



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Cody Smith, County Engineer/Assistant Road Department Director

DATE: July 14, 2023

SUBJECT: **Road Official's Report**  
**Vacation of a Portion of Schibel Road in Section 05, Township 17S, Range 12E, W.M.**

**Background:**

Deschutes County Road Department has received a petition to vacate a portion of Schibel Road in Section 05 of Township 17S, Range 12E, W.M.. The Petitioners, who are owners of abutting or underlying property to the proposed vacation area, are:

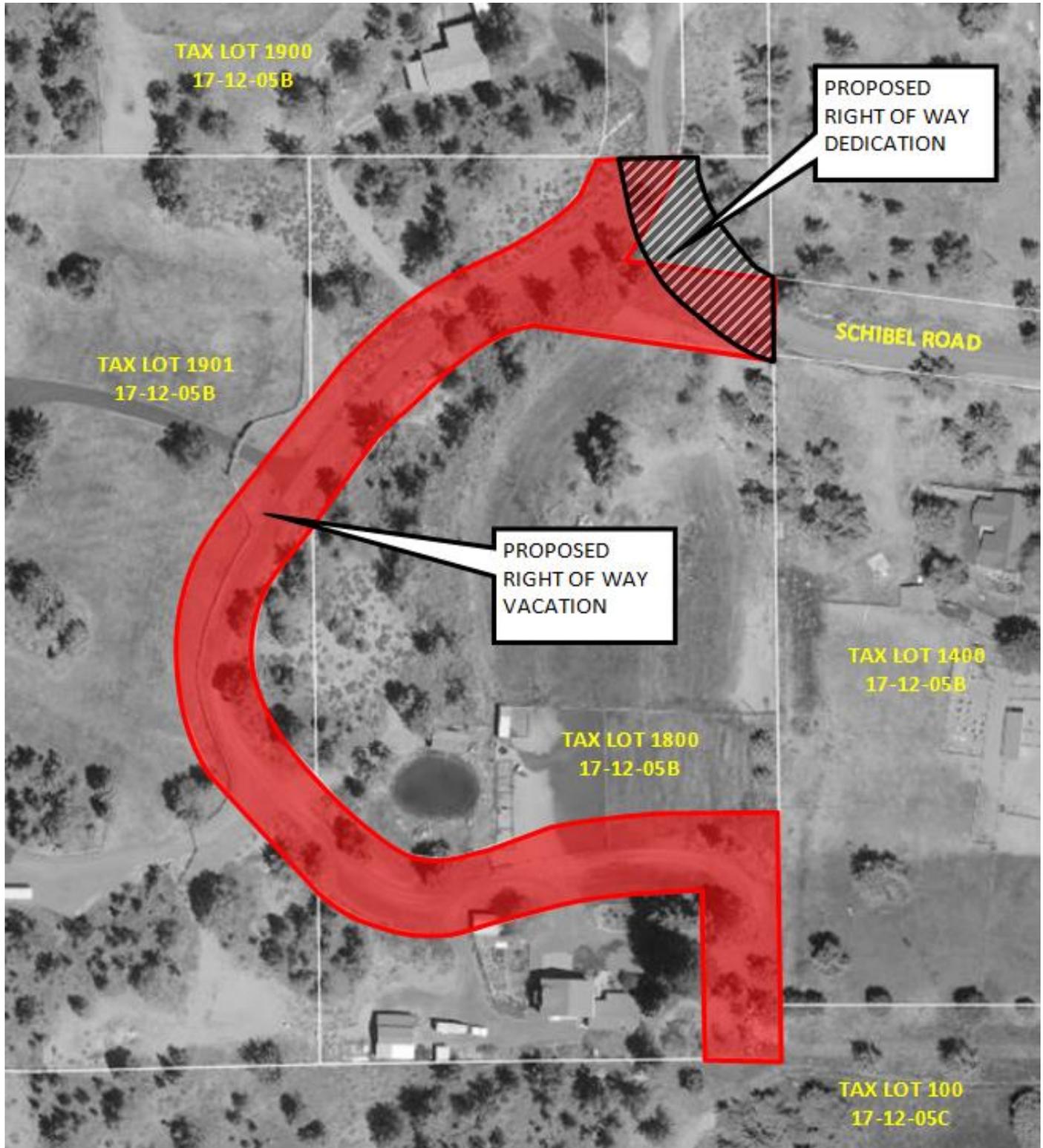
- Jeffrey and Kathryn Gates, owners of Tax Lot 1800 on Assessor's Map 17-12-05B (Chief Petitioner);
- Marlene Wheeler Rennie, owner of Tax Lot 1901 and joint owner of Tax Lot 1400 on Assessor's Map 17-12-05B; and
- Terry A. Rennie, joint owner of Tax Lot 1400 on Assessor's Map 17-12-05B.

The following individuals are owners of abutting or underlying property to the proposed vacation area who are not Petitioners to the proposed vacation:

- Carl Elwyn Owens III, owner of Tax Lot 1900 on Assessor's Map 17-12-05B; and
- John Kevin O'Leary, owner of Tax Lot 100 on Assessor's Map 17-12-05C.

Schibel Road is a local access road that is not maintained by Deschutes County. From Old Bend Redmond Highway, Schibel Road proceeds west; approximately 1,240 ft. west of Old Bend Redmond Highway (within the boundaries of Tax Lot 1800), Schibel Road branches into two alignments, one alignment bearing north and one alignment bearing southwest. The northerly alignment across Tax Lot 1800 presently does not coincide with the established right of way. The subject right of way proposed for vacation includes the entirety of the right of way lying within the boundaries of Tax Lots 1800 and 1901, which includes the intersection of the two aforementioned alignments and the southwest alignment. The owners of Tax Lot 1800 have agreed to dedicate a new public right of way across their property to coincide with the existing as-travelled alignment of Schibel Road for the north alignment. The subject right of way proposed for vacation is 60 feet wide and was

created by dedication deed recorded at the Deschutes County Clerk's Office as Deed No. 1994-46818. Most of the length of Schibel Road within the proposed vacation is paved at varying widths; Road Department staff understand that the road improvements were funded and constructed by current or previous owners of the underlying properties and that the improvements were not funded by the County. There are presently public utilities within the proposed vacation area consisting of facilities owned and operated by Central Electric Cooperative.



**Figure – Aerial Photo of Proposed Vacation Area**

The Petitioners provided the following reasons (in bold italics) for the proposed vacation; Road Department staff responses to the reasons provided by the Petitioners are also given below:

- 1. Invalid Dedication due to Restrictions and Reservations –Septic was installed & permitted by Deschutes County in 1980, repaired and permitted by Deschutes County in 1991. The Deed of Dedication was accepted in 1994 by Deschutes County. The 60 foot width encroaches upon the septic system that was approved by Deschutes County.** Road Department staff assert that the dedication of the subject portion of Schibel Road was valid, as Deed No. 1994-46818 includes valid offer of the dedication by the owners of the underlying property at the time of dedication and acceptance by the County governing body at the time of dedication. Based on a review of Community Development Department property records for Tax Lot 1800 on Assessor’s Map 17-12-05B, it does appear that a portion of the disposal field and reserve area for the subject property’s onsite wastewater system may exist within the proposed vacation area. Additionally, an outbuilding and a portion of a livestock corral also appear to exist within the proposed vacation area. Road Department staff note that, while this situation encumbers both the public right of way and the underlying property, it does not invalidate the public road dedication.
- 2. Reduces property values of the 3 tax lots requesting this Vacation, which is 75% of the owners.** Road Department staff will not address this statement as it is not verifiable or indicative of a necessity to vacate the public’s interest in a property.
- 3. Decades old trees and landscaping would be lost.** Road Department staff will not address this statement as it is not verifiable or indicative of a necessity to vacate the public’s interest in a property.
- 4. Since 1994, the county has never used, improved, nor plowed this road to our knowledge. Not once that we know of has the county plowed the snow during the major snowstorms of 2017 & 2019.** Road Department records indicate that no County-funded maintenance or improvement of the subject portion of Schibel Road has ever occurred; however, Road Department staff note that County-funded maintenance of a local access road is forbidden under state law and that absence of County-funded maintenance is not indicative of a necessity to vacate the public’s interest in a property.
- 5. The southern portion of the road that is requested to be vacated has not been used by the general public and has only been used as access and a driveway for tax lots 1800 and 1901.** John Kevin O’Leary, owner of Tax Lot 100 on Assessor’s Map 17-12-05C, has indicated to Road Department staff that he has interest in using it for future access. Nonetheless, Road Department staff believe that, generally, the subject right of way has only been used to access Tax Lots 1800 and 1901 as indicated by the Petitioners. The primary access to Tax Lot 100 on Assessor’s Map 17-12-05C is from Old Bend Redmond Highway.
- 6. Traffic will increase, and no traffic study has been done that we know of.** Road Department staff will not address this statement as it is not verifiable or indicative of a necessity to vacate the public’s interest in a property.

7. ***Safety of the young children living on Schibel Road is a concern of the parents and neighbors.*** Road Department staff will not address this statement as it is not verifiable or indicative of a necessity to vacate the public's interest in a property.
8. ***It is not in the General Public's best interest.*** The Board of County Commissioners will make this determination.
9. ***Induced to sign dedication under false pretenses. We were told we could remove the southern portion of the dedication with a "single item deletion."*** Current Road Department staff have no knowledge of the requirements or circumstances under which the subject right of way was dedicated in 1994. Road Department staff note that Jeffrey and Kathryn Gates, Chief Petitioners and owners of Tax Lot 1800 on Assessor's Map 17-12-05B, were partial grantors for the 1994 dedication deed.
10. ***Tax lot 100 to the south will not suffer loss of access as the site address of 64145 Old Bend Redmond Hwy is permitted, approved and installed.*** As indicated above, the primary access to Tax Lot 100 on Assessor's Map 17-12-05C is from Old Bend Redmond Highway.

A review of Assessor's Tax Map 17-12-05B indicates that the proposed vacation would effectively landlock Tax Lot 1901, potentially depriving the owners of that property of access necessary for the exercise of their property right. In regards to this matter, Road Department staff note that the submitted petition included a loss of access consent form signed by the property owners.

The Petitioners submitted completed service provider consent forms from those providers serving within or adjacent to the proposed vacation area; those service providers and their responses are listed below:

- Avion Water Company, Inc.
  - Representative: Mike Heffernan, Engineering Department
  - Service provider does not have existing facilities within the area proposed for vacation
  - **Service provider consents to the proposed vacation**
- Central Electric Cooperative
  - Representative: Parneli Perkins, Land and ROW Specialist
  - Service provider does have existing facilities within the area proposed for vacation
  - **Service provider consents to the proposed vacation but requests that an easement for utilities be granted within the proposed vacation area.** Service provider emailed Road Department staff on June 12, 2023 indicating that easement documents had been secured and that their organization was supportive of the proposed vacation.

#### **Findings:**

Based upon the submitted petition materials, responses to service provider notices, and the Road Department's research of the subject right of way, the Road Department makes the following findings:

- The proposed vacation area was dedicated to the public by dedication deed recorded at the Deschutes County Clerk's Office as Deed No. 1994-46818 (ORS 368.326).
- Owners of a recorded property right that would potentially be deprived of access necessary for the exercise of that property right with the proposed vacation have consented to the proposed vacation (ORS 368.331).

- The Petitioners, who represent the owners of more than sixty (60) percent of property abutting the subject right of way, have submitted complete petitions and submitted the required fee (ORS 368.341(1)(c); ORS 368.341(3); ORS 368.341(4); ORS368.351).
- As the petition for vacation does not include acknowledged signatures of owners of 100 percent of property abutting the proposed vacation area, the vacation proceedings are subject to a public hearing (ORS 368.346).
- The subject right of way does not appear to be necessary for current or future public use.
- The subject right of way appears to coincide with onsite wastewater system components, an outbuilding, and other private property improvements for Tax Lot 1800 on Assessor’s Map 17-12-05B.

**Recommendation:**

**Based on the above findings, the Road Department has determined that the proposed vacation is in the public interest.** The Road Department recommends that the Board of County Commissioners approve the proposed vacation with adoption of Order No. 2023-017 subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to vacation of the subject right of way, the owners of Tax Lot 1800 on Assessor’s Map 17-12-05B shall execute a dedication deed to coincide with the existing as-travelled north alignment of Schibel Road.
2. The vacated property shall vest with the rightful owner or owners holding title according to law in accordance with ORS 368.366(1)(c).

This report is made pursuant to ORS 368.326 through 368.366, concerning the vacation of county property.