



8

**Recreation**



## Opportunities, Challenges, and Considerations

Recreation is an important quality of life issue for Deschutes County and recreational tourism is a key part of the local economy. Both residents and visitors are drawn by the County's extensive public lands, seasonal climate, and wide variety of activities and settings. Recreational opportunities include places set aside for specific activities such as campgrounds or sports fields as well as passive spaces such as natural areas.

The primary focus of recreation in rural Deschutes County is outdoor recreation. Outdoor activities promote healthy communities by encouraging people to enjoy an active lifestyle and by providing opportunities to reconnect with the natural world.

Deschutes County does not have a parks department; instead, it coordinates with the federal and state agencies, local park districts, and private entities that provide park and recreational opportunities. Coordination assures that resources are used efficiently, and duplication is avoided. With a holistic view of recreation in Deschutes County, the County can also provide other agencies and jurisdictions with guidance for service gaps to fill.

Statewide Planning Goal 8, Recreation and Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 660-034 address recreation, but do not require local governments to provide park and recreation services. Several agencies and special districts already provide recreation services in Deschutes County. These include Bend Parks and Recreation District, La Pine Parks and Recreation District, Sunriver Parks and Recreation District, and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

The health of the County's recreational assets and industry is inexorably tied to the health of the land, forests, and waterways of Central Oregon. The effects of human activity - from development pressures and overuse of recreational facilities to resource extraction and climate change - will have a significant impact on recreation in Deschutes County. Some of these impacts include:

- Changes in precipitation affecting the timing and conditions for winter sports
- Loss of habitat
- Wildfire and risk of wildfire limiting recreational access
- Increased number of dangerously warm days

## Future Challenges to Recreation

The health of the County's recreational assets and industry is inexorably tied to the health of the land, forests, and waterways of Central Oregon. The effects of human activity - from development pressures and overuse of recreational facilities to resource extraction and climate change - will have a significant impact on recreation in Deschutes County.

There are several environmental concerns that may affect parks and recreation in Deschutes County in the future. Activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, swimming, and foraging are an important part of recreation in Deschutes County - these activities are likely to be impacted by future changes to the climate.

Fishing may be impacted by drought as water bodies warm and seasonally drop. Foraging animals, like deer and elk, may express changing behavior like earlier-season high elevation foraging and increased interactions with agricultural communities due to drought. Drought also severely reduces the prominence of fruiting fungi for annual mushroom hunters, and may increase pressure on the remaining harvest areas. Fungi are crucial to the health of the forest ecosystem, adapting and responding to changing conditions and disease.

These conditions may also lead to greater frequency and severity of algal and bacterial

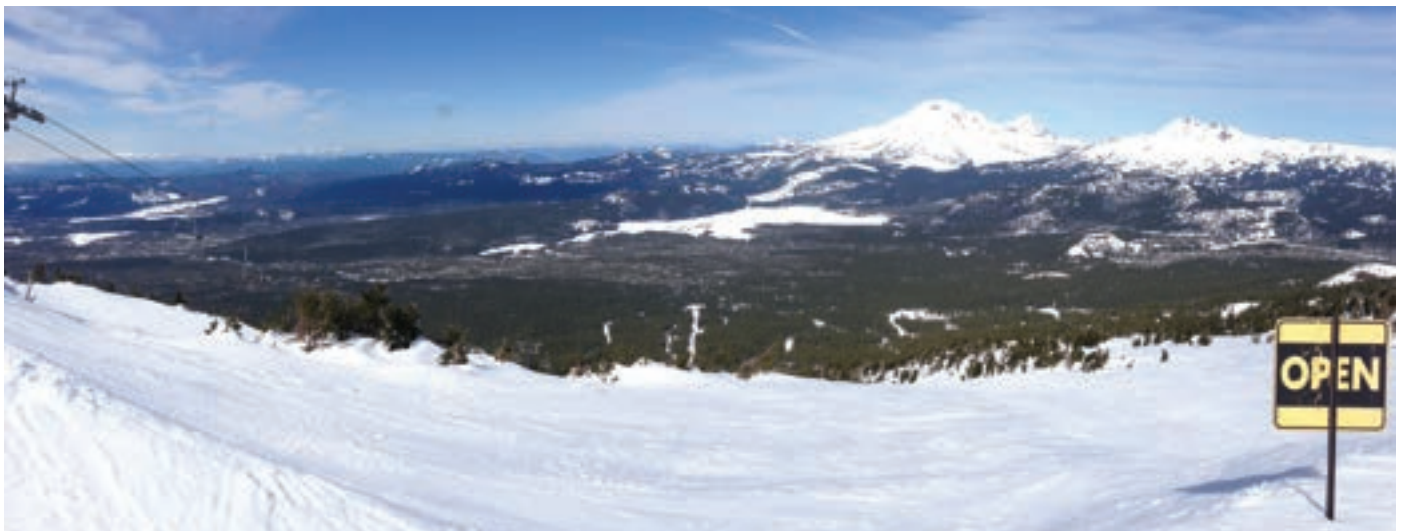
blooms in fresh water. Algal blooms in other parts of the state have led to drinking water concerns, but Deschutes County cities are supplied by groundwater and so the risk in algal blooms is mainly to recreation - boaters, swimmers, anglers, and campers may be less motivated to visit.

## Winter Sports

Snow sports are a significant component of recreation in Deschutes County. Overall decline in snow pack is expected in the coming decades, which will heavily impact winter sports that rely on snowpack in the Cascades. At the Mt. Bachelor Ski Resort, April Snowpack is expected to decline between 11% and 18% by the middle of the century and between 18% and 43% by the end of the century. Additionally, inconsistent snowpack buildup will increase due to more precipitation falling as rain instead of snow throughout the season, making winter sports seasons less predictable.

## Summer Recreation

The summer outdoor season has additional risks from degraded to severely degraded air quality due to wildfire throughout the west coast. With degraded air quality, outdoor recreators may avoid the region, impacting regional income and generally degrading the perception of the county as a retreat to the natural world. Additionally, an



increase in the frequency of very high temperature days may impact the safety and desirability of outdoor recreation.

## Context

Deschutes County does not directly provide parks and recreation services. The only public parks the County maintains are a section of the County Fairgrounds and the Worrell Wayside in downtown Bend. Although there is no County parks department, there are County-owned properties which are designated as park lands. Parks and recreation services are provided by the following entities.

### OREGON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

OPRD owns and manages several key parks and scenic areas in the County. These include state parks such as line Falls State Scenic Viewpoint, La Pine State Park, Pilot Butte State Scenic Viewpoint, Smith Rock State Park, and Tumalo State Park. In addition, they also manage the Upper and Middle Deschutes River Scenic Waterway segments, and Cascade Lakes and McKenzie Pass-Santiam Pass Scenic Byways.



Photo Credit: Visit Bend ([www.visitbend.com](http://www.visitbend.com))

### THE BEND PARKS AND RECREATION SPECIAL DISTRICT (BPRD)

BPRD owns and maintains approximately 3,035 acres of parkland including 81 parks and 70 miles of trails. The largest park district in the County, the taxing district follows the City of Bend Urban Growth Boundary closely, although extends past the UGB to the west and east to include several properties outside of city limits.

### THE LA PINE PARKS AND RECREATION SPECIAL DISTRICT

This district operates in 85 square miles and 11 parks and recreation facilities in southern Deschutes County including the City of La Pine.

### THE REDMOND AREA PARKS AND RECREATION SPECIAL DISTRICT

The District operates five recreational facilities including the Cascade Swim Center and extends beyond city limits to Tetherow Crossing. In 2022, the district received voter approval for a general obligation bond to build a new community center with a variety of recreational, fitness, and therapeutic activities.

### THE SISTERS PARK AND RECREATION SPECIAL DISTRICT

Operates approximately 15 acres of land within City of Sisters city limits, including Bike Park 242, Hyzer Pines Disc Golf Course, a playground, a skatepark, and Coffield Community Center. The district boundary extends far past city limits, serving approximately 14,000 residents through programming and activities.

### THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Approximately 76% of the County's total land area is owned by the federal government, primarily these two agencies. Community members seek out extensive recreation activities in these areas, including skiing, mountain biking, hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, kayaking, and off-road vehicle riding.

### COUNTY-OWNED OPEN SPACE

Starting in 1994 the County received donation of several properties along rivers, creeks, or streams or with wildlife, wetlands, or other value as park lands. The intent of this donation was not to develop these lands for park use but rather to preserve lands with valuable resources, which were protected through deed restrictions. The park designation means that the lands would be retained in public ownership unless there was a public hearing and the Board of County Commissioners determined that selling was in the best interest of the public.

ORS 275.330 governs the disposal of these lands, stating that if they are sold the proceeds must be dedicated to park or recreation purposes. As of 2009, there were approximately 70 properties designated as park lands.

### COUNTY FAIRGROUND AND EXPO CENTER

The 132-acre County Fairground and Expo Center site is located southwest of the Redmond airport, and it is placed strategically at the hub of the tri-county area (Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook Counties). The facility is used for a variety of public and private events. Each of its lawn areas can be rented exclusively by groups for different events, which range from weddings, picnics, reunions, car shows, RV / motorcycle rallies, animal shows, and outdoor trade shows, among others.

## Key Community Considerations

Recreation and access to nature is a key component of life in Deschutes County and a primary attraction for both residents and visitors. As part of this Comprehensive Plan update, community members noted concerns about increasing recreational use or overuse, conflicts among different users, and the need for permitting or other strategies to manage use, particularly in popular locations.

Because the county does not have a parks and recreation department, community members have identified service gaps and lack of continuity of trail networks, habitat and species preservation, and land access policies. Residents are concerned with private recreation development and use of natural resources such as land and water.

The tension between resource use of forest land and water, recreational use of these areas, and natural resource protection is evident among members of the community

Community members also noted that it is imperative for all special districts and agencies providing park services to coordinate on integrated services. These partnerships will be key to ensure sustainable recreation and land stewardship as the County continues to grow.



## Goals and Policies

**Goal 8.1:** Increase affordable, sustainable, and diverse recreation opportunities through partnerships with government and private entities.

**Policy 8.1.1.** Reduce barriers to regional parks and recreation projects in Deschutes County, including acknowledgement or adoption of federal, state and local parks district trail and facility plans.

**Policy 8.1.2.** Collaborate with partners to develop a regional system of trails and open spaces, prioritizing recommendations from local parks districts, County,-state, and federal recreational plans and studies.

**Policy 8.1.3.** Encourage coordination between the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and recreational use interest groups to minimize environmental degradation, agricultural fragmentation and user conflicts on public and private land.

**Policy 8.1.4.** Support the creation and improvement of accessible park and recreation opportunities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Policy 8.1.5.** Support efforts to coordinate recreation planning between the County, park and recreation districts, school districts, irrigation districts, unincorporated communities, and cities.

**Policy 8.1.6.** Support the development of parks and trails identified in locally-adopted plans.

**Policy 8.1.7.** Coordinate with unincorporated communities to identify opportunities for parks, trails, open spaces, and community centers.

**Policy 8.1.8.** Establish trail design standards and identify specific funding sources for trails as part of future transportation system planning efforts to ensure development of identified priority rural trail segments and bicycle routes.

**Policy 8.1.9.** Explore creation of a County Parks and Recreation Department to increase the County's role in recreation and natural resource management and implement if deemed appropriate.

**Policy 8.1.10.** Support community efforts for acquisition and management of Skyline Forest as a community amenity.

**Policy 8.1.11.** Work with stakeholders to promote new recreational and tourist initiatives that maintain the integrity of the natural environment.



9

**Economic  
Development**





## Opportunities, Challenges, and Considerations

Statewide Planning Goal 9 provides guidance on economic development for Oregon jurisdictions. This goal is intended to “provide adequate opportunities throughout the state for a variety of economic activities vital to the health, welfare, and prosperity of Oregon’s citizens.” For Deschutes County, implementing Goal 9 is focused on ensuring opportunities for economic development, while protecting rural land uses.

In Deschutes County, several areas are designated for rural industrial and rural commercial activities to allow for activities such as manufacturing or resource processing. Additionally, unincorporated communities and rural service centers allow for limited commercial opportunities, including restaurants, services, and retail stores.

Economic development agencies in Central Oregon cite the tremendous natural resource access and amenities to be essential for drawing in new businesses and workers. As the County grows, childcare will continue to be challenge for rural residents along with access to high speed and reliable internet services.


A continued challenge for Deschutes County will be to balance adequate economic opportunity for rural residents, with protection of natural resource lands. Community members have expressed interest in providing for new and emerging economic opportunities through renewable energy development, including potential for biomass, solar, geothermal, and wind projects that may be compatible with rural uses.

### Context


Deschutes County’s economy was initially built around farming and logging. As those sectors declined in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, recreation and tourism increased as people were drawn to the beauty and opportunities to recreate on public lands. Deschutes County’s high quality of life became a draw for employers and employees alike. In the 2000’s, the building sector boomed as new housing was built to meet both increased housing demand and the real estate speculation that followed. Housing prices rose so high that workforce housing became a limiting factor in economic growth. The period of strong growth ended with the national recession that began in late 2007, leading to falling housing prices and rising unemployment. The 2010’s and early 2020’s have proven to be another period of booming economic growth for Deschutes County, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the dramatic increase in remote work.




Deschutes County's economy remains strong compared to Oregon as a whole, as shown in the statistics below.



**\$74,082**  
Median Household Income  
(\$70,084 in Oregon)

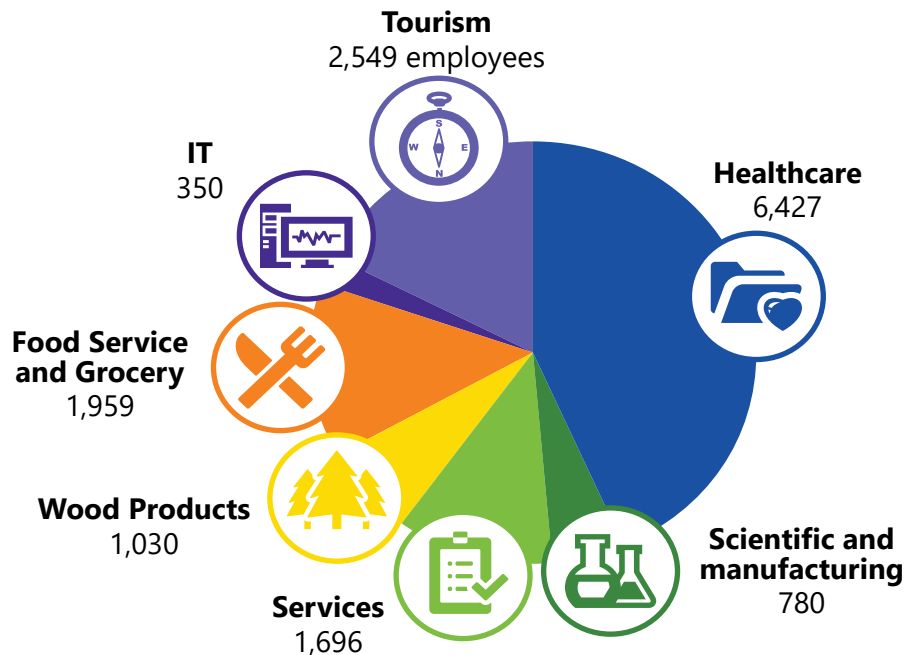


**9.4%**  
of county population experiencing poverty  
(12.1% in Oregon)



**63.3%**  
of population in civilian workforce  
(62.6% in Oregon)

## 2022 Central Oregon Largest Private Employers by Industry



## 2022 Central Oregon Largest Private Employers

Rank	Employees	Employer
1	4,509	St. Charles Health System regional
2	1,030	Bright Wood Corporation regional
3	1,000	Sunriver Resort 1,000 1,000 940
4	916	Les Schwab Headquarters & Tire Centers regional
5	894	Mt. Bachelor
6	714	Safeway regional
7	640	NC Fred Meyer regional
8	628	Summit Medical Group regional
9	605	McDonald's regional
10	440	Lonza, formerly Bend Research
11	415	Rosendin Electric
12	391	Mosaic Medical regional
13	375	Black Butte Ranch
14	365	ibex
15	350	Meta Platforms, Inc. - Facebook Data Center
16	340	BasX
17	336	PacificSource
18	296	High Lakes Health Care regional
19	280	Brasada Ranch
20	267	Medline ReNewal

## Primary Industries

Deschutes County is known for its abundant natural resources, though the County continues to balance its economy through a variety of industries. The top 10 industries overall in Deschutes County (including those within urban areas) are:

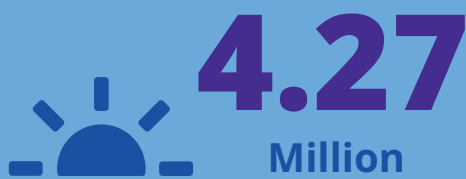
1. Trade, transportation, utilities (15,742 jobs)
2. Education/Health Services (13,479 jobs)
3. Goods-producing (13,169 jobs)
4. Leisure and hospitality (12,990 jobs)
5. Health care and social assistance (12,541 jobs)
6. Retail trade (11,714 jobs)
7. Accommodation and food services (10,718 jobs)
8. Professional/business services (10,067 jobs)
9. Food services/drinking places (8,304 jobs)
10. Local government (7,396 jobs)

## Tourism

Tourism continues to be a major facet of Central Oregon’s economy, with approximately 4.5 million visitors entering Central Oregon each year. The majority of those visitors travel to Bend and Deschutes County in particular but other communities in the County also are popular destinations, including Sisters, Redmond and Terrebonne, as well as destination resort such as Sunriver, Eagle Crest, Pronghorn and others. In addition, recreational opportunities throughout the County also attract a multitude of visitors, from skiing on Mt. Bachelor, hiking in the Three Sisters Wilderness, and rafting the Deschutes River, to fishing, hunting and camping at dispersed sites on National Forest and BLM land throughout the County.



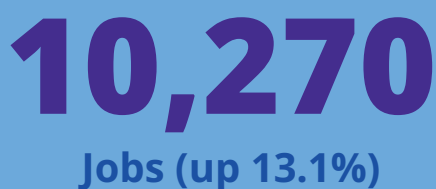
### Tourism Impacts



Annual overnight visitors in Central Oregon (comprised of Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson, and south Wasco counties)



In 2022, employment directly generated by travel spending in Central Oregon was



Million in Tax Revenues

Transient Tax Revenues in 2022  
Central Oregon as a whole



Deschutes County alone



Average trip spend, per person, from an overnight visitor

Source: Oregon Travel Impacts, 2022 by Dean Runyan Associates for the Oregon Tourism Commission

## Resource Land

While much of the County's economic activity occurs in urban areas, County administration of farmland, forest land, and natural resources plays a vital role in protecting and enhancing the economic development potential of the area.

## Coordination

A key partner for the County in promoting a healthy economy is Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO). This private non-profit organization is dedicated to diversifying the tri-county regional economy by attracting new investment and jobs. This organization also tracks the local economy.

Between 2010 and 2013, Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson counties, and their respective cities established a regional large lot industrial land need analysis, ultimately leading to changes to state law, OAR 660-024-0040 and 45. This rule provides that the large lot industrial land need analysis agreed upon by all of the parties, once adopted by each of the participating governmental entities, would be sufficient to demonstrate a need for up to nine large industrial sites in Central Oregon. Six of the sites will be made available initially. Three more sites may be added under the rule as the original sites are occupied. Intergovernmental agreements were formed with the regions jurisdictions and Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council in 2013 to provide oversight of this new regional large lot industrial lands program. Participating local governments will review the program after all nine sites have been occupied, or after ten years, whichever comes first.

## Connections to Other Comprehensive Plan Chapters

Much of the County's economic development activity is directly related to farmland (Chapter 3), forest land (Chapter 3), mineral and aggregate resources (Chapter 4), and natural resources (Chapter 5). Additional information can be found in these sections.

## Key Community Considerations

As part of this comprehensive plan update, community members expressed the following:

- A recognition that tourism is an important industry in the County, but some concern that the interests of tourism-related activity play an outsized role in the County.
- Desire for a strong and diverse economy that benefits local residents.
- Strong interest in expanding access to childcare for rural residents, especially those who travel into incorporated cities for employment.
- Interest in exploring new economic opportunities including renewable energy development.
- Desire for additional educational and job training opportunities, including expansion of colleges and universities.



## Economic Development Goals and Policies

**Goal 9.1:** Maintain a stable, and sustainable, and thriving rural economy, compatible with rural lifestyles and a healthy environment.

**Policy 9.1.1.** Promote rural economic initiatives, including home-based businesses, that maintain the integrity of the rural character and natural environment.

**Policy 9.1.2.** Support a regional approach to economic development in concert with Economic Development for Central Oregon or and similar organizations.

**Policy 9.1.3.** Support growth and expansion of colleges and universities, regional educational facilities, and workforce training programs.

**Policy 9.1.4.** Support renewable energy generation as an important economic development initiative, while taking other community goals and concerns into consideration.

**Policy 9.1.5.** Support and participate in master planning for airports in Deschutes County, including expansion of noise impact boundaries and upgrades to facilities as airports continue to grow.

**Policy 9.1.6.** Within the parameters of State land use regulations, permit limited local-serving commercial uses in higher-density rural communities. Support limited and locally-serving commercial uses in appropriate locations.

**Policy 9.1.7.** Support expansion of high-speed internet in rural areas and integrate infrastructure such as fiber-optic cables into new development and road projects.

**Policy 9.1.8.** Support funding and development of childcare locations across the County to support families in the workforce.

**Policy 9.1.9.** Explore need for master planning for rural economic development lands, including Deschutes Junction.

**Policy 9.1.10.** Recognize the importance of maintaining a large-lot industrial land supply that is readily developable in Central Oregon, and support a multi-jurisdictional cooperative effort to designate these sites.

**Goal 9.2:** Support creation and continuation of rural commercial areas that support rural communities while not adversely affecting nearby agricultural and forest uses.

**Policy 9.2.1.** Allow for new Rural Commercial zoning designations if otherwise allowed by Oregon Revised Statute, Administrative Rule, and this Comprehensive Plan.

**Policy 9.2.2.** In Spring River there shall be a Limited Use Combining Zone.

**Policy 9.2.3.** Ensure new uses permitted on Rural Commercial lands do not adversely affect nearby agricultural and forest uses.

**Policy 9.2.4.** Ensure new commercial uses on Rural Commercial lands are limited to those intended to serve the surrounding rural area and/or the needs of the traveling public.

**Policy 9.2.5.** New commercial uses shall be limited in size to 2,500 square feet or if for an agricultural or forest-related use, 3,500 square feet.

**Policy 9.2.6.** A lawful use existing on or before November 5, 2002 that is not otherwise allowed in a Rural Commercial zone, may continue to exist subject to the county's nonconforming use regulations.

**Policy 9.2.7.** An existing lawful use may expand up to 25 percent of the total floor area existing on November 5, 2002.

**Policy 9.2.8.** The Rural Commercial zoning regulations shall allow a mixed use of residential or rural commercial uses.

**Policy 9.2.9.** Residential and commercial uses shall be served by DEQ approved on-site sewage disposal systems.

**Policy 9.2.10.** Residential and commercial uses shall be served by on-site wells or public water systems.

**Policy 9.2.11.** Community sewer systems, motels, hotels and industrial uses shall not be allowed.

**Policy 9.2.12.** Recreational vehicle or trailer parks and other uses catering to travelers shall be permitted.

**Goal 9.3:** Support the creation and continuation of rural industrial areas that support rural communities while not adversely affecting nearby agricultural and forest uses.

**Policy 9.3.1.** Update the policies for lands designated Rural Industrial as needed to limit and control industrial uses through the use of the Rural Industrial designation and development standards.

**Policy 9.3.2.** To assure that urban uses are not permitted on rural industrial lands, land use regulations in the Rural Industrial zones shall ensure that the uses allowed are less intensive than those allowed for unincorporated communities in OAR 660-22 or any successor.

**Policy 9.3.3.** Limited Use Combining zones shall be applied to the Redmond Military (Tax lot 1513000000116), Deschutes Junction (Tax lot 161226C000301, Tax lot 161226C000300, Tax lot 161226C000111 and Tax lot 161226A000203) to ensure permitted uses are compatible with surrounding farm and forest lands.

**Policy 9.3.4.** To ensure that the uses in Rural Industrial zone on tax lot 16-12-26C-301, as described in Exhibit "C" and depicted on Exhibit "D" attached to Ordinance 2009-007 and incorporated by reference herein, are limited in nature and scope, the Rural Industrial

zoning on that site shall be subject to a Limited Use Combining Zone which will limit the uses to storage, crushing, processing, sale and distribution of minerals.

**Policy 9.3.5.** To ensure that the uses in Rural Industrial zone on tax lot 16-12-26C-301, as described in Exhibit "C" and depicted on Exhibit "D" attached to Ordinance 2009-007 and incorporated by reference herein, are limited in nature and scope, the Rural Industrial zoning on that site shall be subject to a Limited Use Combining Zone which will limit the uses to storage, crushing, processing, sale and distribution of minerals

**Policy 9.3.6.** To ensure that the uses in the Rural Industrial Zone on Tax Lot 300 on Assessor's Map 16-12-26C-300 and Tax Lot 203 on Assessor's Map 16-12-26A-300 and portions of Tax Lot 111 on Assessor's Map 16-12-26C-111 as described in Exhibit 'D' and depicted in Exhibit 'E' attached to Ordinance 2010-030 and incorporated by reference herein, are limited in nature and scope, the Rural Industrial zoning on the subject parcel shall be subject to a Limited Use Combining Zone, which will limit the uses to storage, crushing, processing, sale and distribution of minerals, subject to conditional use and site plan approval

**Policy 9.3.7.** Ensure new uses on Rural Industrial lands do not adversely affect nearby agricultural and forest uses.

**Policy 9.3.8.** A lawfully established use that existed on or before February 2, 2003 not otherwise allowed in a Rural Industrial zone may continue to exist subject to the county's non-conforming use regulations.

**Policy 9.3.9.** A lawfully established use that existed on or before February 2, 2003 may be expanded to occupy a maximum of 10,000 square feet of floor area or an additional 25 percent of the floor area currently occupied by the existing use, whichever is greater.

**Policy 9.3.10.** Ensure new uses on Rural Industrial lands are served by on-site sewage disposal systems approved by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

**Policy 9.3.11.** Residential and industrial uses shall be served by on-site wells or public water systems.

**Policy 9.3.12.** Community sewer systems shall not be allowed in Rural Industrial zones.

**Policy 9.3.13.** A 2009 exception (Ordinance 2009-007) included an irrevocably committed exception to Goal 3 and a reasons exception to Goal 14 to allow rural industrial use with a Limited Use Combining Zone for storage, crushing, processing, sale and distribution of minerals.

**Policy 9.3.14.** A 2010 exception (Ordinance 2010-030) took a reasons exception to Goal 14 with a Limited Use Combining Zone for storage, crushing, processing, sale and distribution of minerals.

**Policy 9.3.15.** Properties for which a property owner has demonstrated that Goals 3 and 4 do not apply may be considered for Rural Industrial designation as allowed by State Statute, Oregon Administrative rules and this Comprehensive Plan. Rural Industrial zoning shall be applied to a new property that is approved for the Rural Industrial Plan designation.

## Rural Service Center Policies

**Goal 9.4:** Support the creation and continuation of rural service centers that support rural communities while not adversely affecting nearby agricultural and forest uses.

**Policy 9.4.1.** Rural Service Centers in Alfalfa, Brothers, Hampton, Wilstlestop, and Wildhunt are identified on the Comprehensive Plan Map and shall have zoning consistent with Comprehensive Plan designations.

**Policy 9.4.2.** In Alfalfa, the remaining 20 acres of the Rural Service Center will continue to be zoned Rural Service Center – Residential District, with a 5-acre minimum lot size. A zone change to mixed use commercial can be considered only for a specific use and upon findings that the existing commercial area is fully developed.

**Policy 9.4.3.** Ensure that land uses at Rural Service Centers do not adversely affect agricultural and forest uses in the surrounding areas.

**Policy 9.4.4.** Zoning in rural service areas shall promote the maintenance of the area's rural character. New commercial uses shall be limited to small-scale, low impact uses that are intended to serve the community and surrounding rural area or the travel needs of people passing through the area. The commercial/mixed use zoning regulations shall allow a mixed use of residential or small-scale commercial uses such as health and retail services.

**Policy 9.4.5.** Residential and commercial uses shall be served by DEQ approved on-site sewage disposal systems.

**Policy 9.4.6.** Residential and commercial uses shall be served by onsite wells or public water systems.

**Policy 9.4.7.** Community water systems, motels, hotels and industrial uses shall not be allowed.

**Policy 9.4.8.** Recreational vehicle or trailer parks and other uses catering to travelers shall be permitted.

# 10

**Housing**





## Opportunities, Challenges, and Considerations

Deschutes County faces a variety of housing demands, issues, and challenges. The County continues to be a desirable and attractive place to live, with access to jobs, recreation, beautiful natural landscapes, and a variety of other amenities. The County's population is projected to continue to grow in the coming decades. At the same time, there are several challenges to the development of housing in the County. Some of the key issues the County faces today include increased demand for rural housing; housing affordability; state planning requirements related to Urban Growth Boundaries, farm and forest land, destination resorts, and others; water availability; and issues related to homelessness.

## Context

### PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH IN UNINCORPORATED DESCHUTES COUNTY

Deschutes County is one of the fastest growing counties in Oregon, and that trend is expected to continue. Significant growth is expected to occur in Deschutes County in the coming years (over 90,000 new residents in the next 25 years). However, the majority of this growth is forecasted to happen in urban areas with a more modest amount occurring in unincorporated parts of the County (about 5,000 additional people during the same period). (Source: *Portland State University Population Research Center*)





## Historical and Forecasted Population and Average Annual Growth Rate in Deschutes County and its Sub-Areas



### INCREASED DEMAND FOR RURAL HOUSING

Between 2010 and 2022, Deschutes County processed seven applications to rezone approximately 1,200 acres of property from a non-residential zone to a residential zone, with several more applications recently submitted and under review. Most of these applicants requested rezonings of farmland due to poor soil quality for farming. This trend is likely to continue.

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The median value of owner-occupied housing units in Deschutes County (including cities), is significantly higher than that of the State of Oregon (\$435,600 compared to \$362,200 according to 2017-2021 Census figures), and consistently increasing. In July 2023, Becon Appraisal Group reported an all-time high median home value for Bend area homes, in the amount of \$785,000. The same report estimated a median home price as \$694,000 for Sisters area homes, \$473,000 for Redmond area homes, and \$401,000 for La Pine

area homes. Given that median income is generally on par with the state as a whole, high housing prices are likely an indicator of an inadequate supply of housing affordable to many residents of the Deschutes County, particularly those with low to moderate incomes.

### STATE PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

Although Deschutes County has numerous prospects to expand residential development, some of these opportunities face challenges with respect to state rules and regulations. The Oregon land use system is designed to concentrate most growth within Urban Growth Boundaries. A variety of statewide planning goals, laws, and administrative rules designed to protect farm and forest land, regulate destination resorts, and ensure cost-effective provision of infrastructure limit where and how housing can be built outside of urban areas.

*Vacant Lots in Resort Areas*

Resort Area	Number of Vacant Lots
<b>Destination Resorts</b>	
Caldera Springs	101
Eagle Crest	139
Pronghorn	285
Tetherow	200
<b>Resort Communities</b>	
Black Butte	27
In of the 7th Mountain/Widgi Creek	12
<b>Urban Unincorporated Area</b>	
Sunriver	118
Total Vacancies, Resort Areas	887

*Vacant Lots in Rural Residential Areas*

Rural Residential Areas	Number of Vacant Lots
<b>Rural Residential Zones</b>	
Rural Residential	2,139
Multiple use Agriculture	518
Suburban Low Density Rural Residential	32
Urban Area Reserve	292
<b>Rural Communities</b>	
Tumalo (TUR/TUR5)	32
Terrebonne (TER/TER5)	134
Total Vacancies, Rural Residential Areas	3,447

*Future Opportunities for Rural Residential Lots*

Rural Residential Areas	Count
Thornburgh Destination Resort	950
Caldera Springs Destination Resort Phase 2	340
West Side Transect	187
Tumalo Irrigation District Rezoned Parcel	72
Gopher Gulch (North of Bend)	10
Total Vacancies, Rural Residential Areas	1,559

**WATER AVAILABILITY AND CONSUMPTION**

A growing demand for water for residential, business, recreation, and agricultural uses; changes in water table depth; allocation of water rights; and potential future changes in water supply related to climate change all may impact the availability of water to support new housing. Water resources are discussed in Chapter 5 in more detail.

**HOMELESSNESS**

The incidence and impacts of homelessness have been rising in Deschutes County, as well as across the state and nation in recent years. A variety of factors have contributed to this trend, including rising housing costs, increasing income disparities, and limited transitional housing and supportive resources. As a result, impacts on both urban areas and natural resources have increased, with elevated levels of community concern and support for more action by the County and its partners to address these issues.

**BALANCING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH VISITOR ACCOMMODATIONS**

Although population growth in unincorporated Deschutes County is forecasted to be relatively limited, rural parts of the County, including several destination resorts, include significant capacity for new residential development. Community members have expressed concern regarding the use of these homes as primary residences, second homes, or vacation rentals.

**RECENT CHANGES IN COUNTY HOUSING RULES**

The County has recently adopted and/or is currently considering new rules related to development and regulation of different types of housing. These include:

- Changes to where accessory dwelling units are allowed.
- Repeal of the County's "Conventional Housing Combining Zone" which prohibited manufactured homes in three large unincorporated areas east and west of Tumalo and east of Bend.

### What type of housing is allowed in unincorporated Deschutes County?

Residential development in Deschutes County is less dense than the Cities of Bend, La Pine, Redmond and Sisters due to state land use rules. Single family homes are most common type of housing throughout the county in all zones. Recreational vehicles are allowed to be placed on property for temporary living situations or as medical hardship dwellings for family members but are not intended to be permanent living situations. Accessory Dwelling Units or ADUs, also known as “granny flats” or “carriage houses” are smaller secondary residences on a property. In 2021, the Oregon legislature passed Senate Bill 391 which allows for rural ADUs with certain parameters, and Deschutes County is currently in the process of implementing this legislation.

## Key Community Considerations

Given the range of issues and conditions discussed related to this important topic, the Comprehensive Plan includes a variety of policies to guide future development of housing and address impacts to residents in rural areas. Additional related policies are found in Chapter 2 (Land Use) and Chapter 13 (Transportation). These strategies are underpinned by community sentiment, as described below.

- Some community members expressed support for allowing or encouraging growth in rural areas, particularly to alleviate housing pressure and provide larger-lot options. However, engagement showed greater opposition to residential development outside of Urban Growth Boundaries.
- Overall support for allowing a wider range of types of housing (e.g., accessory dwelling units, manufactured homes, recreational vehicles, etc.), but concerns about the quality of this housing and additional rural residential development in general.
- Concern about homelessness and its impacts, coupled with strong support for a proactive approach by the County to work with partner agencies and groups to address this issue.
- Relatively strong opposition for rezoning low productivity farmland with poor soil to allow greater opportunities for housing, due to negative impact on open space, habitat, transportation, and active farm practices.



## Goals and Policies

**Goal 10.1:** Support housing opportunities and choices for rural County residents in unincorporated Deschutes County, while meeting health and safety concerns, minimizing environmental and resource land impacts.

**Policy 10.1.1.** Incorporate annual farm and forest housing reports into a wider system for tracking the cumulative impacts of rural housing development.

**Policy 10.1.2.** Continue to update the County zoning ordinance and work with partnering organizations to address health and safety issues associated with housing.

**Policy 10.1.3.** Encourage and/or require, where consistent with County policies and requirements, new subdivisions to incorporate alternative development patterns, such as cluster development, that mitigate community and environmental impacts.

**Policy 10.1.4.** Implement legislation allowing accessory dwelling units in rural areas to expand housing choices.

**Policy 10.1.5.** Create and encourage opportunities for flexibility in rural housing including development of manufactured home parks, safe parking sites, and RV parking areas.

**Policy 10.1.6.** Reduce barriers to housing development and supporting services (such as locally serving medical offices or similar uses) in unincorporated communities.

**Policy 10.1.7.** Explore grants and funding opportunities for ongoing maintenance and rehabilitation of existing housing stock.

**Policy 10.1.8.** Evaluate the impacts of short-term rentals and consider regulations to mitigate impacts, as appropriate.

**Goal 10.2:** Support agencies and non-profits that provide affordable housing.

**Policy 10.2.1.** Support Central Oregon Regional Housing Authority and other stakeholders to meet the housing needs of all Deschutes County residents by assisting, as needed, in coordinating and implementing housing assistance programs.

**Policy 10.2.2.** Utilize block grants and other funding to assist in providing and maintaining low- and moderate-income housing in partnership with Housing Works and other housing agencies and providers in Deschutes County.

**Goal 10.3:** Regulate the location and density of housing in the area located between the Bend UGB and Shevlin Park through Westside Transect policies

**Policy 10.3.1.** Protect the sensitive eco-systems and interrelationships of the urban/rural interface on the west side of Bend between the urban area and Shevlin Park and the public and forestlands to the west.

**Policy 10.3.2.** Protect natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and provide special setbacks between development and Shevlin Park, Tumalo Creek, and forestlands.

**Policy 10.3.3.** Development patterns shall reflect the protection of land with environmental significance and fire-wise and other fire prevention community design best practices.

**Policy 10.3.4.** Limit residential development to 200 single-family residential lots.

**Policy 10.3.5.** Manage all areas outside of the structural building envelopes on residential lots for wildfire mitigation and wildlife habitat in accordance with coordinated plans prepared by professionals, reviewed annually with reports submitted to the County every three years. The wildfire mitigation and wildlife habitat

plans shall be funded through homeowner assessments and administered and enforced by a homeowners association established at the time of creation of any residential lots.

**Policy 10.3.6.** Reduce the impact of construction by using best management practices to minimize site disturbance during construction and construction impacts (i.e., erosion) on Shevlin Park, Tumalo Creek, and forestlands.

**Policy 10.3.7.** Coordinate with the City of Bend for mitigation of impacts to City infrastructure from development within the Transect.

**Goal 10.4:** Participate in regional efforts to plan for housing.

**Policy 10.4.1.** Collaborate with cities and private sector partners on innovative housing developments to meet the region's housing needs.

**Policy 10.4.2.** Partner with cities to incentivize development within urban growth boundaries and reduce infrastructure costs for workforce and affordable housing.

**Policy 10.4.3.** Partner with local, state, and federal agencies to address and limit nuisance and public health issues related to homelessness.

**Policy 10.4.4.** Utilize County owned land in city limits for affordable and workforce housing, where appropriate.

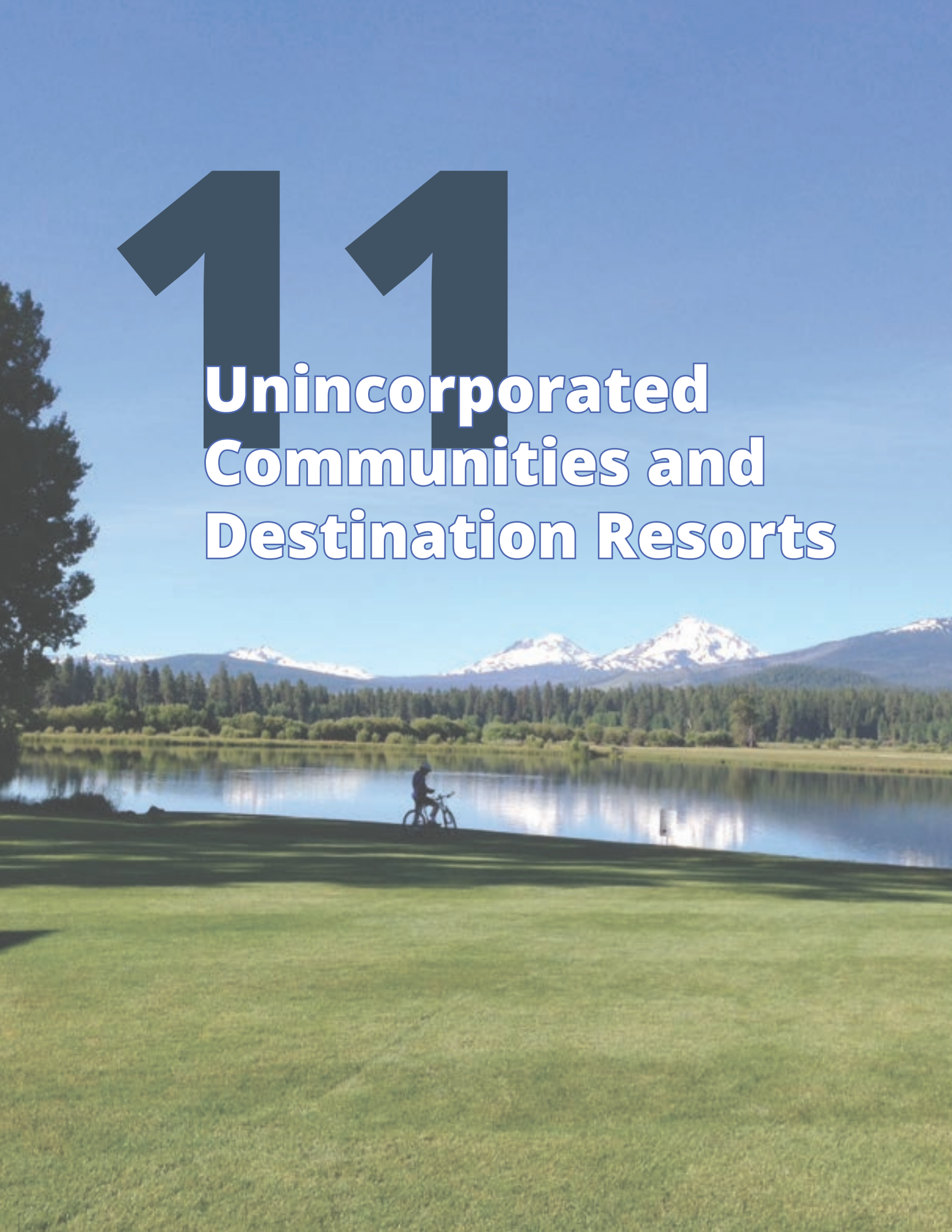
**Policy 10.4.5.** Promote regional housing planning, including urban reserve planning for cities, to allow for longer term and multi-jurisdictional housing strategies.

**Policy 10.4.6.** Limit parcelization and development adjacent to cities or in conflict with planned and/or known road/utility corridors to preserve land for future urban development.



11

**Unincorporated  
Communities and  
Destination Resorts**





## Opportunities, Challenges, and Considerations

Deschutes County is home to numerous unincorporated communities, which contain urban levels of development outside of city limits. Many of these communities provide services and amenities to rural residents. As the county continues to grow, many residents are concerned about increasingly dense development in these unincorporated areas which may feel out of scale with the surrounding rural uses. However, many residents also see the need for more opportunities for small-scale rural services and retail opportunities to serve existing and future community members. Deschutes County will need to continue to refine the vision and guidelines for development in these areas while balancing infrastructure needs, protection of natural resources and rural land uses, and community desires.

In addition to these unincorporated communities, Destination Resorts are another form of development outside of urban areas. In recent years, community members have expressed concern about the creation of new resorts for a variety of reasons. While Destination Resorts are an opportunity for economic development and housing in the rural County, many residents have expressed opposition to additional development of this type.

### Context

#### Unincorporated Communities

Deschutes County's unincorporated communities generally pre-date Oregon's statewide land use system and have more urban-scale uses in outlying rural areas, within a defined geographic boundary.

In 1994, Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) were amended to define unincorporated communities and the types of uses that could be allowed in these areas. The OARs established four types of unincorporated communities, all of which were required to be in existence at the time of the change - the Rule did not allow for new rural communities to be established. These community types are described below.

#### URBAN UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITY

This is a community which contains at least 150 permanent dwelling units, a mixture of land uses, and contains a community water and sewer system. Sunriver is an Urban Unincorporated community. One parcel just outside of the City of La Pine was mistakenly left outside of the City's urban growth boundary, and is technically under this classification as well.

### RURAL COMMUNITY

This is a community which consists of permanent residential dwellings and at least two other types of land uses – such as commercial, industrial, or public uses provided to the community or travelers. Terrebonne and Tumalo are Rural Communities.

### RESORT COMMUNITY

This type of community was established for a recreation-related use on private land prior to 1989 when the state adopted its Destination Resort rules. Black Butte Ranch and Inn of the 7<sup>th</sup> Mountain/Widgi Creek are Resort Communities. It's important to note that there are several other resort style developments in the County on private lands called "Destination Resorts." See the next section for more information.

### RURAL SERVICE CENTER

This is an unincorporated community that has primarily commercial or industrial uses that provide goods and services to the surrounding rural area and travelers. These are the most common type of unincorporated community in Deschutes County and include Alfalfa, Brothers, Hampton, Millican, Whistlestop, and Wildhunt.

## Destination Resorts

Since 1979 destination resorts have increased in importance to the economy of Deschutes County. In 1989, recognizing the importance of tourism to the economy of the State of Oregon, the state legislature and the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) took steps to make it easier to establish destination resorts on rural lands in the state. Statewide Planning Goal 8, the recreation goal, was amended to specify a process for locating destination resorts on rural land without taking an exception to Goals 3, 4, 11 and 14, which govern development in rural resource lands. Under these changes, destination resorts may be sited in EFU zones where they weren't previously allowed. In 1990, LCDC amended the rule for siting destination resorts on forest lands as well.

Eagle Crest Resort, although it had existed prior to these changes, applied for legislative changes to comply with these new rules and expand onto adjacent lands.

In 2010, Deschutes County completed an amendment to its destination resort mapping process, adding "clear and objective" requirements for eligible and ineligible sites, and the process for amending the destination resort map based on changes in state law. Since that time, Pronghorn, Caldera Springs, and Tetherow resorts have gone through the siting process. Resorts existing prior to the legislative change, such as Black Butte, Sunriver, and the Inn of the Seventh Mountain have also expanded and been rezoned to Urban Unincorporated Community and Resort Community, respectively. Thornburgh Resort has received preliminary approvals, but has not yet broken ground.





## Key Community Considerations

Unincorporated Communities are limited in their development potential due to their specific geographic footprint. Protecting open space and natural resources while providing economic opportunities in these unincorporated areas continues to be a balancing act.

As additional rural development occurs, so does the demand for services and goods that can be reached without having to drive to an incorporated city. Aging residents have expressed a desire for additional medical care and offices in rural areas to support aging in place. On the other hand, many residents would prefer limiting development in unincorporated communities in order to preserve the rural of the area.

Destination Resort development continues to be a contentious issue. Community members have expressed concern regarding the water use of large-scale development – specifically the effects to groundwater for neighboring property owners. Many community members have expressed a desire to further limit destination resorts, golf courses, and visitor accommodations in order to preserve water access and availability for year-round residents.



## Goals and Policies

### Resort Community Policies

#### General Resort Community Policies

**Policy 11.1.1.** Land use regulations shall conform to the requirements of OAR 660 Division 22 or any successor.

**Policy 11.1.2.** Designated open space and common area, unless otherwise zoned for development, shall remain undeveloped except for community amenities such as bike and pedestrian paths, park and picnic areas. Areas developed as golf courses shall remain available for that purpose or for open space/recreation uses.

**Policy 11.1.3.** The provisions of the Landscape Management Overlay Zone shall apply in Resort Communities where the zone exists along Century Drive, Highway 26 and the Deschutes River.

**Policy 11.1.4.** Residential minimum lot sizes and densities shall be determined by the capacity of the water and sewer facilities to accommodate existing and future development and growth.

**Policy 11.1.5.** The resort facility and resort recreation uses permitted in the zoning for Black Butte Ranch and the Inn of the Seventh Mountain/Widgi Creek shall serve the resort community.

#### Black Butte Ranch General Policies

**Policy 11.2.1.** County comprehensive plan policies and land use regulations shall ensure that new uses authorized within the Black Butte Ranch Resort Community do not adversely affect forest uses in the surrounding Forest Use Zones.

**Policy 11.2.2.** The County supports the design review standards administered by the Architectural Review Committee.

**Policy 11.2.3.** Residential, resort and utility uses shall continue to be developed in accordance with the Master Design for Black Butte Ranch and the respective Section Declarations.

**Policy 11.2.4.** Industrial activities, including surface mining, shall only occur in the area zoned Black Butte Ranch Surface Mining, Limited Use Combining District (Black Butte Ranch SM/LU) located in the northwest corner of Black Butte Ranch.

**Policy 11.2.5.** Employee housing shall be located in the area zoned Black Butte Ranch-Utility/Limited Use Combining District (Black Butte Ranch-U/LU).

**Policy 11.2.6.** Any amendment to the allowable use(s) in either the Resort Community District or the Limited Use Combining District shall require an exception in accordance with applicable statewide planning goal(s), OAR 660-04-018/022 and DCC 18.112 or any successor.

**Policy 11.2.7.** The westerly 38-acres zoned Black Butte Ranch Surface Mining, Limited Use Combining District (Black Butte Ranch SM/LU) shall be used for the mining and storage of aggregate resources. Uses that do not prevent the future mining of these resources, such as disposal of reclaimed effluent and woody debris disposal from thinning and other forest practices may be allowed concurrently. Other resort maintenance, operational and utility uses, such as a solid waste transfer station, maintenance facility or equipment storage may be allowed only after mining and reclamation have occurred.

**Policy 11.2.8.** The 18.5 acres zoned Black Butte Ranch-Utility/Limited Use Combining District (Black Butte Ranch-U/LU) may be used for the disposal of reclaimed sludge.

**Policy 11.2.9.** The area west of McCallister Road and east of the area zoned Black Butte Ranch may be used for large equipment storage, general storage, maintenance uses, RV storage, telephone communications, administration offices, housekeeping facilities and employee housing.

**Policy 11.2.10.** Employee housing shall be set back at least 250 feet from the eastern boundary of the area zoned Black Butte Ranch Surface Mining, Limited Use Combining District (Black Butte Ranch SM/LU).

**Policy 11.2.11.** Surface mining within the Black Butte Ranch community boundary shall adhere to the following Goal 5 ESEE "Program to Meet Goal" requirements:

- a. Only the western most 38 acres of the site shall continue to be mined.
- b. Setbacks shall be required for potential conflicting residential and other development. A minimum 50-foot setback shall be maintained from the perimeter of tax lot 202 for all surface mining activity.
- c. Noise impact shall be mitigated by buffering and screening.
- d. Hours of operation shall be limited to between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. weekdays. No operations shall be allowed on weekends and holidays.
- e. Processing shall be limited to 45 days in any one year, to be negotiated with Deschutes County in the site plan process in consultation with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).
- f. The conditions set forth in the August 10, 1989, letter of ODFW shall be adhered to.
- g. Extraction at the site shall be limited to five acres at a time with on-going incremental reclamation (subject to DOGAMI review and approval).

- h. Mining operations, siting of equipment, and trucking of product shall be conducted in such a manner that applicable DEQ standards are met and minimizes noise and dust.
- i. DOGAMI requirements for a permit once mining affects more than five acres outside the 8.6-acre exemption area shall be met.
- j. A conditional use permit shall be obtained from Deschutes County, under the provisions of section 18.128.280. Surface mining of resources exclusively for on-site personal, farm or forest use or maintenance of irrigation canals, before mining activity affects more than five acres outside the 8.6-acre exempt area.

**Black Butte Ranch Public Facility Policies**

- Policy 11.3.1.** Police protection services shall be provided by the Black Butte Ranch Police Services District.
- Policy 11.3.2.** The Black Butte Ranch Water Distribution Company and the Black Butte Ranch Corporation shall confirm the water and sewer service, respectively, can be provided for new uses or expansion of existing uses that require land use approval.
- Policy 11.3.3.** The Black Butte Ranch Water Distribution Company shall provide water service for the Black Butte Ranch Resort Community.
- Policy 11.3.4.** The Black Butte Ranch Corporation shall provide sewer service for Black Butte Ranch.
- Policy 11.3.5.** The Black Butte Ranch Fire Protection District shall provide fire protection services for Black Butte Ranch.
- Policy 11.3.6.** The roads and the bicycle/pedestrian path system within the Black Butte Ranch Resort Community boundary shall be maintained by the Black Butte Ranch Owners Association.

**Inn of the 7th Mountain Widgi Creek General Policies**

- Policy 11.4.1.** Any amendment to the allowable uses in either the Resort Community District or the Widgi Creek Residential District shall require an exception in accordance with applicable statewide planning goal(s), OAR 660-04-018/022 or any successor, and DCC 18.112 or any successor.
- Policy 11.4.2.** The County shall encourage and support land exchanges efforts by and between private property owners, public agencies, and public trusts for the purpose of fostering public access to and protection of natural resources, such as rivers, streams, caves, areas/features of historical importance and other natural features.

**Inn of the 7th Mountain/Widgi Creek Public Facility Policies**

- Policy 11.5.1.** Police protection services shall be provided under contract with the Deschutes County Sheriff.
- Policy 11.5.2.** Water service shall be supplied by on-site wells for the Inn/Widgi Resort Community.
- Policy 11.5.3.** New uses or expansion of existing uses that require land use approval shall be approved only upon confirmation from the City of Bend that sewer service can be provided.
- Policy 11.5.4.** Fire protection services for the Inn/Widgi shall be provided through a contract with the City of Bend until such time as Inn/Widgi develops another plan to provide adequate fire protection.
- Policy 11.5.5.** The Resort Community, not Deschutes County, shall maintain roads in the community.
- Policy 11.5.6.** The bicycle/pedestrian path system shall be maintained by the Inn/Widgi Owners Association.

**Policy 11.5.7.** Emergency access between Widgi Creek and the Inn of the Seventh Mountain shall be provided in accordance with the approved development plan for the Elkai Woods town homes. The respective resort property owners shall maintain emergency access between the Inn and Widgi Creek

**Policy 11.7.3.** Ensure that destination resort developments support and implement strategies to provide workers with affordable housing options within or in close proximity to the resorts.

**Policy 11.7.4.** Mapping for destination resort siting.

## Destination Resorts Policies

**Goal 11.6:** Provide for development of destination resorts in the County in a manner that will be compatible with farm and forest uses, existing rural development, and in a manner that will maintain important natural features including habitat of threatened or endangered species, streams, rivers, and significant wetlands.

**Policy 11.6.1.** Provide a process for the siting of destination resorts facilities that enhance and diversify the recreational opportunities and economy of Deschutes County, on lands that have been mapped by Deschutes County as eligible for this purpose.

**Goal 11.7:** Provide for development of destination resorts consistent with Statewide Planning Goal 12 in a manner that will ensure the resorts are supported by adequate transportation facilities.

**Policy 11.7.1.** Destination resorts shall only be allowed within areas shown on the “Deschutes County Destination Resort Map” and when the resort complies with the requirements of Goal 8, ORS 197.435 to 197.467, and Deschutes County Code 18.113.

**Policy 11.7.2.** Create and implement additional limitations on the siting and development of destination resorts that go beyond current state regulations to ensure protection of water quality, recreational resources, and other County resources and values.

a. To assure that resort development does not conflict with the objectives of other Statewide Planning Goals, destination resorts shall pursuant to Goal 8 not be sited in Deschutes County in the following areas:

- 1) Within 24 air miles of an urban growth boundary with an existing population of 100,000 or more unless residential uses are limited to those necessary for the staff and management of the resort;
- 2) On a site with 50 or more contiguous acres of unique or prime farm land identified and mapped by the Soil Conservation Service or within three miles of farm land within a High-Value Crop Area;
- 3) On predominantly Cubic Foot Site Class 1 or 2 forest lands which are not subject to an approved Goal exception;
- 4) On areas protected as Goal 5 resources in an acknowledged comprehensive plan where all conflicting uses have been prohibited to protect the Goal 5 resource;
- 5) Especially sensitive big game habitat, and as listed below, as generally mapped by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in July 1984 and as further refined through development of comprehensive plan provisions implementing this requirement.
  - i. Tumalo deer winter range;
  - ii. Portion of the Metolius deer winter range;

- iii. Antelope winter range east of Bend near Horse Ridge and Millican;
- 6) Sites less than 160 acres.
- b. To assure that resort development does not conflict with Oregon Revised Statute, destination resorts shall not be sited in Deschutes County in Areas of Critical State Concern.
- c. To assure that resort development does not conflict with the objectives of Deschutes County, destination resorts shall also not be located in the following areas:
  - 1) Sites listed below that are inventoried Goal 5 resources, shown on the Wildlife Combining Zone, that the County has chosen to protect:
    - i. Antelope Range near Horse Ridge and Millican;
    - ii. Elk Habitat Area; and
    - iii. Deer Winter Range;
  - 2) Wildlife Priority Area, identified on the 1999 ODFW map submitted to the South County Regional Problem Solving Group;
  - 3) Lands zoned Open Space and Conservation (OS&C);
  - 4) Lands zoned Forest Use 1 (F-1);
  - 5) Irrigated lands zoned Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) having 40 or greater contiguous acres in irrigation;
  - 6) 6. Non-contiguous EFU acres in the same ownership having 60 or greater irrigated acres;
  - 7) Farm or forest land within one mile outside of urban growth boundaries;
  - 8) Lands designated Urban Reserve Area under ORS 195.145;
  - 9) Platted subdivisions;
- d. For those lands not located in any of the areas designated in Policy 3.9.5(a) though (c), destination resorts may, pursuant to Goal 8, Oregon Revised Statute and Deschutes County zoning code, be sited in the following areas:
  - 1) Forest Use 2 (F-2), Multiple Use Agriculture (MUA-10), and Rural Residential (RR-10) zones;
  - 2) Unirrigated Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) land;
  - 3) Irrigated lands zoned EFU having less than 40 contiguous acres in irrigation;
  - 4) Non-contiguous irrigated EFU acres in the same ownership having less than 60 irrigated acres;
  - 5) All property within a subdivision for which cluster development approval was obtained prior to 1990, for which the original cluster development approval designated at least 50 percent of the development as open space and which was within the destination resort zone prior to the effective date of Ordinance 2010-024 shall remain on the eligibility map;
  - 6) Minimum site of 160 contiguous acres or greater under one or multiple ownerships;
- e. The County shall adopt a map showing where destination resorts can be located in the County. Such map shall become part of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance and shall be an overlay zone designated Destination Resort (DR).

### **Policy 11.7.5. Ordinance Provisions**

- a. The County shall ensure that destination resorts are compatible with the site and adjacent land uses through enactment of land use regulations that, at a minimum, provide for the following:

## Unincorporated Communities and Destination Resorts

- 1) Maintenance of important natural features, including habitat of threatened or endangered species, streams, rivers, and significant wetlands; maintenance of riparian vegetation within 100 feet of streams, rivers and significant wetlands; and
  - 2) Location and design of improvements and activities in a manner that will avoid or minimize adverse effects of the resort on uses on surrounding lands, particularly effects on intensive farming operations in the area and on the rural transportation system. In order to adequately assess the effect on the transportation system, notice and the opportunity for comment shall be provided to the relevant road authority.
  - 3) Such regulations may allow for alterations to important natural features, including placement of structures, provided that the overall values of the feature are maintained.
- b. Minimum measures to assure that design and placement of improvements and activities will avoid or minimize the adverse effects noted in Policy 3.9.4(a) shall include:
- 1) The establishment and maintenance of buffers between the resort and adjacent land uses, including natural vegetation and where appropriate, fenced, berms, landscaped areas, and other similar types of buffers.
  - 2) Setbacks of structures and other improvements from adjacent land uses.
- c. The County may adopt additional land use restrictions to ensure that proposed destination resorts are compatible with the environmental capabilities of the site and surrounding land uses.
- d. Uses in destination resorts shall be limited to visitor- oriented accommodations, overnight lodgings, developed recreational facilities, commercial uses limited to types and levels necessary to meet the needs of visitors to the resort, and uses consistent with preservation and maintenance of open space.
  - e. The zoning ordinance shall include measures that assure that developed recreational facilities, visitor-oriented accommodations and key facilities intended to serve the entire development are physically provided or are guaranteed through surety bonding or substantially equivalent financial assurances prior to closure of sale of individual lots or units. In phased developments, developed recreational facilities and other key facilitated intended to serve a particular phase shall be constructed prior to sales in that phase or guaranteed through surety bonding.

### SUNRIVER POLICIES

#### General Sunriver Policies

**Policy 11.8.1.** Land use regulations shall conform to the requirements of OAR 660 Division 22 or any successor.

**Policy 11.8.2.** County comprehensive plan policies and land use regulations shall ensure that new uses authorized within the Sunriver Urban Unincorporated Community do not adversely affect forest uses in the surrounding Forest Use Zones.

**Policy 11.8.3.** To protect scenic views and riparian habitat within the community, appropriate setbacks shall be required for all structures built on properties with frontage along the Deschutes River.

**Policy 11.8.4.** Open space and common area, unless otherwise zoned for development, shall remain undeveloped except for community amenities such as bike and pedestrian paths, and parks and picnic areas.

**Policy 11.8.5.** Public access to the Deschutes River shall be preserved.

**Policy 11.8.6.** The County supports the design review standards administered by the Sunriver Owners Association.

### Sunriver Residential District Policies

**Policy 11.9.1.** Areas designated residential on the comprehensive plan map shall be developed with single family or multiple family residential housing.

### Sunriver Commercial District Policies

**Policy 11.10.1.** Small-scale, low-impact commercial uses shall be developed in conformance with the requirements of OAR Chapter 660, Division 22. Larger, more intense commercial uses shall be permitted if they are intended to serve the community, the surrounding rural area and the travel needs of people passing through the area.

**Policy 11.10.2.** No additional land shall be designated Commercial until the next periodic review.

**Policy 11.10.3.** Multiple-family residences and residential units in commercial buildings shall be permitted in the commercial area for the purpose of providing housing which is adjacent to places of employment. Single-family residences shall not be permitted in commercial areas.

**Policy 11.10.4.** Approval standards for conditional uses in the commercial district shall take into consideration the impact of the proposed use on the nearby residential and commercial uses and the capacity of the transportation system and public facilities and services to serve the proposed use.

### Sunriver Town Center District Policies

**Policy 11.11.1.** Small-scale, low-impact commercial uses shall be developed in conformance with the requirements of OAR Chapter 660, Division 22. Larger, more intense commercial uses shall be permitted if they are intended to serve the community, the surrounding rural area or the travel needs of people passing through the area.

**Policy 11.11.2.** Development standards in the town center district should encourage new development that is compatible with a town center style of development that serves as the commercial core of the Sunriver Urban Unincorporated Community. The following policies should guide development in the Town Center District in Sunriver:

- a. Combine a mixture of land uses that may include retail, offices, commercial services, residential housing and civic uses to create economic and social vitality and encourage pedestrian use through mixed use and stand alone residential buildings.
- b. Develop a commercial mixed-use area that is safe, comfortable and attractive to pedestrians.
- c. Encourage efficient land use by facilitating compact, high-density development that minimizes the amount of land that is needed for development.
- d. Provide both formal and informal community gathering places.
- e. Provide visitor accommodations and tourism amenities appropriate to Sunriver.
- f. Provide design flexibility to anticipate changes in the marketplace.
- g. Provide access and public places that encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel.
- h. Provide road and pedestrian connections to residential areas.

- i. Facilitate development (land use mix, density and design) that supports public transit where applicable.
- j. Develop a distinct character and quality design appropriate to Sunriver that will identify the Town Center as the centerpiece/ focal point of the community.

**Policy 11.11.3.** Development within the Town Center (TC) District will be substantially more dense than development elsewhere in Sunriver. This increased density will require changes to existing topography and vegetation in the TC District to allow for screened, underground parking. The requirements of the County’s site plan ordinance shall be interpreted to reflect this fact.

**Sunriver Resort District Policies**

**Policy 11.12.1.** Areas designated resort on the comprehensive plan map shall be designated resort, resort marina, resort golf course, resort equestrian or resort nature center district on the zoning map to reflect a development pattern which is consistent with resort uses and activities.

**Sunriver Business Park District Policies**

**Policy 11.13.1.** A variety of commercial uses which support the needs of the community and surrounding rural area, and not uses solely intended to attract resort visitors, should be encouraged.

**Policy 11.13.2.** Allow small-scale, low-impact commercial uses in conformance with the requirements of OAR Chapter 660, Division 22. Larger more intense commercial uses shall be permitted if they are intended to serve the community, the surrounding rural area and the travel needs of people passing through the area.

**Policy 11.13.3.** Small-scale, low-impact industrial uses should be allowed in conformance with the requirements of OAR Chapter 660, Division 22.

**Sunriver Community District Policies**

**Policy 11.14.1.** Areas designated community on the comprehensive plan map shall be designated community general, community recreation, community limited or community neighborhood district on the zoning map to reflect a development pattern which is consistent community uses and activities.

**Policy 11.14.2.Policy 11.9.2.** Lands designated community shall be developed with uses which support all facets of community needs, be they those of year-round residents or part-time residents and tourists.

**Policy 11.14.3.Policy 11.9.3.** Development shall take into consideration the unique physical features of the community and be sensitive to the residential development within which the community areas are interspersed.





### Sunriver Airport District Policies

**Policy 11.15.1.** Future development shall not result in structures or uses which, due to extreme height or attraction of birds, would pose a hazard to the operation of aircraft.

**Policy 11.15.2.** Future development should not allow uses which would result in large concentrations or gatherings of people in a single location.

### Sunriver Utility District Policies

**Policy 11.15.3.** Lands designated utility shall allow for development of administrative offices, substations, storage/repair yards, distribution lines and similar amenities for services such as water, sewer, telephone, cable television and wireless telecommunications.

### Sunriver Forest District Policies

**Policy 11.16.1.** Uses and development on property designated forest that are within the Sunriver Urban Unincorporated Community boundary shall be consistent with uses and development of other lands outside of the community boundary which are also designated forest on the Deschutes County comprehensive plan map.

**Policy 11.16.2.** Forest district property shall be used primarily for effluent storage ponds, spray irrigation of effluent, biosolids application and ancillary facilities necessary to meet Oregon Department of Environmental Quality sewage disposal regulations.

**Policy 11.16.3.** The development of resort, residential or non-forest commercial activities on Forest district lands shall be prohibited unless an exception to Goal 14 is taken.

### Sunriver General Public Facility Policies

**Policy 11.17.1.** Residential minimum lot sizes and densities shall be determined by the capacity of the water and sewer facilities to accommodate existing and future development and growth.

**Policy 11.17.2.** New uses or expansion of existing uses within the Sunriver Urban Unincorporated Community which require land use approval shall be approved only upon confirmation from the Sunriver Utility Company that water and sewer service for such uses can be provided.

**Policy 11.17.3.** Expansion of the Sunriver Water LLC/Environmental/LLC Water and Sewer District outside of the historic Sunriver boundaries shall adequately address the impacts to services provided to existing property owners.

### Sunriver Water Facility Policies

**Policy 11.18.1.** Water service shall continue to be provided by the Sunriver Utilities Company.

### Sunriver Sewer Facility Policies

**Policy 11.19.1.** Sewer service shall continue to be provided by the Sunriver Utilities Company.

### Sunriver Transportation System Maintenance Policies

**Policy 11.20.1.** Privately-maintained roads within the Sunriver Urban Unincorporated Community boundary shall continue to be maintained by the Sunriver Owners Association.

**Policy 11.20.2.** The bicycle/pedestrian path system in Sunriver shall continue to be maintained by the Sunriver Owners Association or as otherwise provided by a maintenance agreement.

**Policy 11.20.3.** The County will encourage the future expansion of bicycle/pedestrian paths within the Sunriver Urban Unincorporated Community boundary in an effort to provide an alternative to vehicular travel.

**Policy 11.20.4.** All public roads maintained by the County shall continue to be maintained by the County. Improvements to County maintained public roads shall occur as described the County Transportation System Plan.

# 14

Energy





## Opportunities, Challenges, and Considerations

The amount, source, and distribution of energy used in Deschutes County is a fundamental component of how we live our lives, and it is influenced by land use and other decisions made at the County level. The State of Oregon requires land uses to be managed with an eye to their energy impacts.

### Statewide Planning Goal 13

Land and uses developed on the land shall be managed and controlled so as to maximize the conservation of all forms of energy, based upon sound economic principles.



In Deschutes County, the key energy issues include:

- Community design in more urban areas to limit the need for large vehicles (generally powered with fossil fuel) for everyday tasks.
- Generating, transporting, and storing energy locally from a variety of sources, and managing the impacts of these facilities.
- Conservation of energy through building design and orientation, the use of energy-efficient technologies, and incentives/regulations/education to encourage others to do so.

Deschutes County coordinates with utility providers that serve the area, including:

- Central Electric Cooperative
- Midstate Electric Cooperative
- Pacific Power (PacifiCorps)
- Cascades Natural Gas

## Context

The role of Deschutes County in planning for energy is addressed in more detail below.

### SOLAR ORIENTATION

The solar orientation of structures can create significant energy savings and allows for photovoltaic energy generation. The County has long promoted energy conservation through a passive solar code that requires new structures to be sited so that they do not block the sun from falling on adjacent properties.

### SITING LARGE-SCALE ENERGY FACILITIES

In general, cities and counties have siting authority over energy projects below a certain size or generating capacity. This includes individual projects powering or supplementing homes and businesses or small commercial projects which produce energy for sale. Larger facilities are regulated by the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council. The thresholds for Siting Council jurisdiction are determined by the Legislature and are defined in Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 469.300. The Siting Council does not regulate hydroelectric development. Instead, the Oregon Water Resources Commission has the authority to issue licenses for hydroelectric development.

Deschutes County currently has five developed large-scale energy facilities, primarily located on the eastern side of the County, approved between 2015-2017. In 2018, the Department of Land Conservation and Development altered statewide rules related to these types of large-scale energy facilities on high value farmland, limiting development opportunities in parts of the County. Community members have expressed concern regarding impacts of these facilities on wildlife habitat and aesthetics.

In addition to solar, several irrigation districts have developed in conduit hydroelectric facilities in which existing canals are upgraded with equipment for power generation. Three of these facilities currently exist, two of which are owned

and operated by Central Oregon Irrigation District, and the third owned and operated by Three Sisters Irrigation District.

### SMALL-SCALE RESIDENTIAL, BUSINESS, AND COMMERCIAL ENERGY GENERATION

The State oversees construction and approval of large commercial energy facilities, as noted above. However, there is a role for local governments to oversee smaller commercial projects. Commercial energy generation is considerably more complex than permitting small projects for homes and businesses. From a land use perspective, the scale, extended time frame, investment required and required off-site components all complicate the approval process. For example, to move the electricity generated at an alternative energy facility to market there is often a need for approval of roads, transmission lines or substations. The accessory facilities may or may not be in place at the same site as the main facility, but are an integral part of the project and are currently reviewed separately, based on State regulations.

### Wind Energy Generation

As shown in the following figure, wind energy is most abundant in the eastern portion of Deschutes County.

Potential impacts of this type of facility include temporary construction impacts, habitat loss and animal fatalities due to collision with turbines, visual impacts from towers and accessory structures, and noise. Deschutes County regulates small scale wind energy development generating less than 100 kilowatts of power. This allowance was added to the Deschutes County Code in 2010, although since that time no applications have been received to establish this type of facility.

### Solar Energy Generation

The following figure gives a broad sense of where in the US solar irradiance is highest, and therefore where solar generation will be most efficient. Deschutes County is generally favorable to solar generation.

Potential impacts of this type of facility include temporary construction impacts, habitat loss, animal fatalities due to reflected sunlight (for some solar facilities), and visual impacts. As noted previously, the Department of Land Conservation and Development amended its rules in 2018 to limit solar development on high value farmland. Typically, solar developments require large acreage and relatively flat terrain for their operations. This requirement is a limiting factor in Deschutes County, as many of the properties that would meet large acreage and terrain requirements are actively used for farming purposes. The Bureau of Land Management is exploring an amendment to its rules to allow for greater opportunity for solar development in the western United States. The County anticipates limited solar development on private land going forward and an increase of leased BLM land for this type of development in the future.

### **Commercial Biomass**

Commercial biomass uses organic material such as wood, agricultural waste or crop residues to power boilers to generate heat. According to the Oregon Forest Resources Institute an estimated 4.25 million acres (about 15% of Oregon's forestland) have the potential to provide useful woody biomass through thinning to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic forest fires.

Potential impacts include temporary construction impacts, transportation impacts (as materials need to be transported to a central location), visual impacts, and air quality and climate impacts due to combustion of biofuels.

The County's first biomass facility is under construction through a partnership with the Deschutes National Forest and Mt. Bachelor Ski Resort. The project is located on federal land and outside of the purview of Deschutes County regulations.

### **Geothermal Energy Generation**

Geothermal energy is a form of renewable energy derived from heat in the earth. This heat is transferred to water through various means and the steam produced is used to produce

electricity. Geothermal energy is dependent on the location of geothermal resources; central Oregon may contain some of the best prospects for geothermal exploration in the continental United States.

Potential impacts include construction and visual impacts of geothermal facilities.

Deschutes County regulates geothermal energy in accordance with state law, although no geothermal development projects have been proposed to date.

### **Hydroelectric Energy Generation**

Several water districts in Deschutes County have implemented hydropower projects to harness the energy of moving water. These projects may have impacts on wildlife habitat and migration, as well as construction, visual, and noise impacts.

Currently, Deschutes County has three approved "in conduit" hydroelectric facilities that are owned and operated by irrigation districts within existing irrigation district canals. Approval of these facilities have previously been contentious with many community members expressing concern about wildlife and impacts to other basin users. Irrigation districts have expressed interest in reducing barriers to permitting these types of developments to promote renewable energy development using man-made waterways.

## Key Community Considerations

Community discussions related to energy have revolved around the following topics:

- Interest in planning for and adapting to climate change, including using more renewable energy sources.
- Concern about the design and location of energy facilities and their impacts on environmental resources and scenic views.
- Preparation for more use of electric vehicles in the future, which often require specialized charging infrastructure.

## Goals and Policies

**Goal 14.1:** Promote Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy Production

**Policy 14.1.1.** Continue to incorporate energy conservation into the building and management of all County operations and capital projects using regular energy audits to refine the results.

**Policy 14.1.2.** Reduce energy demand by supporting energy efficiency in all sectors of the economy.

**Policy 14.1.3.** Encourage energy suppliers to explore innovative alternative energy conservation technologies and provide energy audits and incentives to patrons.

**Policy 14.1.4.** Provide flexibility and exemptions for small properties and anomalous sites in the development code to promote energy conservation. Promote affordable, efficient, reliable, and environmentally sound commercial energy systems for individual homes, and business consumers.

**Policy 14.1.5.** Promote development of solar, hydropower, wind, geothermal, biomass and other alternative energy systems while mitigating impacts on neighboring properties and the natural environment.

**Policy 14.1.6.** Provide incentives for homes and businesses to install small-scale on-site alternative energy systems consistent with adopted County financing programs.

**Policy 14.1.7.** Support development of electric vehicle charging stations and facilities to help promote use of electric vehicles.

**Policy 14.1.8.** Use the development code to promote commercial renewable energy projects while addressing and mitigating impacts on the community and natural environment.

**Policy 14.1.9.** Use Oregon's Rural Renewable Energy Development Zones to support the creation of renewable energy projects.

**Policy 14.1.10.** Identify, protect, and support the development of significant renewable energy sites and resources.

