

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Michael Preedin Mayor  
Andrea Blum Council President  
Gary Ross Councilor  
Jennifer Letz Councilor  
Susan Cobb Councilor

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Jordan Wheeler City Manager  
Paul Bertagna Public Works Director  
Scott Woodford CDD Director  
Kerry Prosser Assistant City Manager  
Joe O'Neill Finance Director

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:**

Tony DeBone Chair  
Patti Adair Commissioner  
Phil Chang Commissioner

**COUNTY STAFF:**

Nick Lelack Administrator  
Cris Doty Road Dept. Director  
Tim Brownell Solid Waste Director  
Kevin Moriarty County Forester

**1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Joint meeting was called to order by Mayor Preedin at 5:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Mayor Preedin took roll call and established a quorum of the City Council. Chair DeBone established a quorum of the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) were present.

**3. INTRODUCTIONS**

Mayor Preedin welcomed County Commissioners and staff, and introductions were made.

**4. UPDATES**

**A. Deschutes County Transportation System Plan Update**

Chris Doty, Road Department Director, provided an update on the Transportation System Plan (TSP). This Plan outlined the future transportation improvements for the county's unincorporated areas over the next 20 years. It involved various project categories, including intersections, roadway changes, pedestrian and bicycle plans, bridge replacements, federal lands access projects, and transportation safety plan projects.

Currently, the TSP was before the County Planning Commission, with deliberations scheduled for October 12th, followed by approval of the Board, likely in early 2024. One significant project in Sisters was the Highway20 at Locust Street roundabout, with a \$1,000,000 contribution from the county. Another local project involved widening and overlaying Three Creeks Road. Additionally, the Plan supported regional connections between cities for pedestrians and cyclists. The TSP emphasized partnerships and collaboration between the county, city, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), and parks and recreation districts to achieve these transportation improvements.

Councilor Cobb had concerns about the safety of Locust Street, where it turned into Camp Polk Road. She mentioned that the road had become dangerous for cycling due to vehicles traveling at high speeds, often between 50 and 60 miles per hour. Councilor Cobb hoped that the county would consider addressing these safety issues on Camp Polk Road by possibly adding bike lanes or implementing safety measures to make it safer for cyclists.

Director Doty replied he would check whether Camp Polk Road was part of the county's designated bike routes. He said this was a common issue and many County Road corridors were experiencing increased traffic volumes and higher speeds. He said they worked with the Sheriff's Office to address safety concerns through a combination of enforcement and engineering efforts to enhance safety on such roads.

Chair DeBone said the TSP represented the next phase of capital investments in the transportation system, focusing on safety and capacity improvements.

#### B. Sisters Housing and Development Updates

City Manager Wheeler explained this was an update on the Housing Needs Analysis and the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) Sufficiency Analysis. In a few weeks, a meeting was scheduled with the Planning Commission to discuss the sufficiency analysis, potentially leading to expanding the UGB.

Director Woodford reviewed the city updated the Comprehensive Plan in 2021 and a Housing Needs Analysis and an Economic Opportunities Analysis were completed at that time. The analysis showed that Sisters had a significant increase in population that pointed to the need for quite a few housing units. The city had been exploring ways to make existing land more efficient before requesting a UGB amendment, and they made several development code amendments to encourage infill and higher-density housing. The initial UGB Sufficiency Analysis report suggested a need for additional land, and staff planned to present these findings to the Planning Commission and the Council for further consideration.

In terms of affordable housing, there was a 40-unit affordable rental project in progress, contingent on the developer, Northwest Housing Alternatives (NHA), receiving grant funding from Oregon Housing and Community Services. If successful, the city would grant NHA \$500,000 towards the project. If not, we might need to reassess the terms of the agreement to ensure the funds were utilized within the allotted timeline, which was the end of 2026.

Commissioner Chang asked about employment lands. Director Woodford replied there had been significant development in the industrial zone, which led to the potential need for more employment land in the UGB.

The group discussed where a potential UGB expansion could occur.

Director Woodford explained that state law mandated a specific process for evaluating potential UGB expansion. This process involved examining every parcel within half a mile of the city boundaries and applying criteria to determine the most suitable lands for expansion.

Chair DeBone asked if it was time for Sisters to grow.

Councilor Letz reviewed the city was engaged in ongoing discussions and partnerships with landowners in the community, particularly with the school district. The school district was in discussions with "Rooted Homes" about potentially partnering on housing within The Woodlands development, which was formerly a Forest Service property. She was also interested in exploring possibilities with the Forest Service and looking at the potential for housing developments on federal lands. Councilor Letz was open to partnering and helping in any way to address the housing situation. She said the Council was considering adjustments to short-term rental rules that could increase housing availability in the community. The city was preparing for the forthcoming hard conversation about a UGB expansion.

Mayor Preedin said it was important to address the housing shortage in Sisters to meet the population growth target of 7,000 by 2040. He said the state mandated the process of discussing a UGB expansion and that it was necessary to explore this option, even if they might not ultimately choose to expand it. The Mayor thought this would be an interesting conversation with the public, as some individuals did not want the town to grow. Mayor Preedin reviewed the Council had increased housing density through adjustments to the building code to facilitate infill. He anticipated that there would be a significant and ongoing conversation in the coming years about the potential expansion of the UGB.

Commissioner Chang said that Dillion, Colorado, was working with the Forest Service to use forest land for housing development.

Chair DeBone discussed several aspects of housing and short-term rentals (STR) in rural Deschutes County. He said STRs had a significant impact on the rural county. He acknowledged that some residents were adversely affected by their neighbors' short-term

rentals. However, short-term rentals were integral to destination resorts like Sunriver, Black Butte Ranch, and Eagle Crest.

Chair DeBone said discussions were ongoing regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) at the state level. ADUs could be up to 900 square feet, located on properties of two acres or more, and within 100 feet of an existing property. He estimated there could be around 10,000 eligible lots for ADUs in the county.

The county was in the early stages of considering Recreational Vehicle (RV) occupancy as a rental option. Some people have unauthorized RV occupancy on their private property or in their backyard next to a house. They were exploring the possibility of authorizing this practice legally, with considerations such as snow load requirements for roof structures over RVs, septic, and water requirements.

Commissioner Chang noted legislation was created during the last legislative session, which said that the RVs used for this purpose must be registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and operable. He was unsure whether "operable" meant that the RV must be able to move with its chassis attached, and he wondered about the possibility of using tiny homes on wheels for this purpose. He clarified that this legislation allowed rural residential property owners to host one RV year-round without needing medical hardship or similar conditions.

The group discussed ADUs and housing options in the rural county and their potential impact on the city.

#### C. Solid Waste – Landfill Siting Update

Tim Brownell, Director of Solid Waste for Deschutes County, provided an update on the landfill siting process. The county was looking for a site that would last at least 100 years and was approximately 250 acres with a 250-acre buffer. They initially identified around 200 potential parcels for the landfill but narrowed it down to 33 after considering factors like flood zones, high groundwater, fault lines, and environmental sensitivity.

During the broad site screening process, they engaged property owners, including county, federal, and private properties. Issues like property owners unwilling to sell, environmental concerns, and FAA advisories related to public use airports further narrowed down the potential sites. They were now down to two final sites, the "moon pit site" and the Roth site near Pine Mountain Observatory.

The county had entered the phase two assessment, which involved geotechnical work, land use assessment, and soliciting purchase agreements and pricing for the remaining

properties. Both sites were outside the core sage grass habitat, which was essential. They anticipated challenges in the environmental review process and potential litigation, but they hoped to secure the necessary permits within the next three to four years to begin landfill development. The goal was to have the landfill operational by 2029, but they recognized several steps and challenges ahead.

Chair DeBone said the choice facing Deschutes County was whether to establish a landfill within the county to serve its citizens for the next century or more or opt for the alternative of transporting waste via trucks to other landfills, which might initially offer cost savings but came with long-term cost and control implications. Setting up a local landfill offered advantages such as greater control over costs, reduced environmental impact, self-sufficiency, long-term planning, and potential economic benefits. The alternative involved sending trucks on two-lane roads, potential road improvements, and dependence on external landfill owners. The county's decision centered on ensuring sustainable waste management for its residents now and in the future.

Director Brownell stated that the Knot landfill was expected to reach total capacity by the end of 2029 or early 2030, and these projections had been consistent for the past couple of years. While the Knot landfill would close, it would continue operating as a transfer station. There were plans to upgrade facilities in Sisters, Redmond, and La Pine to accommodate this change.

Additionally, Director Brownell mentioned the development of a franchise agreement to formalize relationships with waste haulers, including Republic Services and Cascade Disposal. The franchise agreement would establish service requirements, control over waste disposal locations, education and outreach standards, financial disclosures, customer service reporting, and consequences for non-compliance. A draft agreement was expected to be ready by the end of October. The cities of Bend, Redmond, and La Pine had all expressed interest in the process. The goal was to establish universal waste management and recycling standards throughout the county.

The franchise agreement was also being prepared in anticipation of the Recycling Modernization Act, a 2021 law that standardized recycling programs across the state and provided resources for achieving those standards. Additional materials would be collected at the curb, and new requirements would apply to drop-off stations. Funding for these changes will come from the top 20 or 25 manufacturers of products within each category.

The county and cities were collaborating to align the franchise agreements with the requirements of this act, which would bring resources to the communities. For example, Sisters might receive funding for additional staffing and infrastructure improvements at its

recycling drop-off location. The changes were set to be implemented by July 2025, and the hope was that the rates for waste management services would benefit from these developments. The exact financial impact would become more apparent in the coming year.

Deschutes County was not considering the length of the franchise agreements but was focusing on rolling seven-year terms. This arrangement allows for termination with a six-year notice. However, the potential challenge lies in persuading the waste haulers to sign a new franchise agreement, as they were not obligated to do so. The county was leveraging both incentives ("carrot") and consequences ("stick") to encourage their cooperation and participation in the new franchise agreement. These efforts were geared towards efficient waste management and regulation within Deschutes County, ensuring accountability and performance standards for waste disposal services.

Councilor Ross was happy to see a collaborative effort to address the issues with the national waste hauling companies.

Councilor Ross asked if there was any pushback from the Pine Mountain Observatory on the Roth landfill site. Director Brownell replied that there were ongoing conversations regarding various aspects of the landfill operation. One of the points of concern was the lighting needs. He said minimal lighting was required overnight, for security purposes, and appropriate shielding could be implemented.

Another topic of concern was dust management at the landfill site. Dust could be a significant issue, and mitigation strategies would need to be discussed and established. While the landfill might cover 250 acres, it typically operated on approximately 10 acres at any time. Therefore, managing dust, particularly at the end of the day, was crucial, and discussions would center on effectively mitigating this concern.

Councilor Letz asked about environmental concerns and possible preemptive mitigation. Director Brownell replied that meetings were ongoing with various organizations and stakeholders, including the Oregon Natural Desert Association, BLM, tribal representatives, Sierra Club, and Audubon Society. The primary concerns related to the proposed landfill sites included sage grouse habitat shifting westward, and it might intersect with the Roth property, potentially raising difficulties. Regarding the "moon pit site," it was already significantly disturbed and experienced heavy equipment activity and truck access. The site's use would be similar to the current landfill, with limited access for transfer vehicles transporting materials from transfer stations to the landfill. This was not a public access site and the number of daily visits was expected to be significantly reduced compared to the current landfill.

Commissioner Chang had early engagement with conservation organizations regarding potential landfill sites. Despite early awareness of potential impacts on other sites, conservation groups did not act when it could have been more productive.

Director Brownell said in the coming years, the waste management department planned to explore various options to address waste disposal once the landfill reached total capacity. These options may include discussions with Crook County to potentially accept a portion of the waste for a period, considering longer-haul alternatives, and implementing higher diversion operations, such as expanding composting, introducing a construction demolition recovery system, and enhancing recycling opportunities.

#### D. Wildfire Hazard Maps Update

Kevin Moriarty, County Forester, reviewed in 2022 the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and Oregon State University developed administrative rules and a state wildfire risk map as required by Senate Bill 762. These rules established criteria for the map's development, risk classes, notification processes, and appeals. The map categorized properties into risk classes based on various factors. However, the map's rollout was temporarily withdrawn in August 2022 for further refinement due to feedback from over 2,000 Oregonians.

Senate Bill 80, passed in 2023, which changed the map, renaming it the Wildfire Hazard Map, reducing risk categories from five to three (low, medium, and high hazard), and prohibiting insurance companies from using the map to set insurance rates. The updated map was expected to be released in spring 2024, with ODF conducting extensive public hearings and meetings to gather input.

County Commissioners and staff provided feedback on the map, and common concerns included inaccuracies, questions about insurance and building standards, and the impact of overlays and fuel treatments on risk classification, especially on federal and state lands.

Commissioner Chang said the Oregon State Insurance Commissioner attended the meeting and said individuals had complained about their insurance being canceled or premiums raised due to the map. However, after a thorough investigation, the Commissioner found no evidence of insurance companies using these maps for such purposes. Using the map for such actions was now explicitly prohibited. Commissioner Chang said it was important to note that insurance companies had more advanced models than the state, making such actions unnecessary.

Councilor Letz explained there was a noticeable increase in wildfires occurring outside of the traditional fire season, including in spring, winter, and fall. This trend was expected to

continue due to climate change and has been observed in various regions, including Central Oregon.

Councilor Ross was pleased the state had moved away from the initial map. He emphasized the importance of taking action within our community by implementing effective building codes and carefully choosing house locations to mitigate the potential damage caused by fires in the future.

Councilor Letz noted that wildfire resiliency was one of the Council's goals for the year, and she had a strong desire to start working on this goal. We had been waiting for guidance from the state on these rules and maps, but the process was slow; she thought the city should move forward and do whatever we could to protect the people in our community.

Council President Blum asked if the state would be coming back with an updated map after hearing the county input; she did not want this to keep going on and on and on before we received the help that people needed to improve their properties.

Forester Moriarty said the next steps regarding the wildfire risk map were not entirely clear. However, he believed there was an opportunity for public comment and input in terms of narrative feedback and spatial data. He thought the most crucial moments for input were during the public comment period and when the map was officially issued. They also noted a right to appeal the map on a case-by-case basis.

Forester Moriarty said the key indicator they had found on the map regarding wildfire risk was whether there were fuel treatments on adjacent federal or state land and whether this information was included in map creation. He provided an example of the west side of Sisters, where US Forest Service treatments had taken place over the years, resulting in a moderate wildfire risk rating. In contrast, the east side of Sisters, where there had not been treatments, was rated high for wildfire risk. The tax lot and its fuel may not be a significant factor in determining risk. He thought the moderate rating on the west side might lead to a false sense of security and impact grant funding opportunities.

Mayor Preedin said it was important to approach the wildfire risk issue from multiple angles. He suggested that if there were delays or controversies in the official process, we should not wait around but take proactive steps within our 1.88 square miles to enhance resilience and preparedness against wildfires. We needed to focus on doing everything we could to strengthen the community's defenses.

Chair DeBone explained that "Project Wildfire" in Deschutes County was a part of the county code focusing on best practices, defensible space, and neighbor support in wildfire



mitigation. Deschutes County had a long history, since the late 1990s of promoting wildfire awareness and community cooperation. He highlighted the importance of educating the community about wildfire risks, especially for property owners who initially might need to be made aware of the dangers associated with their land. The county successfully increased the number of "Firewise" communities, which had grown from 35 to nearly 70 since 2019. These communities actively participated in meetings and educational programs to learn how to protect themselves from wildfires.

**5. OTHER BUSINESS**

Councilor Letz announced the upcoming opening of the first Mosaic Medical clinic in the city, which would serve clients aged zero to 18. The clinic would operate four days a week, and the community was enthusiastic about its opening. She thanked the County for collaborating with the school district to make this project happen.

**6. ADJOURN: 6:45 p.m.**



Kerry Prosser, City Recorder



Michael Preedin, Mayor