to comprise a road or street for use by vehicular traffic and which is typically identified by a road or street name.

*Right-of-Way* – All land within a corridor with boundaries defined by use or surveyed description, which is established by plat, written deed, easement, instrument of public dedication or prescriptive use that is used for public roadway purposes and other subordinate permissible use.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Pettis County Road and Bridge Department

1511 N. Ohio

Sedalia, Mo 65301(660) 826-7187