



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: June 21, 2023

SUBJECT: Discussion and Board Direction to Address Public Health and Safety Concerns on County-Owned Land Located in North Juniper Ridge

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Direct staff to implement the remediation plan for County-owned property located in north Juniper Ridge, provide the County Administrator discretion to amend the plan as necessary, and authorize an initial \$200,000 for remediation and associated actions.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Deschutes County received a formal code enforcement complaint for unpermitted land use (camping), structures, on-site waste disposal, access, wood-burning apparatuses, and solid waste on County-owned property located in north Juniper Ridge. The complaint resulted in a Pre-Enforcement Notice from the County's Code Compliance program. The violations reveal extremely dangerous public health, life and safety conditions. There are a large number of individuals experiencing houselessness living on the 50-acre site in north Juniper Ridge.

Due to the state of the encampments, including human and solid waste, sharps, vectors, unpredictable pets, burned areas including RVs, and other hazards and the associated risks, it is recommended that a professionally trained and certified environment remediation contractor be used for cleanup. Opportunities for the contractor to use the Sheriff's Office work release crews and Community Justice adult out-of-custody work crews will be used where possible. Also, there may be opportunities for volunteer groups to help with cleaning up residual and strewn trash throughout the 50-acre footprint. The clean-up work will be costly. Staff is requesting an initial authorization of \$200,000 for remediation and associated actions, which includes contracted remediation, signage, Jersey barriers, gates, private patrol, towing, etc.

County staff from several departments have been working on this issue and acknowledge the sensitivity and difficulties associated with the discussions and potential decisions.

Attached is a draft "Remediation Plan for County-owned Property Located in North Juniper

Ridge.” The draft remediation plan provides a phased approach to immediately mitigate hazardous and health threats, while providing more time to work with the individuals residing on the 50-acres to vacate the property. The draft remediation plan includes outreach to individuals living on the property to offer services and to explore shelter options.

County staff that are working on the County property land exchange with the Department of State Lands (DSL) would also be play a key role with implementing the Juniper Ridge Remediation Plan. Due to the large amount of work for both efforts, if the Juniper Ridge Implementation Plan moves forward, the DSL land exchange project will be delayed.

Finally, the City of Bend owns property in Juniper Ridge with similar concerns, therefore the intent is for County and City staff to coordinate efforts. However, the City of Bend will be responsible to determine how to appropriately respond to the City-owned property.

In addition to approving the remediation plan, staff also seeks Board approval for the County Administrator to be able to amend the plan as needed, with the understanding that significant modifications to the plan would return to the Board. If the Board approves the remediation plan, staff will return to the Board with a contract to hire a certified environmental contractor. Staff will provide periodic updates to the Board on costs associated with the remediation plan.

For discussion and direction, staff has identified the following options to pay for the remediation:

- Fund 090 – Project Development and Debt Reserve. Funds are available, but there have been discussions about using these funds for real property acquisition opportunities or investing in the courthouse expansion to decrease the debt load.
- General Fund – although the reserves are at a low level.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

TBD

ATTENDANCE:

Erik Kropp, Deputy County Administrator
Janice Garceau, Health Services Director
Kristie Bollinger, Property Manager
Peter Gutowsky, Community Development Director