



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deschutes County Board of County Commissioners (“Board”)

FROM: Nicole Mardell, AICP, Senior Planner
Will Groves, Planning Manager

DATE: July 24, 2024

SUBJECT: Deliberation #3: Deschutes County 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update – Chapter 7, Natural Hazards

On July 29, 2024, the Board will deliberate Chapter 7 of the Deschutes County 2040 Comprehensive Plan (2040 Plan), pertaining to Natural Hazards (Attachment A). Staff provides a brief background on the process, items recommended to remain in a “parking lot” that will ultimately inform an action plan, and notable testimony. During this meeting, the Board will be asked to provide recommended text, goal, and policy revisions for incorporating in the final document.

I. PROPOSAL

This is a legislative text amendment to repeal and replace the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2011, with the 2040 Plan. No zoning or comprehensive plan map amendments are being considered, nor are any changes to the County’s adopted Goal 5 inventories pertaining to significant natural resources, scenic views, open spaces, mineral and aggregate sites, and historic and cultural resources.

The full record is included on the project hearing page: <https://www.deschutes.org/cd/page/247-23-000644-pa-deschutes-county-2040-comprehensive-plan-update-hearing-page>.

II. BACKGROUND

The 2040 Plan provides background information, a summary of community considerations, and overarching goal and policy guidance pertaining to key issues facing the county. The Board held public hearings to gather testimony for the 2040 Plan on April 10, 2024, in Bend¹;

¹ <https://www.deschutes.org/bcc/page/board-county-commissioners-meeting-162>

April 23 in Sunriver²; and April 30 in Sisters³; and May 8 in Bend⁴. At the conclusion of the May 8 hearing, the Commission voted to close the oral record, leave the written record open until May 30, and commence deliberations at a subsequent meeting.

Staff held a work session with the Board on June 10⁵ to discuss the process for deliberating the 2040 Plan, ultimately determining to perform an extensive review of the following four chapters:

- July 22: Chapter 3, Farm and Forest Resources
- July 24: Chapter 5, Natural Resources
- July 29: Chapter 7, Natural Hazards
- August 5: Chapter 11, Unincorporated Communities and Destination Resorts.

The Board may choose to conduct additional deliberations if needed. At each one, commissioners will discuss preferred edits to chapter narratives, goals, and policies.⁶ Staff will be seeking consensus from the Board. Some issues may warrant a vote.

Parking Lot

During the June work session, staff introduced the concept of a “parking lot” for items that may be outside the scope of the 2040 Plan. This includes items that are one-time actions more fitting for a subsequent action plan or those that are potentially precluded by state law. They are listed in Attachment B. Staff recommends the Board table them during deliberations, and instead include the list as an attachment to the adopted 2040 Plan. The Board can then discuss them in greater detail through the development of an action plan.

III. KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Chapter 7, Natural Hazards was selected due to numerous public and agency comments. To aid in the Board’s discussion, a high-level summary of topics raised in the record are listed below⁷:

General Comments

- Remove or add disclaimer to climate change related text.

²<https://www.deschutes.org/bcc/page/public-hearing-2020-2040-comprehensive-plan-update>

³<https://www.deschutes.org/bcc/page/public-hearing-2020-2040-comprehensive-plan-update-0>

⁴<https://www.deschutes.org/bcc/page/2020-2040-comprehensive-plan-update-public-hearing>

⁵<https://www.deschutes.org/bcc/page/board-county-commissioners-meeting-175>

⁶ Scrivener’s errors and technical edits do not need to be discussed as part of the deliberations process. Staff will compile a list to update in the final draft of the document.

⁷ This list does not include items that are considered to be one-time actions, outside the scope of the plan, or potentially precluded by state law. Those items are listed separately in Attachment A “Parking Lot”

- Add additional policies to address current and future impacts of climate change related hazard events.
- Rely on federal and state agencies for mapping of hazard areas.
- Rely on state and federal regulations to manage development in hazard areas.
- Lobby for expedited process to replace dwellings lost to natural disasters.

Flooding

- Limit or prohibit development in high-risk flood areas.
- Revisit floodplain maps.
- Conduct outreach related to seasonal flooding risk.

Wildfire

- Lobby for affordable fire insurance availability.
- Revise wildfire narrative to include natural occurrence of wildfire and human intervention as causes for altered forest and wildlands.
- Amend wildfire narrative section to reference impacts of rural development.
- Rewrite wildfire narrative to include information more specific to Deschutes County.
- Mitigate impacts of prescribed burns to community members.
- Utilize incentives over regulations to mitigate fire risk.
- Limit development in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).
- Prohibit new subdivisions in high wildfire risk areas.
- Require more than one access/egress route to developments and subdivisions.
- Require large scale development to analyze impacts to service from fire agencies.
- Remove policies that require home hardening and defensible space.
- Note impact of homeless camps and trails on wildfire risk and potentially limit these uses.

IV. NEXT STEPS

Staff seeks direction from the Board on preferred edits to this chapter. Following the discussion, staff will integrate them into a final version of the 2040 Plan for adoption. The Board's next deliberation is scheduled for Monday, August 5 to discuss Chapter 11, Unincorporated Communities and Destination Resorts.

Attachments:

- A. Chapter 7, Natural Hazards
- B. "Parking Lot" Issues