

Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan



DESCHUTES
COUNTY
2040

Draft - Revised August 25, 2023

Acknowledgements

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WHAT ARE THE TOP 3 ISSUES FACING DESCHUTES COUNTY TODAY

1
Community Engagement

WATER

NATURAL RESOURCE AND OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES (JOBS)

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

FARMS AND LOCAL FOOD SUPPLY

MANAGING GROWTH

TRANSPORTATION

MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE

DROUGHT AND WATER SUPPLY



JOB/
COST OF
LIVING
CORRECTION

GARBAGE

Promising

Take a sticker and vote on your top 3 issues.
Don't see your priority listed?
Write it down on a post-it and stick it to the board.



Opportunities, Challenges, and Considerations

Public engagement is the touchstone of planning in Oregon. As Deschutes County grows and its population changes over the course of the next 20 years, the County must be prepared to find innovative ways to keep community members involved in the planning process and provide ample and accessible ways to find and digest information. Challenges including funding, resources, and ongoing state appeals might pose barriers to this work. The County has an opportunity to plan for adequate resources and staffing to support this work.

2023 Comprehensive Plan Update

A far-reaching community conversation was a vital part of updating the Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan. This effort included:

- Two phases of engagement – one focusing on long-range vision, opportunities, and challenges; and another phase focusing on important and controversial topics.
- Outreach events in all parts of the County.
- A deliberate audit of engagement activities to learn and build on successes.

Context

Involving the public in planning is a critical part of Oregon's land use system. Statewide Planning Goal 1 - Citizen Involvement, is intended to ensure that the public has the opportunity to be meaningfully involved in all phases of the land use planning process. Creating these opportunities requires time and energy on the part of County staff, as well as systems to incorporate that input in a meaningful way.

To participate in planning actions, the public needs to be notified of the proposal or project, understand the legal framework for the decision and understand the implications of the decision. Local governments need to be aware of changing technologies and best practices to involve the community and share project information. Community engagement can take many forms, such as focus groups for a larger planning project, email notification lists for department activities, or mailed notices of public hearings.

Summary of Engagement for the 2023 Update



23

Months



1,500

Unique Website
Visitors



466

Email Contact List



29,000

Social Media
Impressions



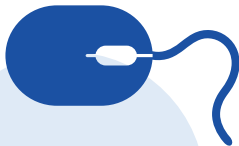
296

In-Person Attendees
at Open Houses



13

News Stories



361

Online Open House
Survey Responses



8

Planning
Commission
Meetings



55

Small-Group Meetings
and Stakeholder
Discussions



254

Small Group
Attendees



2

Staff Community
Engagement Trainings



3

Board
Worksessions

Regulatory Framework

Statewide Planning Goal 1 – Citizen Involvement lays the groundwork for the County’s public involvement program. Jurisdictions are required to establish a Citizen Involvement Program that provides widespread community involvement, two-way communication with appropriate feedback mechanisms, opportunities for engagement in all phases of the planning process, technical information available in an intelligible form, and is adequately funded.

Statewide Planning Goal 1

To develop a citizen involvement program that ensures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.

Deschutes County’s Community Involvement Program

Statewide Planning Goal 1 is implemented by Deschutes County’s Community Involvement Program, as described in the following section.

DESCHUTES COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

The Deschutes County Planning Commission serves as the County’s Committee for Community Involvement (CCI). The Planning Commission is composed of seven volunteer members appointed to four-year terms by the Board of County Commissioners (Board).

Membership of the commission is representative of the various geographic areas of the County. Members are selected through an open process that aims to balance the diverse views of Deschutes County residents.

The purpose of the CCI is to create a direct and transparent connection between County decision-making and the public by providing regular updates, speakers, panel discussions, and handouts on land use law and policy. The CCI aims to make materials intelligible and convenient for the public and to provide a venue for civil discourse on important issues for the County.

HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

The Historic Landmarks Commission serves as a hearings body for matters concerning historical districts, structures and sites within unincorporated Deschutes County as well as the city of Sisters. The Landmarks Commission is composed of nine voting and several non-voting ex-officio members who have demonstrated expertise in historic preservation related disciplines. Commissioners serve four-year terms.



OTHER LAND USE RELATED ADVISORY GROUPS

Project Wildfire is a committee formed to coordinate, develop and implement strategies to mitigate the effects of losses due to natural disasters that strike Deschutes County. Project Wildfire is composed of 15 to 27 members who reside or represent agencies within Deschutes County. All members are appointed by the Board and serve four years (see also Chapter X, Natural Hazards).

The Deschutes River Mitigation and Enhancement Program helps achieve Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) habitat and management goals and objectives within the Upper Deschutes River sub-basin, consistent with an agreement between the Central Oregon Irrigation District (COID) and ODFW. As part of that agreement COID provides ODFW with funds to develop and implement a fish and wildlife habitat mitigation and enhancement program for the Upper Deschutes River Basin. The Deschutes River Mitigation and Enhancement Committee has seven voting

members appointed to three-year terms by the Board (see also Section 2.5).

In addition to convening these groups, Deschutes County engages with the public through numerous methods, including:

- Conducting regular work sessions and hearings
- Providing timely public notice of important items
- Maintaining the County Website, including the department's "Community Engagement Center" page.
- Advertising events and engaging with constituents through social media channels
- Coordinating with media organizations, such as local newspapers.
- Meeting with individuals and small groups to get feedback on important issues.

These activities were part of the most recent update of this Comprehensive Plan.





Key Community Issues

Deschutes County is changing and community members are seeking new ways to share their ideas on key issues. To provide ample opportunities to engage, new tools and technologies will be needed to involve new groups. Issues that the policies in this section address include:

- Continuing to simplify materials to use plain language and be accessible to a variety of audiences
- Continuing to maintain a presence throughout the County, including holding meetings and events throughout the County
- Supporting engagement activities that allow community members to participate virtually and at the time of their choosing.

With these issues in mind, Deschutes County has adopted the following goals and policies:

Goals and Policies

Goal 1.1: Provide for a robust community involvement program that includes all members of the community, including those who are commonly under-represented, by ensuring access to information, encouraging community collaboration, identifying and addressing barriers to involvement, and promoting efficient and transparent planning processes.

Policy 1.1.1. Convene the Deschutes County Planning Commission as the County's Committee for Community Involvement in order to provide a direct and transparent connection between County decision-making and the public.

Policy 1.1.2. Write all County planning documents to be understandable, intuitive, and easily available to the general public, using simplified language where possible, with acronyms spelled out and technical language explained.

Policy 1.1.3. Hold area-specific comprehensive plan and zoning text amendment public hearings in locations and at times convenient and accessible to area residents, as appropriate.

Policy 1.1.4. Provide property information to the public in an intuitive and easy-to-use manner.

Policy 1.1.5. Consult and coordinate with developers before submitting applications as required or recommended by the County Development Code to identify and discuss project requirements and impacts.

Policy 1.1.6. Invest in and support land use educational resources for community members including information related to rural living, agricultural practices, natural resources, and natural hazards.

Policy 1.1.7. Promote opportunities for community members to have civil dialogue around key community issues.

Policy 1.1.8. Explore new and innovative ways to reach community members and promote participation in the planning process.

Goal 1.2: Support the activities of the Committee for Community Involvement

Policy 1.2.1. Maintain adequate funding and staffing support for the Committee.

Policy 1.2.2. Provide regular updates, speakers, panel discussions, and handouts on land use law and policy.

Policy 1.2.3. Appoint members through an open and public process to reflect the diverse geographic regions, demographics, and values of Deschutes County residents.

Policy 1.2.4. Meet with the Board of County Commissioners at least once a year to coordinate planning policies and activities.

Policy 1.2.5. Complete periodic reports on community involvement implementation for the State Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee, the Board of County Commissioners, and the public.

Policy 1.2.6. Maintain open and civil discourse among Committee members and with the public.



An aerial photograph of a town with a main road, green fields, and mountains in the distance. The sky is blue with white clouds. A large, dark blue number '2' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

2

Land Use and Regional Coordination



Opportunities, Challenges, and Considerations

Deschutes County has been one of the most rapidly growing parts of Oregon for many years. This growth can cause tension and highlight trade-offs between community priorities, such as the need for housing, preservation of natural resources, adequate infrastructure, and intergovernmental collaboration. To manage this growth, the County partners with its cities, special districts, and state and federal agencies to ensure a collaborative approach to development activities. As the County continues to navigate emerging issues, intergovernmental agreements and new partnerships will be key.



One purpose of the Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan is to provide a blueprint for land use throughout the County. This is accomplished through goals and policies that tell a cohesive story of where and how development should occur and what places are expected to remain undeveloped. The Plan provides a legal framework for establishing more specific land use actions and regulations.

Deschutes County regulates and manages the use of land in the unincorporated parts of the County. This is accomplished by:

- Implementing state policy and laws and furthering local planning goals by maintaining, updating and applying County land use policies, standards and regulations in its zoning codes and this Comprehensive Plan.
- Reviewing development and land use proposals and help applicants to navigate the application process.

- Coordinating with other local jurisdictions on issues of regional growth management, infrastructure, and public services.
- Coordinating land use and transportation planning efforts in rural areas including planning for farm and forest lands and natural resource management and protection.
- Administering land use regulations for unincorporated communities in the County.

The policies contained in this chapter, as well as all chapters in this Plan, establish the legislative policy basis for the County’s land use planning program. The program is implemented primarily through application of the County’s Zoning Code, regulatory maps, and development permitting application and approval procedures. In addition, these policies establish important criteria to be used when initiating regulatory changes or reviewing and developing code, map, and policy amendments.

Comprehensive Plan Designation	Purpose Statement
County-wide Designations	
Agriculture	To preserve and maintain agricultural lands for farm use.
Airport Development	To allow development compatible with airport use while mitigating impacts on surrounding lands.
Forest	To conserve forest lands for multiple forest uses.
Open Space & Conservation	To protect natural and scenic open spaces, including areas with fragile, unusual or unique qualities.
Rural Residential Exception Area	To provide opportunities for rural residential living outside urban growth boundaries and unincorporated communities, consistent with efficient planning of public services.
Surface Mining	To protect surface mining resources from development impacts while protecting development from mining impacts.
Resort Community	To define rural areas with existing resort development that are not classified as a destination resort.
Rural Community	To define rural areas with limited existing urban-style development.
Rural Service Center	To define rural areas with minimal commercial development as well as some residential uses, based on Oregon Administrative Rule 660-22 or its successor.
Urban Unincorporated Community	To define rural areas with existing urban development, based on Oregon Administrative Rule 660-22 or its successor.
Urban Designations Deschutes County coordinates with cities to adopt comprehensive plan designations for areas within Urban Growth Boundaries or as part of Urban Reserves Areas in the City of Redmond area. These designations are reflected in the Deschutes County GIS database.	
Area Specific Designations Parts of Deschutes County (Sunriver for example) have area-specific Comprehensive Plan designations. These are detailed in Chapter 11, Unincorporated Communities.	

Context

Comprehensive Plan Designations

Comprehensive Plan designations provide a high-level policy basis for more detailed zoning regulations – each Comprehensive Plan designation may be implemented by one or more specific zones.

Comprehensive plan designations in Deschutes County are shown in Map 2-1 and described in the preceding table. Comprehensive Plan designations within the Bend, Redmond, Sisters, and La Pine Urban Growth Boundaries are excluded – local jurisdictions have responsibility for comprehensive planning within their Urban Growth Boundaries.



Land Use Planning in Oregon

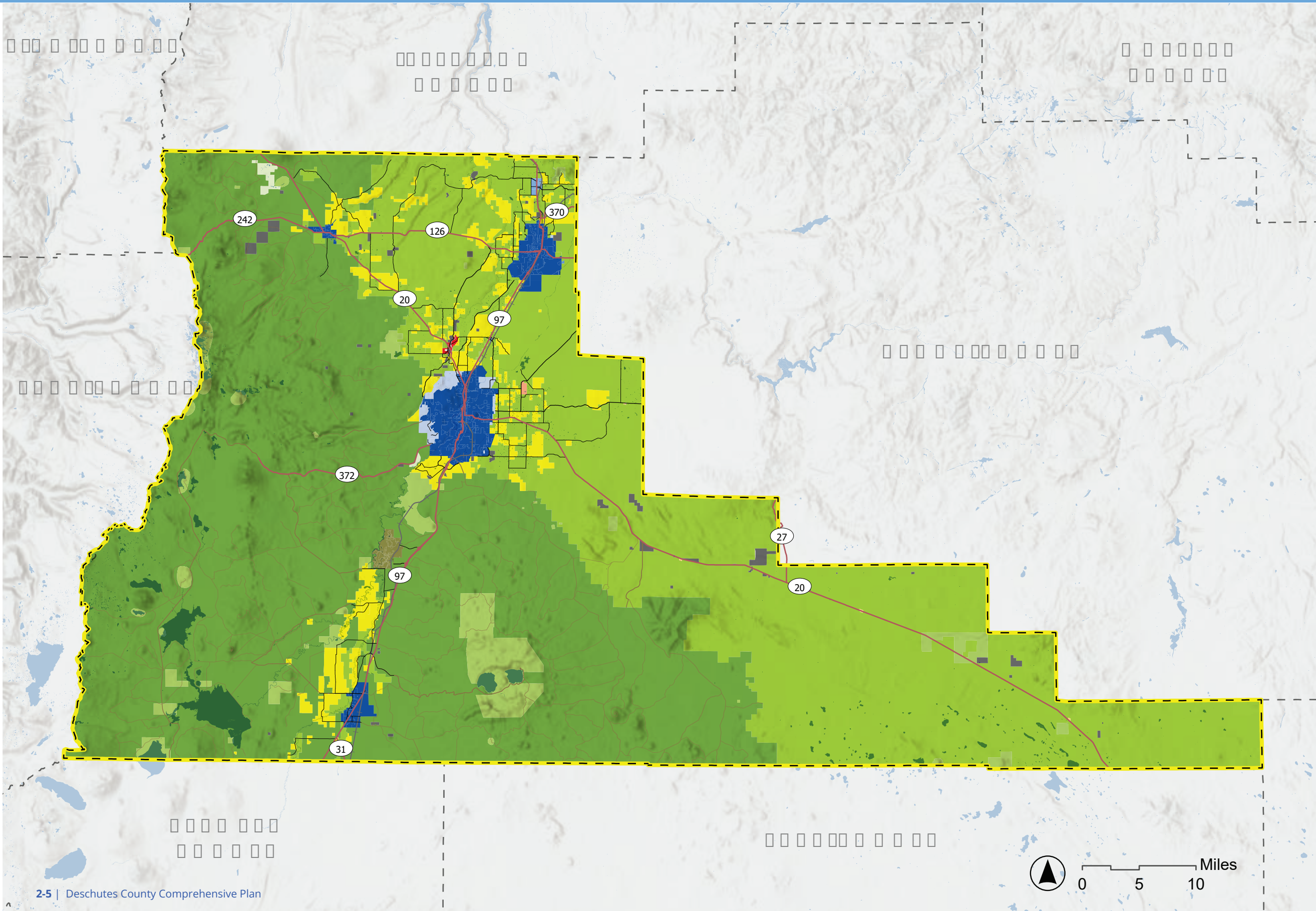
The foundation of statewide program for land use planning in Oregon is a set of 19 Statewide Land Use Planning Goals. The goals express the state's policies on land use and related topics, like citizen involvement, housing, and natural resources.

Oregon's statewide goals are achieved through local comprehensive planning. State law requires each city and county to adopt a comprehensive plan and the zoning and land-division ordinances needed to put the plan into effect.

Local comprehensive plans must be consistent with the Statewide Planning Goals. Plans are reviewed for such consistency by the state's Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC). When LCDC officially approves a local government's plan, the plan is said to be acknowledged. It then becomes the controlling document for land use in the area covered by that plan.

The goals relevant to Deschutes County are:

- **Goal 1 Citizen Involvement**
- **Goal 2 Land Use Planning**
- **Goal 3 Agricultural Lands**
- **Goal 4 Forest Lands**
- **Goal 5 Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Open Spaces**
- **Goal 6 Air, Water and Land Resources Quality**
- **Goal 7 Areas Subject to Natural Hazards**
- **Goal 8 Recreational Needs**
- **Goal 9 Economic Development**
- **Goal 10 Housing**
- **Goal 11 Public Facilities and Services**
- **Goal 12 Transportation**
- **Goal 13 Energy Conservation**
- **Goal 14 Urbanization**



A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

- Water Bodies
- County Boundary

Transportation

- State Routes
- Railroad
- County Lines
- Arterial
- Collector
- Forest Highway

Comprehensive Plan Designation

- Airport
- Agriculture
- Forest
- Flood Plain
- Open Space & Conservation
- Rural Commercial
- Resort
- Rural Industrial
- Rural Residential Exception Area
- Surface Mining
- Terrabone Districts
- Tumalo Districts
- Unincorporated Community
- Mixed Use / Commercial
- Mixed Use / Commercial Future Expansion Area

Other

- Urban Growth Boundary
- Urban Reserve
- Urban Unincorporated Community



This map is for information purposes only. The County's official zoning and comprehensive plan maps can be accessed through the Deschutes County Dial Property Information System. Please note that these maps do not represent all of the County's combining and overlay zones.



Zoning Designations

Zoning designations in Deschutes County are shown in Map 2-2. Zones within the Bend, Redmond, Sisters, and La Pine Urban Growth Boundaries are excluded - local jurisdictions have responsibility for zoning within Urban Growth Boundaries.

OVERLAY ZONES

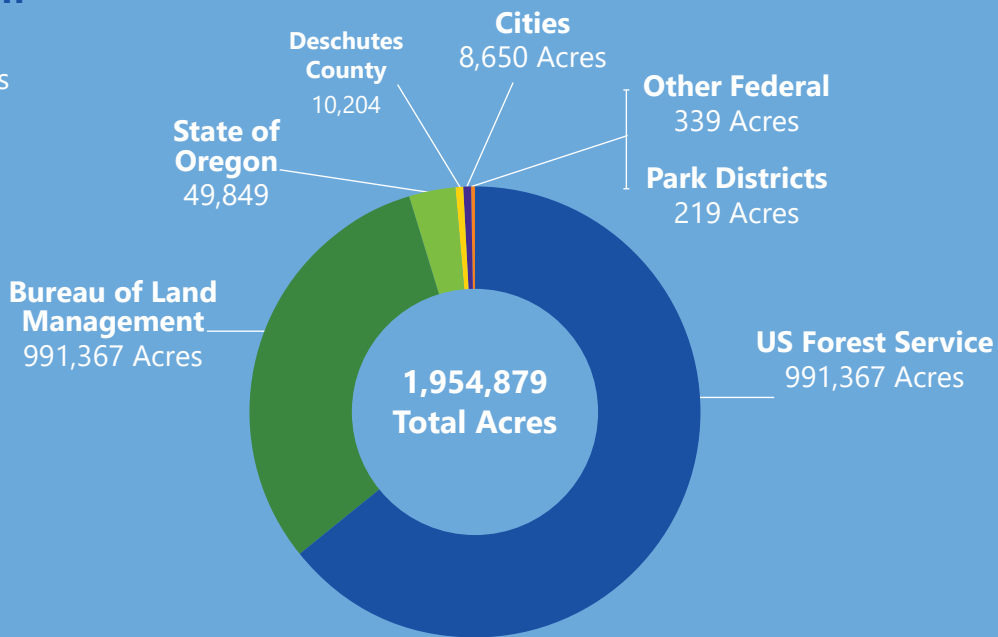
Deschutes County has the following overlay zones, which apply in addition to the base zone of a given property.

- **Airport Safety:** The purpose of the AS Zone is to restrict incompatible land uses and airspace obstructions around airports in an effort to maintain an airport’s maximum benefit.
- **Destination Resort:** The purpose of the Destination Resort Combining Zone is to identify lands eligible for siting a Destination Resort and establish procedures and standards for establishing this type of development.

- **Landscape Management:** The purposes of the Landscape Management Combining Zone are to maintain scenic and natural resources of the designated areas and to maintain and enhance scenic vistas and natural landscapes as seen from designated roads, rivers, or streams.
- **Greater Sage-Grouse Combining Zone.** The purpose of the Greater Sage-Grouse Combining Zone is to fulfill obligations of OAR 660-23-0115. This state rule requires seven Oregon counties to mitigate impacts of large-scale development on sage-grouse habitat.
- **Sensitive Bird and Mammal Habitat:** The purpose of the Sensitive Bird and Mammal Combining Zone is to insure that sensitive habitat areas identified in the County’s Goal 5 sensitive bird and mammal inventory as critical for the survival of the northern bald eagle, great blue heron, golden eagle, prairie falcon, osprey, great grey owl, and the Townsend’s big-eared bat are protected from the effects of conflicting uses or activities which are not subject to the Forest Practices Act.

Public Land Ownership in Deschutes County

Approximately **79%** of Deschutes County is public land.



- **Surface Mining Impact Area:** The purpose of the SMIA zone is to protect the surface mining resources of Deschutes County from new development which conflicts with the removal and processing of a mineral and aggregate resource while allowing owners of property near a surface mining site reasonable use of their property.
- **Wildlife Area:** The purpose of the Wildlife Area Combining Zone is to conserve important wildlife areas in Deschutes County; to protect an important environmental, social and economic element of the area; and to permit development compatible with the protection of the wildlife resource.

CITY COORDINATION

Deschutes County includes the following jurisdictions, each with their own authority and needs. The role of the County is largely one of coordination across these multiple communities.

Deschutes County contains four incorporated cities. The County, per statute, is responsible for coordinating with cities on growth related issues including urban growth boundary and urban reserve planning. The County maintains intergovernmental agreements with each city to define land use authority for lands outside of city limits and within urban growth boundaries.

City of Bend

Bend is the largest incorporated area in Deschutes County. It is centrally located in the county, with Highways 20 and 97 crossing paths through the center of the city. Bend has experienced rapid growth in the last few years, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and “Zoom Town” remote working trends. The 2022 estimated population of the Bend UGB is 103,976. The Bend UGB accounts for most of the population share among all UGBs in Deschutes County with a population of 225,619 (57.4% of the population) by 2072.

City of La Pine

The City of La Pine is located close to the southern edge of the county along Hwy. 97. The current (2022) estimated population of the La Pine UGB is 2,736. The population of the La Pine UGB is projected to increase by 87% to 5,129 in 2047. By 2072, the population is projected to be 8,336.

City of Redmond

Redmond is located northeast of Bend with Hwy. 97 running through the center of town. The current (2022) estimated population of the Redmond UGB is 37,342. The population of the Redmond UGB is projected to increase by 121% to 82,601 in the next 50 years. By 2047 it is estimated that the population of the Redmond UGB will increase to 60,060.





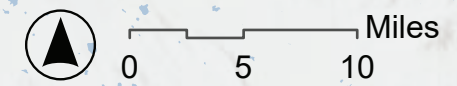
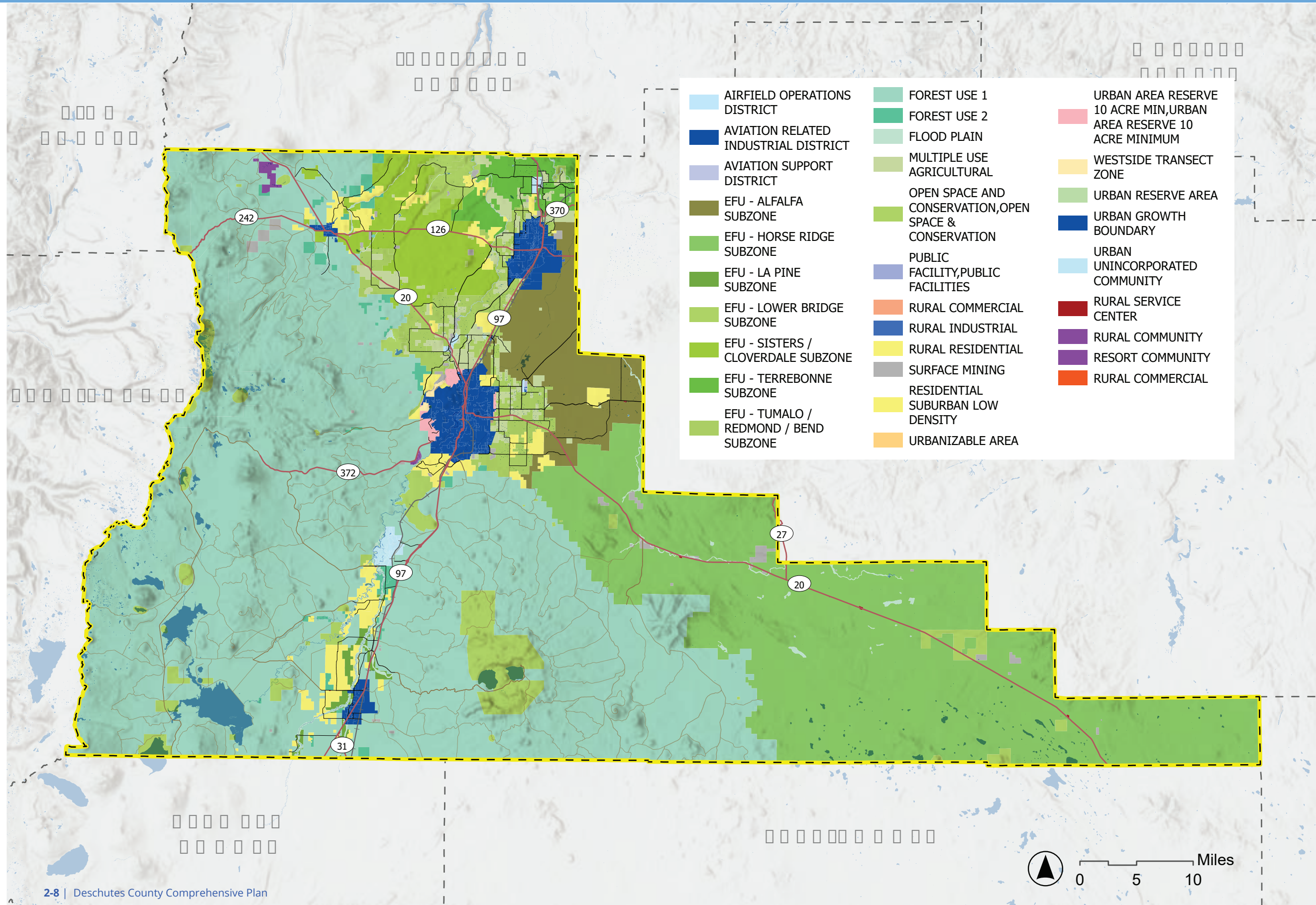
A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

- Water Bodies
- County Boundary

Transportation

- State Routes
- Railroad
- County Lines

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| AIRFIELD OPERATIONS DISTRICT | FOREST USE 1 | URBAN AREA RESERVE 10 ACRE MIN, URBAN AREA RESERVE 10 ACRE MINIMUM |
| AVIATION RELATED INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT | FOREST USE 2 | WESTSIDE TRANSECT ZONE |
| AVIATION SUPPORT DISTRICT | FLOOD PLAIN | URBAN RESERVE AREA |
| EFU - ALFALFA SUBZONE | MULTIPLE USE AGRICULTURAL | URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY |
| EFU - HORSE RIDGE SUBZONE | OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION, OPEN SPACE & CONSERVATION | URBAN UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITY |
| EFU - LA PINE SUBZONE | PUBLIC FACILITY, PUBLIC FACILITIES | RURAL SERVICE CENTER |
| EFU - LOWER BRIDGE SUBZONE | RURAL COMMERCIAL | RURAL COMMUNITY |
| EFU - SISTERS / CLOVERDALE SUBZONE | RURAL INDUSTRIAL | RESORT COMMUNITY |
| EFU - TERREBONNE SUBZONE | RURAL RESIDENTIAL | RURAL COMMERCIAL |
| EFU - TUMALO / REDMOND / BEND SUBZONE | SURFACE MINING | |
| | RESIDENTIAL SUBURBAN LOW DENSITY | |
| | URBANIZABLE AREA | |



This map is for information purposes only. The County's official zoning and comprehensive plan maps can be accessed through the Deschutes County Dial Property Information System. Please note that these maps do not represent all of the County's combining and overlay zones.

City of Sisters

Sisters is located on the eastern edge of the Willamette National Forest and Cascade Mountains. The current (2022) estimated population of the Sisters UGB is 3,437. The Sisters UGB is projected to increase by 130%, to 7,911 in 2047, and to 14,881 by 2072.

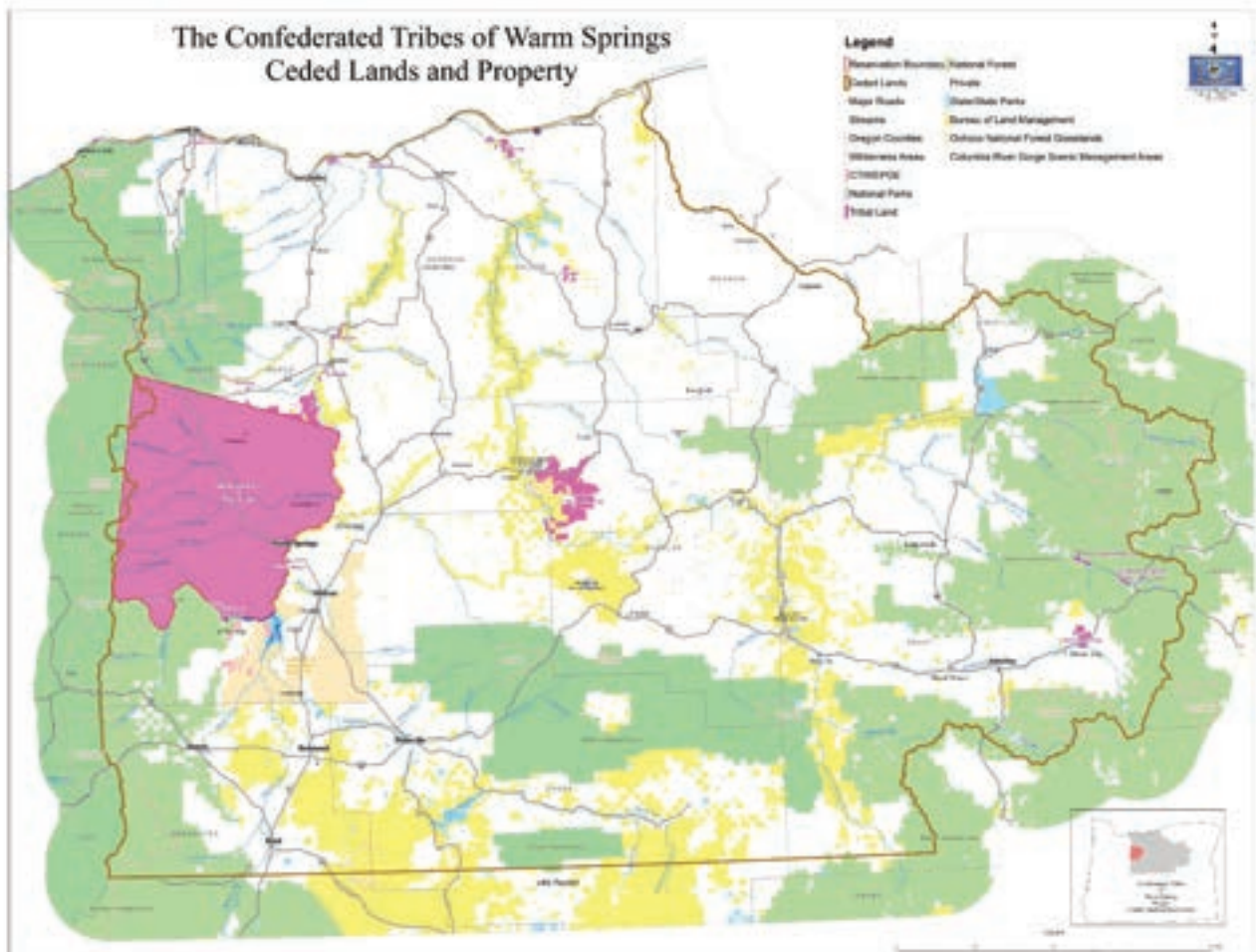
TRIBAL COORDINATION

In the Treaty of 1855, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs ceded approximately 10.2 million acres to the United States Government in exchange for creation of the Warm Springs Reservation. As part of this agreement, the Tribes maintained rights to hunt, fish, gather, and graze on these ceded lands. The map below identifies the location of these ceded areas in Deschutes County, which primarily intersect with publicly owned lands. Coordination with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs on growth and development related issues is important to ensure consistency with these treaty rights.

Key Community Considerations

The rapid pace of growth in Deschutes County and its impacts on urban, rural, natural, and recreational areas has been one of the most significant – and at times the most controversial – topics of discussion among the community. Some topics and comments include:

- Strong desire by some for greater densities in urban areas, in order to accommodate growth while preserving open space and resource land in rural areas.
- A similarly strong feeling by some that the cities in Deschutes County are becoming too urban already.
- Concern about the amount and distribution of benefits and burdens created by destination resorts and tourism-related activities in rural areas.



- Strong desire for interagency collaboration to manage growth in a coordinated manner.

With these ongoing conversations in mind, Deschutes County drafted and refined the following goals and policies to guide the growth of our community for the next 20 years.

Goals and Policies

Goal 2.1: Maintain an open and public land use process in which decisions are based on substantial evidence and a balancing of community needs.

Policy 2.1.1. Balance the consideration of private property rights and the economic impacts of land use decisions on property owners with other community goals identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 2.1.2. Review the Comprehensive Plan periodically in order to address current conditions, issues, and opportunities.

Policy 2.1.3. The Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan Map will be retained in official replica form as an electronic map layer within the County Geographic Information System and is adopted as part of this Plan.

Policy 2.1.4. Implement Comprehensive Plan policies through the Community Development Department’s annual work plan and other actions by the Department and the Board of County Commissioners.

Policy 2.1.5. Explore methods to integrate carrying capacity into County land use decision making.

Goal 2.2: Coordinate and support regional planning efforts relating to growth, natural resources, recreation, and major infrastructure investments.

Policy 2.2.1. Periodically review and update intergovernmental and urban management agreements to coordinate land use review on land inside urban growth boundaries and outside city limits.

Land Use and Regional Coordination

Policy 2.2.2. Help coordinate regional planning efforts with other agencies on land use policies and actions that impact their jurisdictions.

Policy 2.2.3. Support the use of high value natural resource and recreational lands for public purposes, whether through acquisition, easements, or other means.

Policy 2.2.4. Support the implementation of long-range plans of Deschutes County jurisdictions, incorporating elements of those plans into the County’s Comprehensive Plan as appropriate.

Policy 2.2.5. Encourage cities to conduct, in collaboration with Deschutes County, urban reserve planning to facilitate orderly and thoughtful management of growth and infrastructure needs.

Policy 2.2.6. Collaborate with federal agencies on land management issues including homelessness, sustainable recreation expansion, and energy projects.

Policy 2.2.7. Collaborate with tribal governments on regional issues, particularly those that impact ceded lands or shared natural resources.

Policy 2.2.8. Support efforts to reduce barriers to regional infrastructure projects with community benefit while mitigating negative impacts.

Policy 2.2.9. Support updates to unincorporated community area plans.

Policy 2.2.10. In accordance with OAR 660-024-004 and 0045, Deschutes County, fulfilling coordination duties specified in ORS 195.025, shall approve and update its comprehensive plan when participating cities within their jurisdiction legislatively or through a quasi-judicial process designate regionally significant sites.

Policy 2.2.11. The County and City shall periodically review the agreement associated with the Redmond Urban Reserve Area (RURA). The following land use policies guide zoning in the RURA.

- a. Plan and zone RURA lands for rural uses, in a manner that ensures the orderly, economic and efficient provision of urban services as these lands are brought into the urban growth boundary.
- b. Parcels shall be a minimum of ten acres.
- c. Until lands in the RURA are brought into the urban growth boundary, zone changes or plan amendments shall not allow more intensive uses or uses that generate more traffic, than were allowed prior to the establishment of the RURA.
- d. For Exclusive Farm Use zones, partitions shall be allowed based on state law and the County Zoning Ordinance.
- e. New arterial and collector rights-of-way in the RURA shall meet the right-of-way standards of Deschutes County or the City of Redmond, whichever is greater, but be physically constructed to Deschutes County standards.
- f. Existing and future arterial and collector rights-of-way, as designated on the County's Transportation System Plan, shall be protected from development.
- g. A single-family dwelling on a legal parcel is permitted if that use was permitted before the RURA designation.

Additionally, the County will coordinate planning efforts and development goals with the City of Redmond prior to bringing County-owned property into Redmond's urban growth boundary.

Goal 2.3: Manage county-owned lands to balance the needs of the community as articulated in the goals and policies of this Plan and other supporting planning documents.

Policy 2.3.1. Manage lands with a park designation consistent with the goals and policies in Chapter 5 Natural Resources.

Policy 2.3.2. Support the efforts of park districts, state and/or federal agencies to identify additional properties along rivers, streams, or creeks, or containing significant wildlife, scenic resources, or open space resources to designate as park land.

Goal 2.4: Minimize onerous barriers to land use application and development review processes.

Policy 2.4.1. Explore opportunities to build or obtain specialty planning knowledge and experience among staff within CDD in related fields such as wildlife, natural resources, and/or agricultural practices.

Policy 2.4.2. Explore measures to reduce development costs for projects related to agriculture and addressing houselessness, including fee reductions and expedited land use applications.



3

Farm and Forest Resources





Opportunities, Challenges, and Considerations

Farm and forestry resources and operations continue to play an important role in the character and economy of Deschutes County. However, a variety of ongoing and forecasted trends will impact the viability and vitality of these industries and the people who contribute to them. A number of these trends and challenges are described below and more information about some issues is found in the Water Resources section of this Plan (see Chapter 5: Natural Resources).

PREVALENCE OF SMALL FARMING OPERATIONS AND HOBBY FARMS

The 2017 Census of Agriculture profiles Deschutes County as primarily consisting of small acreage, hobby farms and other relatively small agricultural operations. As of 2017, there were approximately 1,484 farms, an increase of 16% from 2012. Although the average size of a farm in Deschutes County is 91 acres, the majority of acreage (about 85%) is in farms of 10 acres or less in size.

MARGINAL OR LOW PRODUCTIVITY SOILS

While a large proportion of the County is zoned for exclusive farm use, much of the land in these areas has marginal soils which provide limited productivity, particularly for higher value crops. Limited access to water rights and irrigation can further hamper productivity in some areas. Deschutes County attempted to reclassify certain agricultural lands through a nonresource lands program. This approach was rejected at the state level. Since that time, some landowners have successfully redesignated property, primarily to residential zones, through an applicant-initiated process.

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

According to the 2017 Agricultural Census, agricultural producers in Deschutes County are often operating in the red. The per-farm average of market value of products sold was \$19,386, a 21% increase from 2012, and average production expenses of \$34,748. This results in a deficit of approximately \$12,866 per farm per year. Government payments help cover a portion of this deficit, with the average farm receiving \$7,477 in assistance. The costs of operating continue to be a major challenge from small family operations, resulting in approximately 46% of farms in Deschutes County reporting under \$2,500 in sales.

DECLINING FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

Approximately 1,032,436 acres of Deschutes County area are zoned for Forest Use. Historically, forestry on public and private land was a primary industry in Central Oregon with key mill sites along the Deschutes River in Bend. Over time, species protections, international competition, and new technologies have reduced the overall footprint of the timber industry in Central Oregon. Recently, land uses are shifting toward recreation and residential development in these natural resource areas.



WATER SUPPLY AND IRRIGATION

Much of Deschutes County is served by six irrigation districts (Map 3-1) – these are special entities created for the purpose of delivering water to their patrons. These districts are effectively non-profit water user associations. In addition to irrigation, these districts also supply other services including municipal, industrial, and pond maintenance. The total water available for irrigation and other human uses in Deschutes County is fixed under the current water regime. No additional water rights can be issued without the decommissioning of a previous claim. Therefore, there is little opportunity to expand irrigated farming in the County. Existing farms with senior water rights in general have relatively generous irrigation rights, which have rarely been fully utilized, and are expected to have sufficient water to cope with increasing temperatures and drought conditions in the future. Junior water right holders, associated with Arnold Irrigation District and North Unit Irrigation District, have recently seen challenges with water delivery due to limited availability and drought.

CHANGES IN CLIMATE CONDITIONS

A number of forecasted trends may impact agriculture and forestry resources and production either positively or negatively by the middle of this century, including the following:

- Drought conditions. Increasing temperatures will lead to an increase in the length of the growing season and a slight change in the

cold hardiness zones throughout the County. The ongoing patterns of drought and lack of sufficient water for irrigation in some districts is likely to be exacerbated by increasing temperatures.

- Growing season. Projected increases in average temperature will have the effect of drastically increasing the length of the growing season. For example, currently the region around Bend has a growing season of just under 100 days a year, but that will increase by more than a month to between 133 to 143 days a year. The eastern part of the county will likely see an even more marked increase from a brief 35 days to between 85 and 100 days. This may increase potential agricultural productivity in parts of the County.
- Water demand and availability. Water demand is likely to increase due to increased temperatures. Warmer days and warmer nights will increase evaporation and transpiration, requiring an increase in irrigation. Because the total volume of water available for agricultural and human use is fixed, strategies to decrease water usage (capping irrigation channels, irrigation timing strategies, water conservation) will become more crucial.

CONFLICTS WITH OTHER USES

Agricultural uses continue to be affected by conflicts with adjacent or surrounding non-farm uses (primarily new rural homes). In some cases, new residents object to impacts of common farming practices, such as noise, dust, and odors related to farm activity.

Days Above 90 Degrees in Brothers





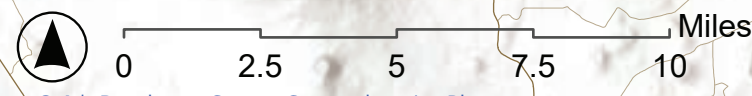
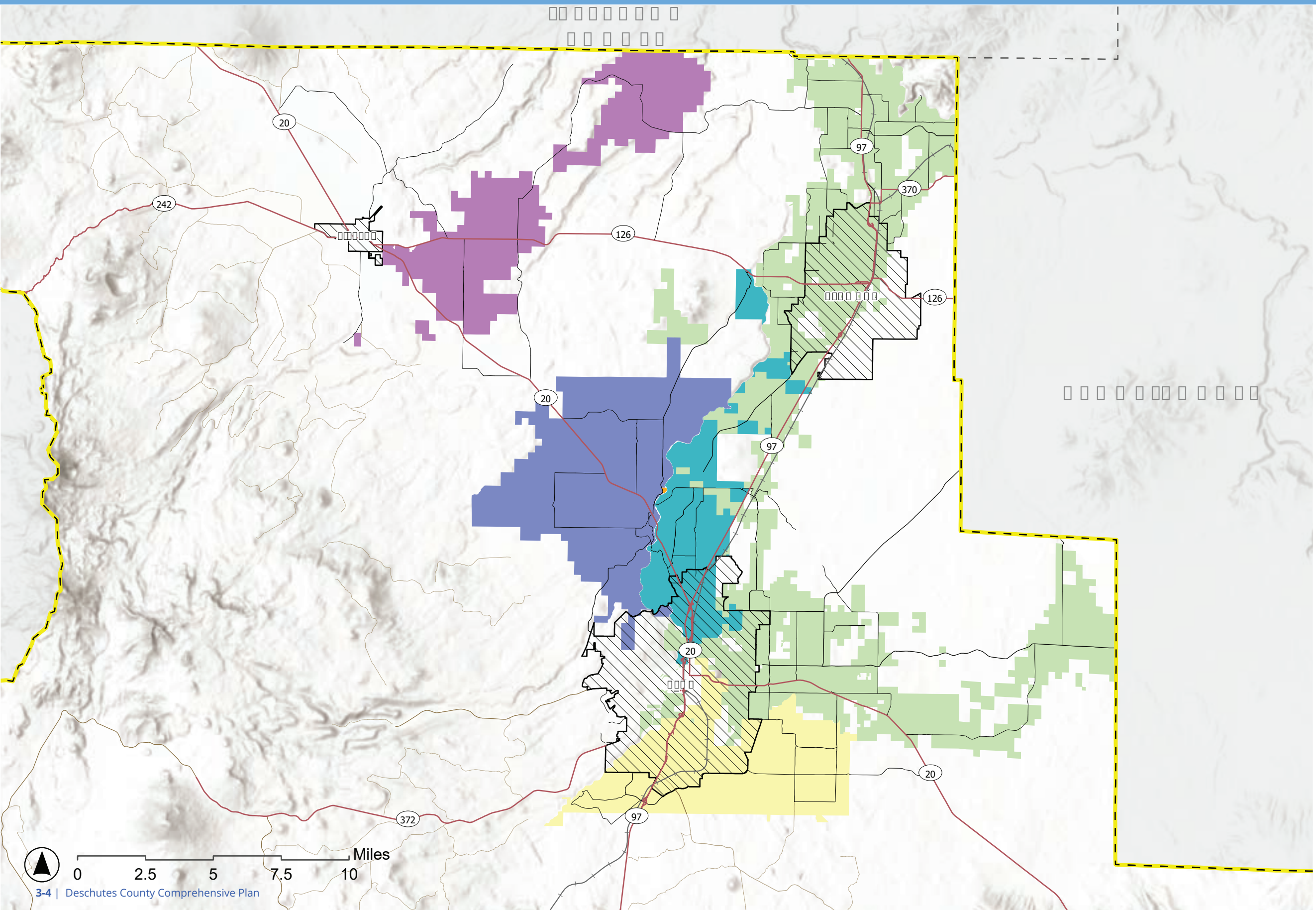
A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Irrigation Districts

- Arnold Irrigation District
- Central Oregon Irrigation District
- Rimrock Water Improvement District
- Swalley Irrigation Dist (DRIC)
- Three Sisters Irrigation District
- Tumalo Irrigation District
- State Routes

Transportation

- Arterial
- Collector
- Forest Highway
- Railroad
- Urban Growth Boundaries
- County Boundary



This map is for information purposes only. The County's official zoning and comprehensive plan maps can be accessed through the Deschutes County Dial Property Information System. Please note that these maps do not represent all of the County's combining and overlay zones.

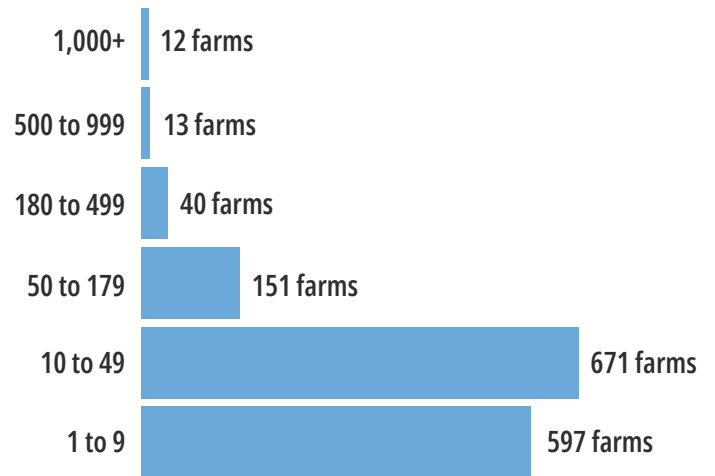
Context

Agriculture

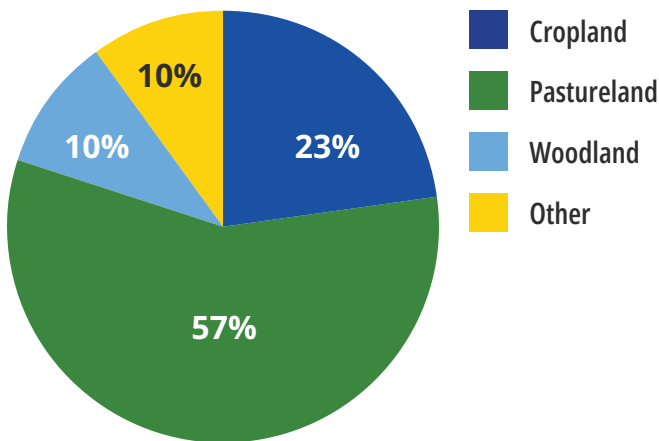
Agriculture and ranching operations in Deschutes County vary widely based on water availability, soil, and microclimate. The following subzones were created through a commercial farm study conducted in 1992. This study concluded that irrigation is a key factor to viability of operations, which enabled the County to establish smaller acreages than allowed by state law to provide additional flexibility.

Additional information about farm and forest resources is provided in the tables and charts below.

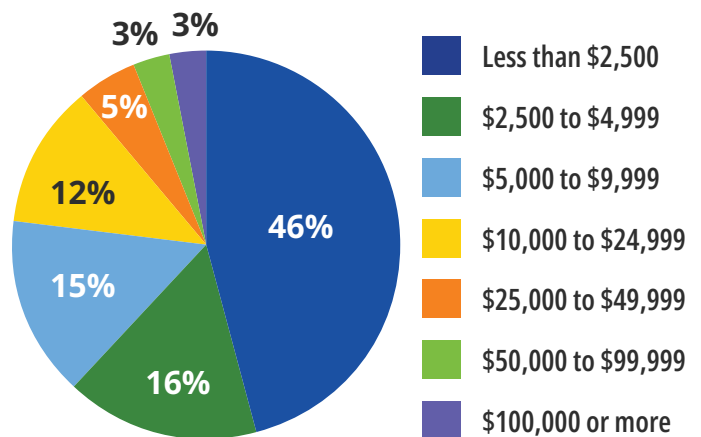
Farms By Size (acres)



Land in Farms by Use



Farms By Value of Sales



Subzone Name	Minimum Parcel Size (for farm divisions and farm-related dwellings)	Profile
Lower Bridge	130	Irrigated field crops, hay pastures
Sisters/Cloverdale	63	Irrigated alfalfa, hay and pastures, wooded grazing and some field crops
Terrebonne	35	Irrigated hay and pasture
Tumalo/Redmond/Bend	23	Irrigated pasture and some hay
Alfalfa	36	Irrigated hay and pasture
La Pine	37	Riparian meadows, grazing and meadow hay
Horse Ridge East	320	Rangeland grazing

Forest Lands

Deschutes County classifies Forest land in one of two zones. Forest 1 zoning is intended for land that is primarily used for forest management or commercial forestry, with a lot size over 160 acres, and not developed with residential or non-forest uses. Forest 2 zoning is intended for land that does have residential or non-forest uses, is less than 160 acres, and may contain roads or other public facilities that serve the property.

State regulations limit residential and non-forestry related development on forest lands and the County sees only a few applications for development in these areas each year. Even with this limitation on development, forest managers and service providers continue to express concern with wildfire risk associated with residential development in heavily wooded areas.

Most lands in either of these classifications within Deschutes County are federally owned and managed by the US Forest Service. Historically, forest lands were used for timber production. As timber harvesting decreases, other uses for forest lands are emerging. State regulations permit five general types of uses, including forest operations; environmental, agricultural or recreational uses; two types of dwellings and locally dependent uses. Permitted uses are defined and clarified in OAR 660-006. The following uses are major forest uses in Deschutes County:

- **Secondary forest products (forest operations):** There is an increasing use of secondary forest products, such as hog fuel (chipped wood) or wood slash. This type of product is generally seen as providing dual benefit, by providing economic opportunity while also reducing wildfire risk through thinning projects.
- **Alternative Energy:** Biomass is an emerging technology for renewable energy and can also be integrated with these products. The first biomass facility in the County is currently

under development through a partnership with Mt. Bachelor Ski Resort and the US Forest Service.

- **Recreation (environmental, agricultural and recreation uses):** The proximity of federal forests for hiking, mountain biking, skiing, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreation draws tourists and residents alike. Skyline Forest, a 33,000-acre privately owned property in the Forest 1 zone has been identified as a potential community asset, with several groups and nonprofits seeking to acquire and utilize the property as a community forest. In 2022, Deschutes Land Trust facilitated a community visioning process to identify preferred community uses if land were to be purchased as a privately held recreational asset.



Key Community Considerations

Given the range of issues and conditions discussed above and, this plan includes a variety of policies to support farm and forest operations in Deschutes County. Additional related policies also are found in Chapter 2: Land Use and Regional Coordination, Chapter 5: Natural Resources, and Chapter 9: Economic Development. These strategies are underpinned by the following results of Comprehensive Plan outreach efforts.

- Community members opposed rezoning low productivity farmland with poor soil to allow greater opportunities for housing, while supporting rezoning of this land to preserve open space.
- There is strong support for conduct educational outreach to encourage water conservation and on-farm efficiency measures.
- Community members also strongly support allowing greater flexibility for income-producing supplemental activities on farms such as farm-to-table dinner, farm stands, weddings, or similar events.
- Outreach participants expressed support for investment in the agricultural economy through grants or exploring a farmland conservation program.



Goals and Policies

Goal 3.1: Preserve and maintain agricultural lands, operations, and uses to support Deschutes County's agricultural economy

Policy 3.1.1. Retain agricultural lands through Exclusive Farm Use zoning.

Policy 3.1.2. Continue to apply Exclusive Farm Use sub- consistent with the County's most up-to-date adopted studies of agricultural land and as implemented through the County Development Code.

Policy 3.1.3. Develop comprehensive plan policy criteria and code to provide clarity on when and how EFU parcels can be converted to other designations.

Policy 3.1.4. Regularly review farm regulations to ensure compliance with changes to State Statute, Oregon Administrative Rules and case law.

Goal 3.2: Promote a diverse, sustainable, and thriving agricultural sector.

Policy 3.2.1. Encourage farming by promoting the raising and selling of crops, livestock and/or poultry.

Policy 3.2.2. Support agriculture through the use of grant funds, research, and other resources dedicated to agricultural community members and stakeholders, including but not limited to farmers, agricultural researchers, farm bureaus, and other organizations in studying and promoting economically viable agricultural opportunities and practices.

Policy 3.2.3. Support and encourage small farming enterprises through a variety of related strategies and programs, including, but not limited to, niche markets, organic farming, food council, buy local, farmers markets, farm-to-table activities, farm stands or value-added products, or other programs or strategies.

Policy 3.2.4. Work cooperatively with irrigation districts, public agencies and representatives, and landowners to promote and support agricultural uses and operations, including through use of rural reserves, conservation easements, transfer of development rights programs, land acquisition, and other preservation strategies.

Policy 3.2.5. Support efforts to control noxious weeds and invasive species.

Policy 3.2.6. Continue to review and revise County Code as needed and consistent with state rules and regulations to permit alternative and supplemental farm activities that are compatible with farming, such as agri- tourism or commercial renewable energy projects.

Policy 3.2.7. Work with the State to review and revise their regulations when a desired alternative or supplemental use identified by the County is not permitted by State regulations.

Policy 3.2.8. Use land use policy and development code requirements, including right-to-farm provisions, as well as coordination with other jurisdictions to minimize conflicts between residential uses and agricultural uses and continue to promote the viable operation of agricultural uses.

Policy 3.2.9. Provide resources such as technical assistance and access to grants to support on-site efficiency upgrades relating to agriculture.

Goal 3.3: Ensure Exclusive Farm Use policies, classifications, and codes are consistent with local and emerging agricultural conditions and markets.

Policy 3.3.1. Identify and retain accurately designated agricultural lands.

Policy 3.3.2. Continue to explore new methods of identifying and classifying agricultural lands.

a. Apply for grants to review and, if needed, update farmland designations.

b. Study County agricultural designations considering elements such as water availability, farm viability and economics, climatic conditions, land use patterns, accepted farm practices, and impacts on public services.

c. Lobby for changes to State Statute regarding agricultural definitions specific to Deschutes County that would allow some reclassification of agricultural lands.

Policy 3.3.3. Address land use challenges in the Horse Ridge subzone, specifically:

a. The large number of platted lots not meeting the minimum acreage;

b. The need for non-farm dwellings and location requirements for farm dwellings;

c. Concerns over the impact on private property from off-road vehicles, facilities, and trails located on adjacent public lands.

Policy 3.3.4. Continue to work with the State to review and revise accessory farm dwelling requirements to address the needs of local farmers.

Policy 3.3.5. Encourage coordination between agricultural interests and fish and wildlife management organizations, including public agencies, non-governmental organizations and others.

Policy 3.3.6. Explore the evaluation and potential redesignation of lands with a farm designation and poor soils and low productivity for protected open space, development of needed housing, or other uses that support community goals as follows.

a. Allow comprehensive plan and zoning map amendments, including for those that qualify as non-resource land, for individual EFU parcels as allowed by State Statute, Oregon Administrative Rules and this Comprehensive Plan.

- b. Explore creation of a new zoning classification intended to balance value of high desert environment while allowing for limited housing opportunities and applying this designation through coordination with interested and willing property owners.

Goal 3.4: Protect and maintain forest lands for multiple uses and objectives, including forest products, watershed protection, conservation, recreation, wildlife habitat protection, carbon sequestration, forest health, and wildfire resilience.

Policy 3.4.1. Retain forest lands through Forest 1 and Forest 2 zoning.

Policy 3.4.2. To conserve and maintain unimpacted forest lands, retain Forest 1 zoning for those lands with the following characteristics:

- a. Consist predominantly of ownerships not developed by residences or non-forest uses;
- b. Consist predominantly of contiguous ownerships of 160 acres or larger;
- c. Consist predominantly of ownerships contiguous to other lands utilized for commercial forest or commercial farm uses;
- d. Are accessed by roads intended primarily for forest management; and
- e. Are primarily under forest management.

Policy 3.4.3. To conserve and maintain impacted forest lands, retain Forest 2 zoning for those lands with the following characteristics:

- a. Consist predominantly of ownerships developed for residential or non-forest uses;
- b. Consist predominantly of ownerships less than 160 acres;
- c. Consist of ownerships generally contiguous to tracts containing less than 160 acres and residences, or adjacent to acknowledged exception areas; and

- d. Provide a level of public facilities and services, including roads, intended primarily for direct services to rural residences.”

Policy 3.4.4. Notwithstanding any other quasi-judicial plan or zone change criteria, lands designated as Forest under this Plan and zoned Forest 2 may upon application be redesignated and rezoned from Forest 2 to Exclusive Farm Use if such lands:

- a. Do not qualify under State Statute for forestland tax deferral,
- b. Are not necessary to permit forest operations or practices on adjoining lands and do not constitute forested lands that maintain soil, air, water and fish and wildlife resources,
- c. Have soils on the property that fall within the definition of agricultural lands as set forth in Goal 3,
- d. Are a tract of land 40 acres or less in size,
- e. Do not qualify under State Statute and the terms of the Forest 2 zone for a dwelling, and;
- f. Were purchased by the property owner after January 1, 1985 but before November 4, 1993.

Such changes may be made regardless of the size of the resulting EFU zoning district. Such changes shall be processed in the same manner as other quasi-judicial plan or zoning map changes.

Policy 3.4.5. Ensure that criteria for and designation of Forest Lands are consistent with state administrative rules and statutes.

Policy 3.4.6. Coordinate and cooperate with the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and other public agencies to promote sustainable forest uses, including recreation and biomass facilities, on public

forest land, including currently adopted Forest and Land Management Plans prepared by the US Forest Service (USFS) and US Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

- a. Using the Deschutes National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, or its successor, as the basis for mutual coordination and cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service;
- b. Using the Prineville Bureau of Land Management Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan, or its successor, as the basis for mutual coordination and cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management.

Policy 3.4.7. Notify affected agencies and tribal governments when reviewing land use applications and proposals for development that could impact Federal or State forest lands.

Policy 3.4.8. Support economic development opportunities that promote forest health, create opportunities for local production of related forest products, and reduce the prevalence of invasive plant species that adversely affect forest health and soil quality.

Policy 3.4.9. Provide input on public forest plans that impact Deschutes County.

Policy 3.4.10. Coordinate with community stakeholders to support forest management plans and projects that are consistent with the policies of this chapter and with local community forest management and wildfire protection plans.

- a. Promote forest health and resilience to wildfire.
- b. Contribute to public safety by treating wildland hazardous fuels particularly in the designated Wildland Urban Interface as identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plans described in Chapter 13, Natural Hazards, of this Plan.
- c. Retain fish and wildlife habitat.

Policy 3.4.11. Continue to review and revise the County Code as needed to ensure development in forest zones minimizes and/or mitigates impacts on fish and wildlife habitat, forest health, and wildfire resiliency.

