

IMPACT THROUGH INSIGHT



► Prepared for Deschutes County

Deschutes County Campground Feasibility Study

Deschutes County

NOV 2023

Acknowledgements

For over 45 years ECONorthwest has helped its clients make sound decisions based on rigorous economic, planning, and financial analysis. For more information about ECONorthwest:

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ECONorthwest prepared this report for Deschutes County with guidance and input of several partners from Deschutes County including Jen Patterson, Kristie Bollinger, Peter Gutowsky, William Groves, Chris Doty, Nick Lelack, and county commissioners Phil Chang, Tony DeBone, and Patti Adair. ECONorthwest and Deschutes County thank those who helped develop the Deschutes County Campground Feasibility Study. Other firms, agencies, and staff contributed to research that this report relied upon, specifically Matthew Crampton, Susan Cunningham, Thomas Fischer, Mason Lacy, and Steve Roelof of Environmental Science Associates (ESA).

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Executive Summary

The rapid growth in the demand for outdoor recreational activities in our region necessitates a comprehensive assessment of potential sites for campground and RV park development. The purpose of this detailed report is to provide Deschutes County insights into the feasibility of establishing new campgrounds at three specific locations: Crooked River Ranch, Fort Thompson Lane, and Drafter Road.

Deschutes County has long been recognized for its natural beauty and its hub for outdoor enthusiasts. Over recent years, Deschutes County has witnessed a substantial increase in visitation, particularly among locals. While camping has grown steadily, other activities like downhill skiing, hiking, and nature exploration have outpaced it. This surge in interest underscores the need for expanded camping and recreational facilities to serve our residents and visitors. Housing scarcity, including short-term opportunities, is an increasing issue in the region as well.

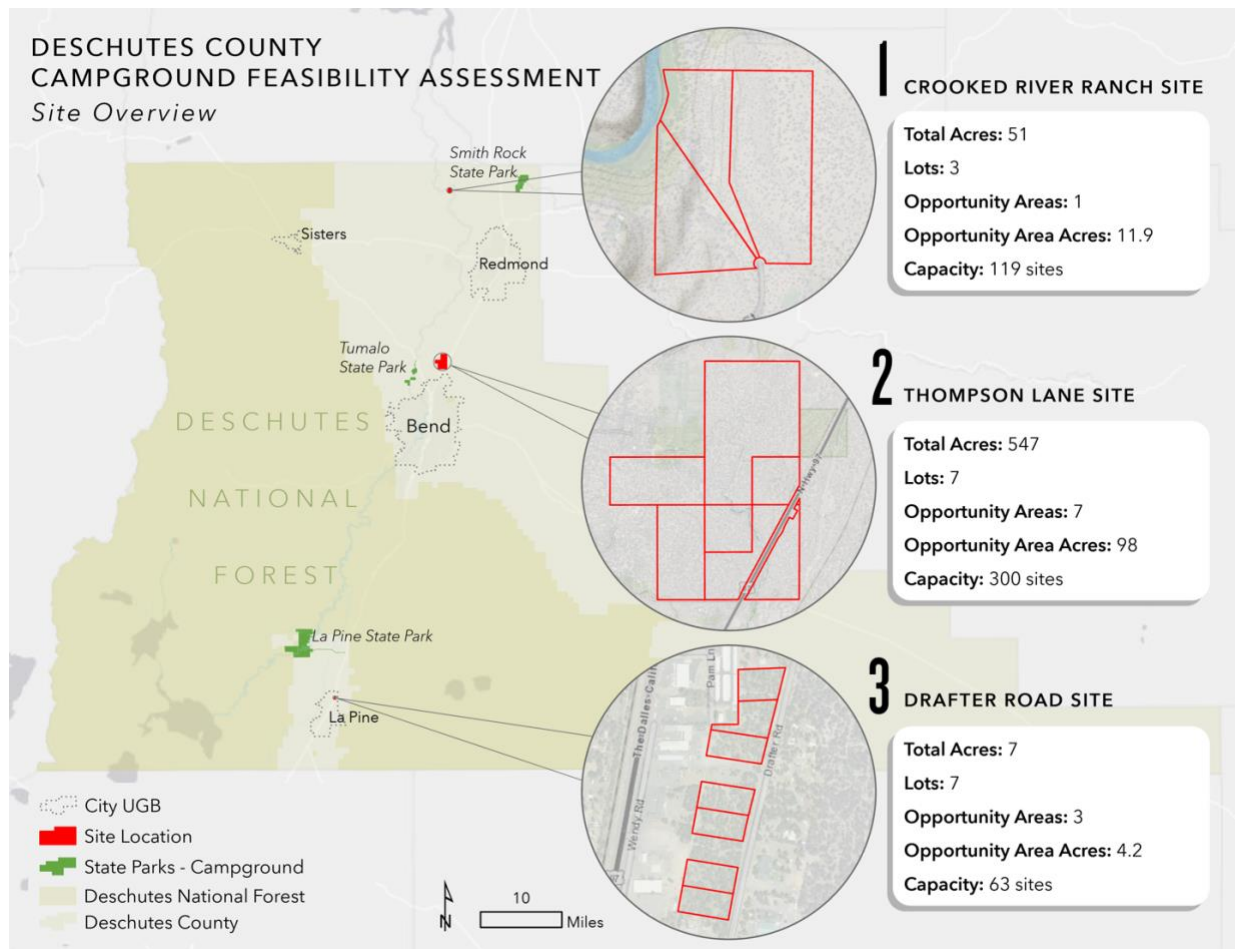
Starting with **Drafter Road within La Pine's city limits**, our analysis indicates this site has some of the most attractive conditions to host an RV park development. Several factors contribute to this suitability: its ample size, direct highway access, conducive zoning conditions, and existing infrastructure. Moreover, the location of Drafter Road could also serve as a solution to seasonal housing needs for temporary workers and visitors. However, it's crucial to note potential challenges, such as attempting to obtain Goal exceptions, the site's limited capacity for development and the necessity for obtaining specific use permits. The projected development cost here is around \$3.7 million, but with an expected return between 9.9 percent and 11 percent, the investment seems justifiable.

The **Fort Thompson Lane** location offers an expansive space that aligns well with a traditional campground setup. However, there are inherent challenges and risks associated with developing this site that pertain to obtaining Goal exceptions, amending the comprehensive plan map zoning, and land use regulation requirements, as well as canal access, which effectively bisects the property. Two distinct zones within this site, termed as Opportunity Areas 1 and 2, appear ideal for tent camping. That said, before moving forward, it's paramount to consider the great challenges that exist with state and county code requirements which create substantial risk of appeal. Like the Drafter Road site, an appeal could have significant costs and result in delays. Moreover, given the complexity of goal exceptions related to comprehensive plan amendments, there is no guarantee that the county would prevail on appeal. With a higher development cost of \$21.6 million modeled for a 300-site RV park, it's crucial to consider the longer-term financial implications and the anticipated demand.

Lastly, **Crooked River Ranch** presents a set of unique challenges that make it the least feasible for typical campground development. The site's rugged terrain, coupled with a lack of utility infrastructure and prevailing zoning regulations against camping, are significant barriers. However, a potential reimaging of the site could see it serving as a trailhead or designated

area for walk-in tent camping. This, of course, would require revisiting the current zoning regulations and addressing challenging and potentially costly access issues. Moreover, the Crooked River Ranch site is outside an established UGB and is zoned RR-10 (rural residential, 10-acre). Similar to the Fort Thompson Lane Site, are inherent challenges and risks associated with developing this site that pertain to obtaining amending the comprehensive plan map, zoning, and land use regulation requirements. Before moving forward, it's paramount to consider the substantial challenges that exist with state and county land use requirements which create risk of appeal. Like the Fort Thompson site, an appeal could have significant costs and result in delays. Moreover, given the complexity of goal exceptions related to comprehensive plan amendments, there is no guarantee that the county would prevail on appeal. Given the limited development potential and space constraints, a more conservative approach to investment is recommended here.

When considering funding avenues, several viable options emerge. The county could leverage its own funds or tap into the revenue generated by transient lodging taxes. Furthermore, the possibility of securing grants, specifically those aimed at promoting tourism and outdoor recreation, should not be overlooked. As for operational strategies, the county could take the lead in management, or explore public-private partnerships, which have proven successful in other regions.



1. Introduction

Deschutes County, a prominent and growing region of Oregon for tourism and residents, attracts over four million visitors annually, largely for outdoor recreation including overnight camping experiences. Tourism remains a major industry in Central Oregon, providing jobs to over 9,250 residents and contributing over \$1.41 billion to the local economy each year.¹ This sector not only fuels economic growth but also enhances quality of life and attracts new businesses and a skilled workforce to the region. However, Deschutes County faces a challenge as it grapples with a shortage of short-term lodging capacity that caters to outdoor recreationists, preventing visitors from extending their stays and corresponding economic impact, limiting the area's economic growth potential.

A scarcity of camping opportunities in Central Oregon, including for recreational vehicles (RV), not only reduces total visitation but also contributes to increased dispersed camping in undeveloped forestland and along roads. While visitation and population have both rapidly grown over recent decades, there has been no corresponding increase in camping capacity. This, in turn, results in added forest maintenance and damage to natural habitats, such as sanitation issues, problems with trash management, and increased fire risk.² Furthermore, affordable RV and tent campgrounds could help address the short-term housing needs of seasonal workers in recreational areas during peak seasons or provide support for the growing demand to accommodate the unhoused or homeless who often rely on RV parks as an affordable housing option.³

Despite its tourism appeal, Deschutes County has not introduced a new county-run campground in over four decades.⁴ Now, after careful planning, the county is poised to conduct an exploratory feasibility assessment for a new county-run campground. The complexity of this endeavor, influenced by state and local land-use laws, community objectives, economic risks, financial *pro-formas*, and site-specific environmental considerations, has prompted the county to enlist the expertise of ECONorthwest and Environmental Science Associates (ESA), a private economic consulting firm and a private environmental consulting firm, respectively.

In collaboration, ECONorthwest and ESA conducted a thorough site analysis, financial assessment, and operations feasibility study for RV campgrounds in three designated county sites. The work includes a comprehensive Deschutes County campground market analysis and the development of financial and operations plans based on land use zoning and environmental opportunities and constraints.

¹ "Visit Central Oregon Annual Report: FY21-22". Oregon Tourism Commission by Dean Runyan Associates (Oregon Travel Impacts). 2021.

² "Dispersed camping in state forests temporarily banned". Central Oregon Daily. May 8th, 2020. Website accessed: <https://centraloregondaily.com/dispersed-camping-in-state-forests-closes-temporarily/>.

³ "For some, RV parks a last chance at housing: 'We are homeless, not seasonal campers'". RVtravel. February 18, 2023. Website accessed: <https://www.rvtravel.com/campground-crowding-1092b/>.

⁴ Memo: Recreational Vehicle Park Expansion/Assesment. Peter Gutowsky, Deschutes CDD. September 1, 2021.

2. Purpose and Need - Campground Demand

Visitation to Deschutes County and its resident population are both experiencing rapid growth, and this trend is projected to persist. The county has witnessed consistent population growth over the past five decades, reaching its peak as a percentage of the population in the 2000s. This growth is anticipated to continue at an annual rate of over 2 percent, gradually slowing to 1.1 percent over the next 50 years (**Exhibit 1**).

Exhibit 1. Population and Forecast Growth in Deschutes County

Source: Population Research Center (2018)⁵

Geography	2020	2022 (forecasted)	2047	2072
Deschutes County	207,921	207,921	298,937	392,790
<i>Bend UGB</i>	99,598	103,976	160,361	225,619
<i>La Pine UGB</i>	2,512	2,736	5,129	8,336
<i>Redmond UGB</i>	33,608	37,342	60,060	82,601
<i>Sisters UGB</i>	3,064	3,437	7,911	14,881
<i>Outside UGB Area</i>	59,471	60,430	65,476	61,352

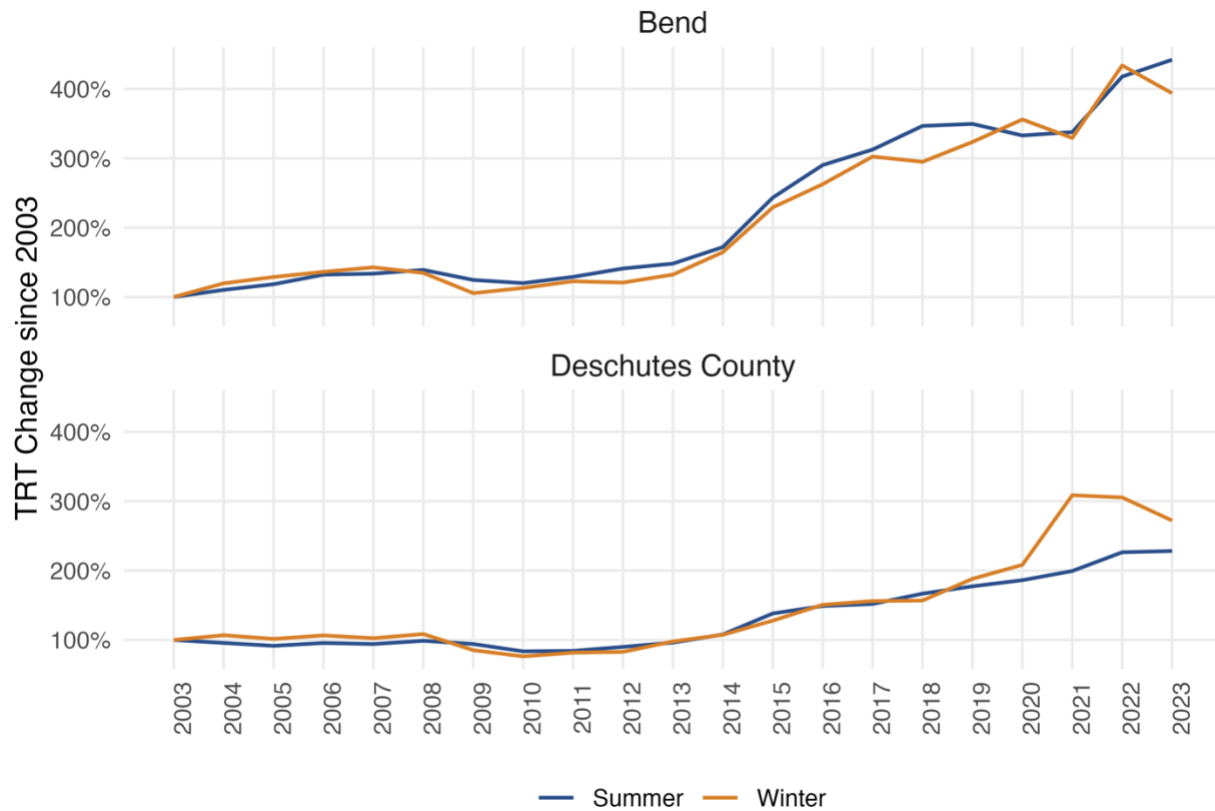
Notes: UGB – Urban Growth Boundary

In addition to the rise in County visitation and growth, Bend has garnered national recognition as a tourism destination, and this recognition and investment are extending to other parts of the county. Tourism Room Tax (TRT) collections have shown consistent growth for both Deschutes County and Bend, especially after the economic downturn of the Great Recession. Adjusted for inflation, TRT has surged by around 400 percent for Bend and 250 percent for Deschutes County compared to 2003 levels, as seen in **Exhibit 2**. This trend continued even through the COVID-19 shutdowns in 2020, with winter tourism revenue outpacing summer trends in recent years.

⁵ Population Research Center 2022. Coordinated Population Forecast, Deschutes County, 2022 through 2072. Portland, OR: Population Research Center, Portland State University.

Exhibit 2. Transient Room Tax (TRT) Trends in Bend and Deschutes County – 2003 to 2023

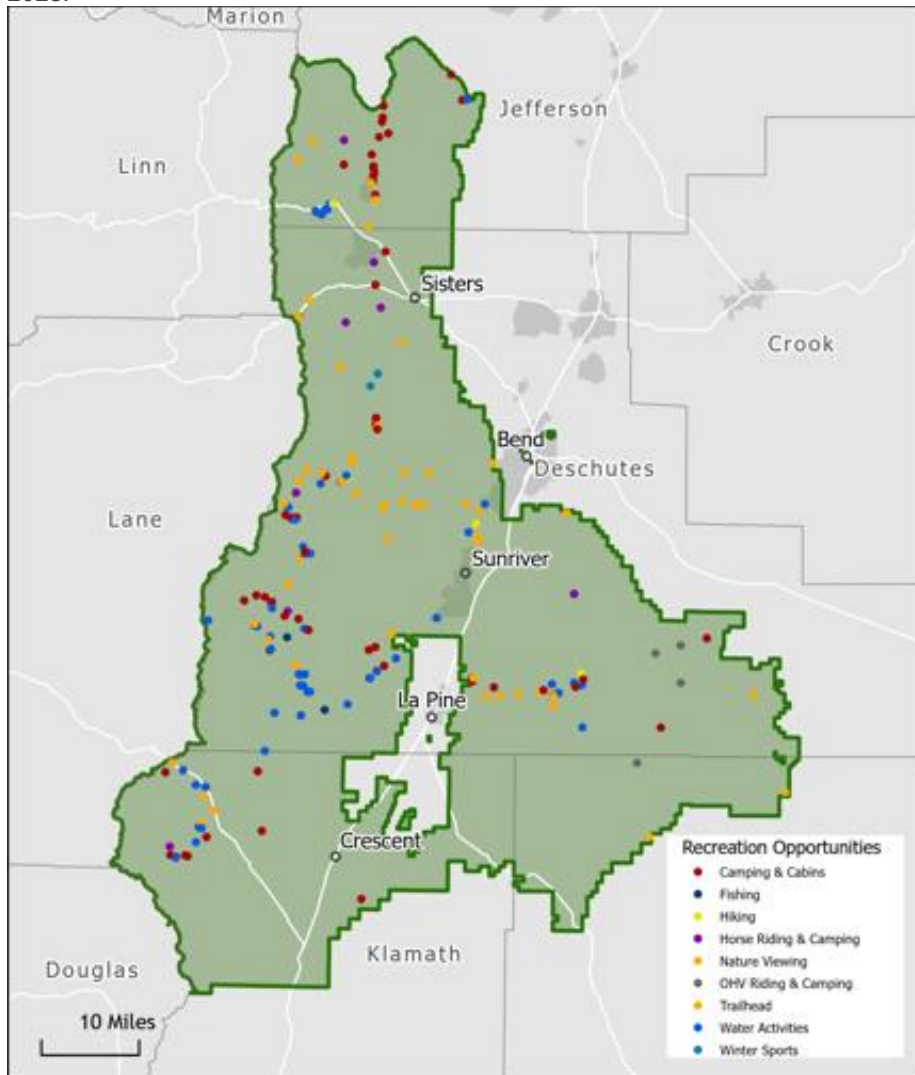
Source: ECONorthwest,



The Deschutes National Forest encompasses around 2,190 miles of trails and 252 recreational activity sites within its 1.6 million acres of land. Participation in outdoor recreation is significant in Deschutes County and across the state of Oregon. The diverse and high-quality recreational offerings in Deschutes County drive regional demand for campgrounds. The area boasts several well-known state parks like Smith Rock State Park and La Pine State Park, numerous Bureau of Land Management recreational areas, and the Deschutes National Forest, providing various trail, water, and snow recreational opportunities (see **Exhibit 3**). It's important to note that most of the Deschutes National Forest campgrounds are only accessible and open during the summer months.

Exhibit 3. Deschutes National Forest Recreation Sites

Source: ECONorthwest, The Economic Importance of Recreation Funding on Central Oregon's National Forests. September 2023.



The Deschutes National Forest welcomes over 2 million visitors each year, with more than 40 percent of these visitors coming from outside the local area (residing over 30 miles away). Based on the trends in **Exhibit 4**, overall visitation is projected to increase significantly from 2.183 million trips in 2021 to 2.914 million trips in 2040, a growth of 33 percent. Local trips are expected to see the largest growth, increasing from 1.278 million trips in 2021 to 1.810 million in 2040, a 42 percent increase. Nonlocal trips also grow, but less sharply from 904,000 to 1.103 million, up 22 percent. Trail-based activities are the most popular, with over 1 million trips in 2021 growing to 1.129 million in 2040. This category sees the largest total growth in trips between 2021-2040 at over 19 million. After trail-based, the next most popular activities are downhill skiing, nature study, and camping. Camping sees slower growth than downhill skiing and nature study, from 79,000 to 103,000 trips. In summary, substantial increases in visitation are expected especially among local users, with trail-based activities remaining the most popular recreation engagement.

Exhibit 4. Current and Forecasted Visitation for Select Activities, Deschutes National Forest

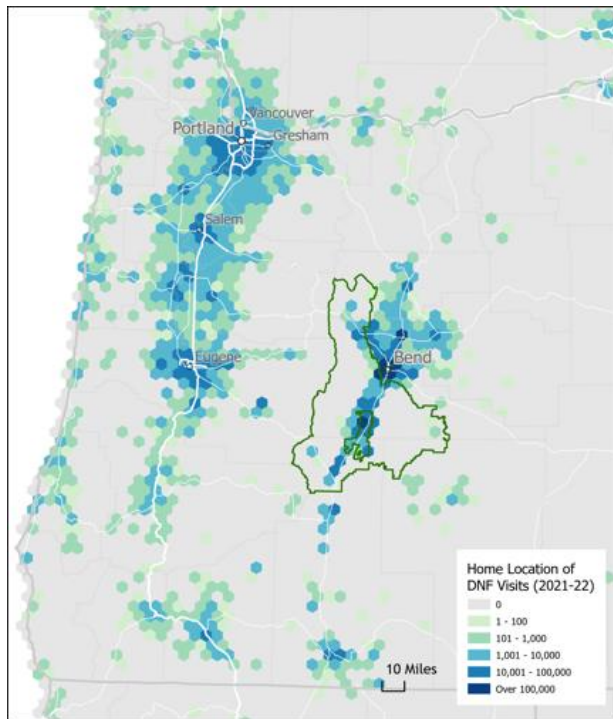
Source: ECONorthwest, The Economic Importance of Recreation Funding on Central Oregon's National Forests. September 2023.

Activity	Trips (thousands)		
	2021	2040	2021-40 sum
Camping	79	103	1,817
Downhill Skiing	397	560	9,486
Hunting, Fishing, and Gathering Forest Products	162	200	3,613
Motorized Non-trail	38	48	868
Nature Study	255	325	5,784
Non-motorized Water	132	177	3,072
Trail-based	833	1,129	19,471
Local	1,278	1,810	30,600
Nonlocal	904	1,103	20,011
Grand Total	2,183	2,914	50,612

These visitors contribute \$200 million in annual spending, and this figure is expected to increase to \$245 million by 2040. Non-local visitors to the Deschutes National Forest come from various parts of the country and even internationally, with a significant concentration in the Willamette Valley, particularly around Portland (as shown on the map in Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5. Home Locations of Visitors to Deschutes National Forest

Source: ECONorthwest, The Economic Importance of Recreation Funding on Central Oregon's National Forests. September 2023.



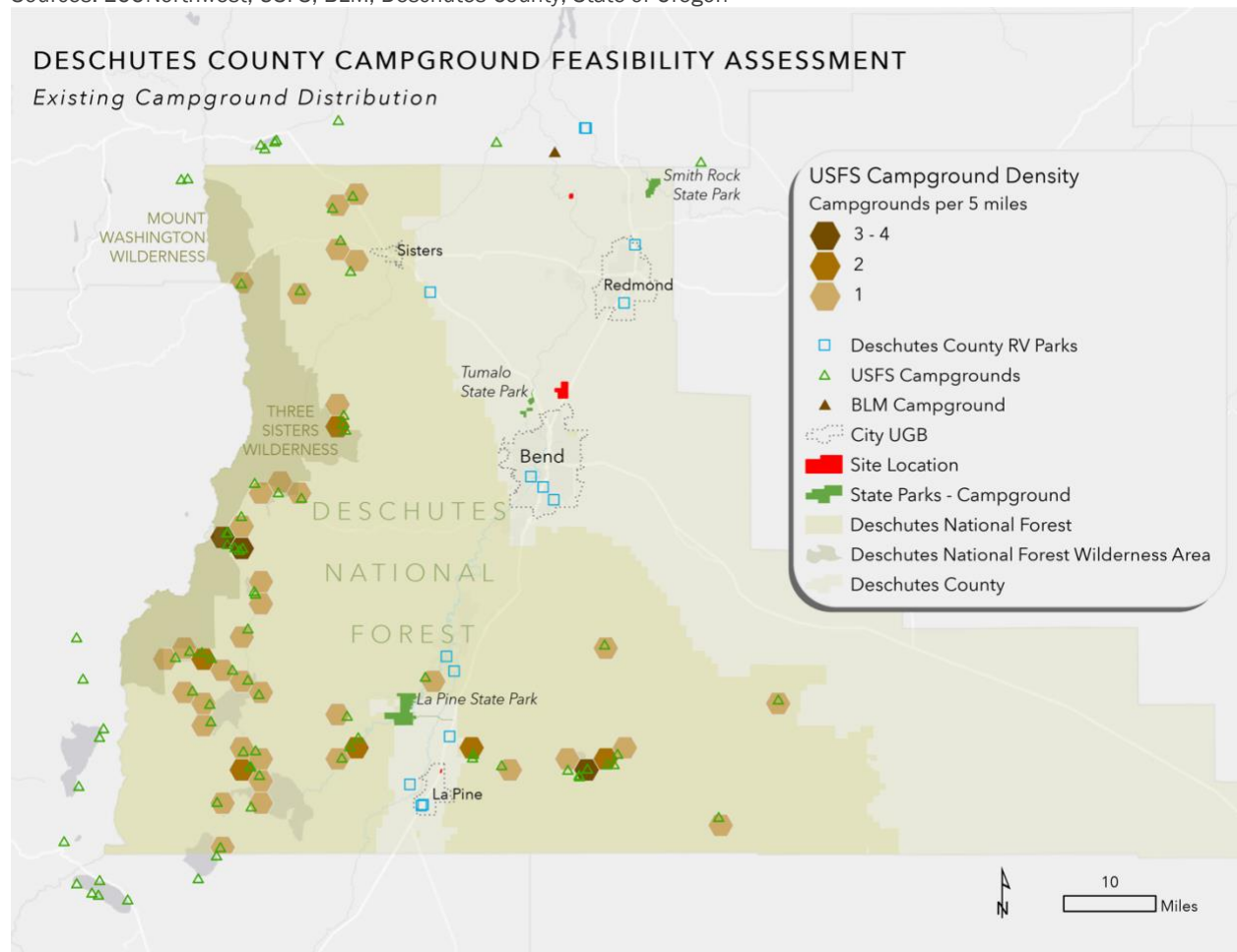
3. Current Campground Operations in Deschutes County (Supply)

Existing Campgrounds

The Deschutes National Forest falls within more than half of Deschutes County, which includes expansive wilderness areas such as Mount Washington Wilderness and Three Sisters Wilderness. The Deschutes National Forest boasts about 81 U.S. Forest Service-operated campgrounds offering a combination of tent and hybrid tent/RV campsites. These campsites vary in price per night, ranging from \$12 to \$151, depending on factors like site type and maximum person capacity.

Exhibit 6. Existing Campgrounds in Deschutes County

Sources: ECONorthwest, USFS, BLM, Deschutes County, State of Oregon



As depicted in **Exhibit 6**, each hexagon on the map represents an area of approximately five miles. In this representation, darker shades of brown indicate densely concentrated areas of camping options, often featuring 3 to 4 campgrounds within a five-mile radius. The individual

USFS campgrounds are designated by green triangles and are typically situated 10 to 20+ miles away from city centers. On the other hand, the fourteen Deschutes County RV Parks are marked with blue squares in Exhibit 6 and are generally located within 10 miles of city limits.

Out of the fourteen RV park sites, twelve were able to provide information regarding the total number of sites, whether they operate seasonally or year-round, the maximum number of available sites, and their rate structures. As depicted in **Exhibit 7**, each RV park displayed a unique rate structure, including nightly, weekly, and some with monthly fees. Unfortunately, none of the RV parks were able to provide occupancy rates, except for the Expo Center RV Park, which will be discussed in following sections.

Exhibit 7. Deschutes County RV Parks Capacity and Fees

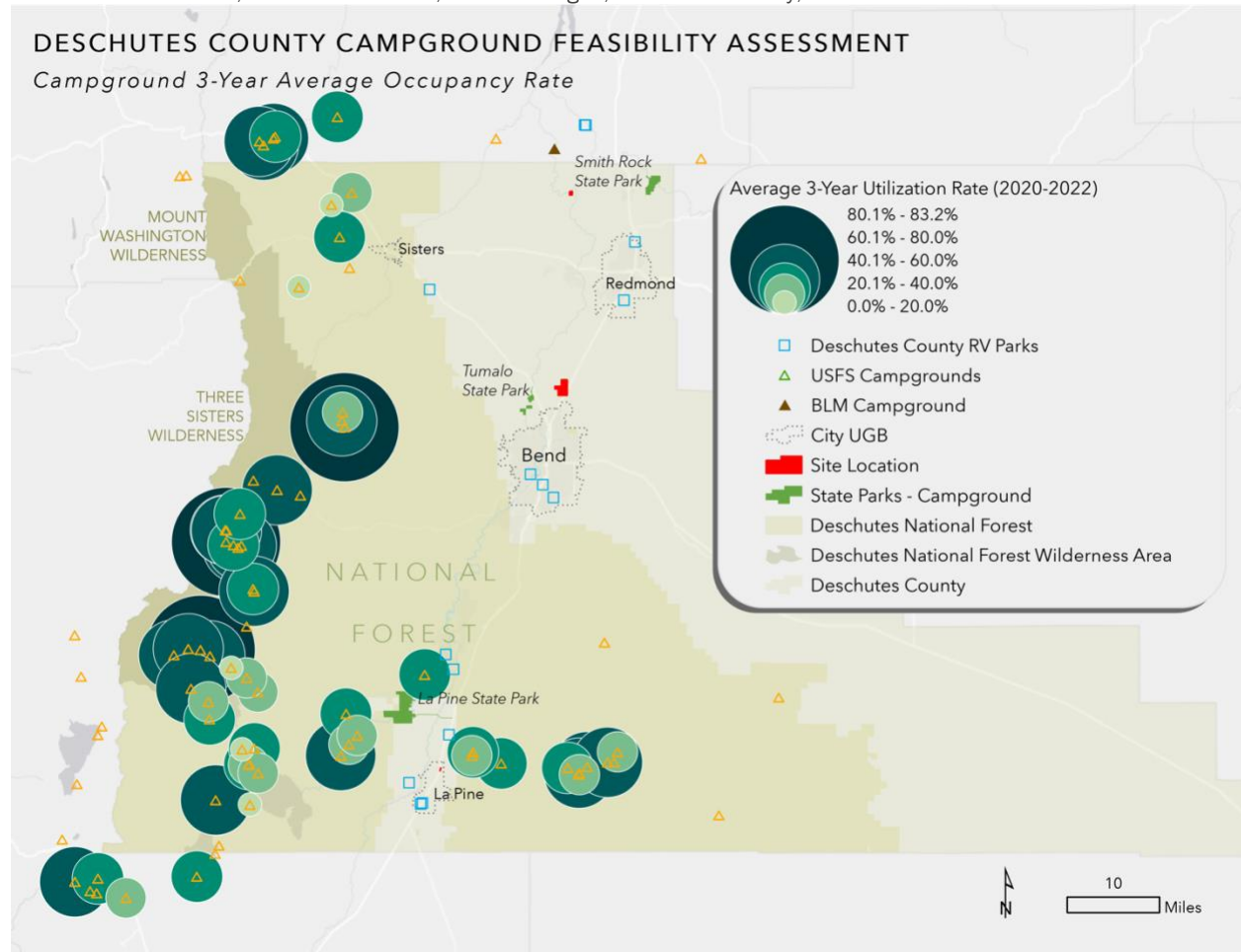
Source: Google Search, RV Park websites

Name of RV Park	# sites	Open	Max Stay	Nightly Range	Monthly Range
Scandia RV Park/Village	326	Year-round	21 nights, or monthly	-	\$369-\$441 (wk)
Thousand Trails Bend-Sunriver	317	Year-round	28 days	\$57 - \$90	-
Cascade Meadows RV Resort	117	Year-round	no max	-	\$695-\$820
Expo Center RV Park	105	Year-round	45 days	\$38-\$50	-
Bend/Sisters Garden RV Resort	99	Year-round	-	-	-
Cottonwood RV Park	52	Year-round	11 months, can extend	-	\$725-\$925
Newberry RV Park	47	Year-round	no max	\$57	-
Crane Prairie Resort	38	Year-round	180 days	\$34.50	-
Copper Ridge RV Resort	30	Year-round	60 days	\$42.90	\$300 (wk)
River Rim RV Park	23	Year-round	-	-	\$750-\$800
Hidden Pines RV Park	22	Year-round	permanent	\$60	\$600
Whispering Pines RV Park	-	Year-round	no max	-	-

While the data available for comparing campground and RV park occupancy rates is limited, **Exhibit 8** depicts the geographical distribution of campgrounds with varying average 3-year utilization rates from 2020 to 2022.

Exhibit 8. Deschutes County Campground Average Occupancy Rate

Source: ECONorthwest, U.S. Forest Service, State of Oregon, Deschutes County, BLM



Among the 57 USFS campgrounds in the Deschutes National Forest that reported utilization rates, 23 campgrounds featured a utilization or occupancy rate exceeding 60 percent. Those campgrounds having greater than 60 percent utilization rate are list in **Exhibit 9**.

Exhibit 9. USFS Campgrounds with 3-year Average Utilization Rate > 60 Percent

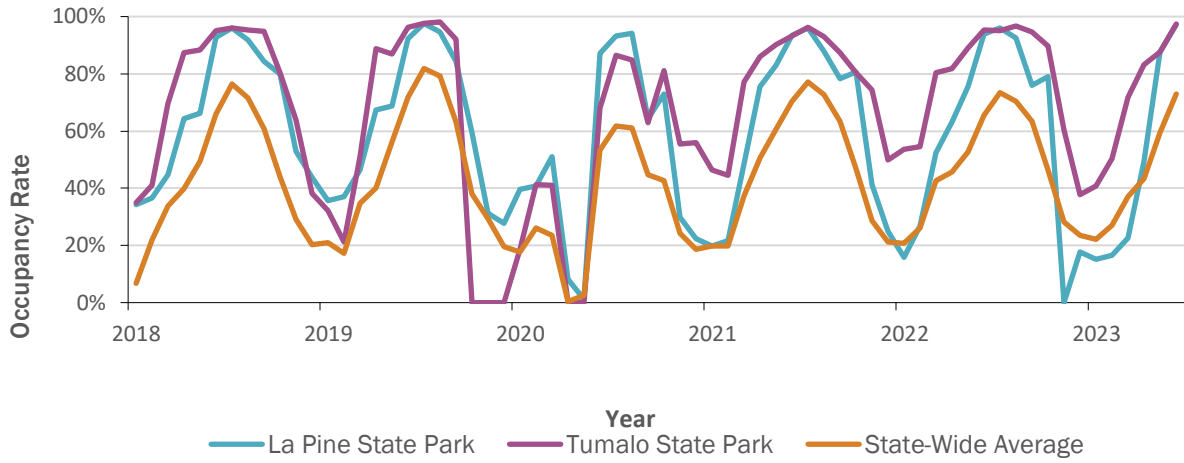
Source: ECONorwest, US Forest Service

Campground Name	Total Person Capacity	Number of Sites	2020-2022 Average Utilization Rate
Point	45	9	83%
Cultus Lake - Little Cove boat-in	25	4	82%
Three Creek Lake	65	11	81%
West Cultus boat-in	65	12	80%
Soda Creek	50	10	79%
Driftwood	80	18	78%
Mallard Marsh (Hosmer Lake)	80	14	75%
Cultus Lake	280	54	73%
Little Crater	250	47	73%
Blue Bay	135	24	72%
Cultus Lake - Big Cove boat-in	20	6	72%
Newberry Group	165	3	72%
South (Hosmer Lake)	115	23	71%
Scout Lake	125	10	70%
Elk Lake	110	19	70%
Elk Lake CG	110	17	70%
Little Cultus	50	28	70%
East Lake	145	29	68%
Little Lava Lake	80	16	66%
Link Creek	180	33	65%
North Davis Creek	70	14	64%
Trapper Creek	190	28	61%
Bull Bend	65	12	61%

Deschutes County hosts three of Oregon's State Parks: Smith Rock State Park, Tumalo State Park, and LaPine State Park, all equipped with campgrounds. Smith Rock's campground doesn't have reported occupancy rates because it operates on a first-come, first-serve basis for bivouac sites and is not available for reservation systems like Reserve America. As shown in **Exhibit 10**, Tumalo and LaPine State Parks have consistently outperformed the state-wide occupancy rate, often exceeding other state parks with campgrounds by as much as 30 percent during peak seasons.

Exhibit 10. Occupancy Rate for Deschutes County State Parks vs State Average, 2018-2023

Source: State of Oregon Parks and Recreation Department



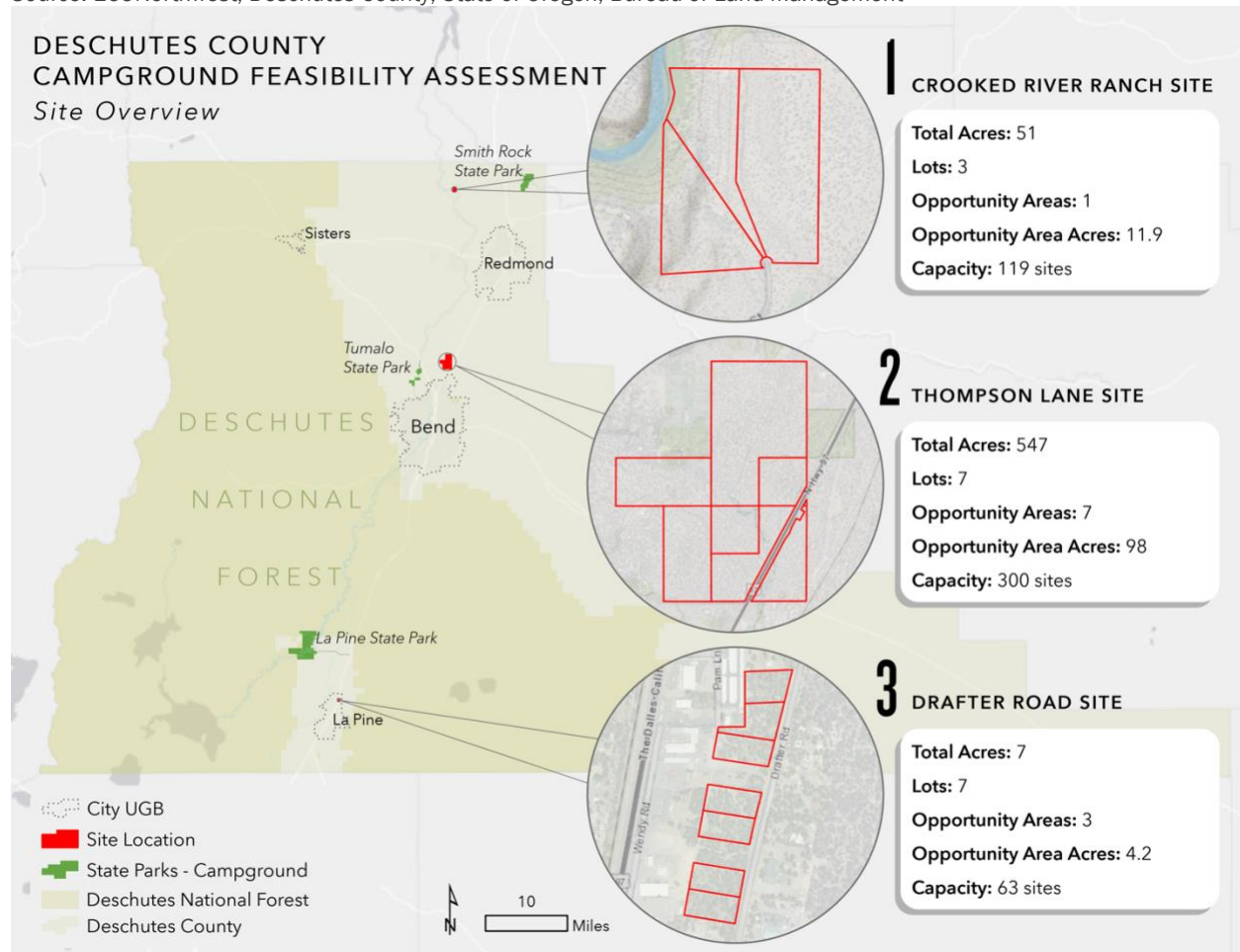
4. Candidate Sites Overview

Deschutes County has identified three county owned locations for evaluation in terms of their economic, financial, and environmental suitability for the possible establishment of a new RV park or an RV/tent hybrid campground. These three sites, illustrated in

Exhibit 11, vary significantly in terms of their size, location, on-site conditions, potential target audience, proximity to various amenities, and major travel routes. Each site presents distinct prospects and limitations for campground development, as well as a unique sense of place, the potential to align with community-specific objectives, and adherence to state and local regulations.

Exhibit 11. Feasibility Sites Overview - Deschutes County

Source: ECONorthwest, Deschutes County, State of Oregon, Bureau of Land Management



Crooked River Ranch Site

Crooked River Ranch encompasses an expansive 10,000-acre area, offering a mix of residential, recreational, and commercial properties situated alongside Route 97, linking Redmond and Madras. The 9,900-acre rural residential section is comprised of 2,646 privately owned lots, while the remaining acreage has been developed to cater to both residents and visitors with an array of amenities. Notably, residents and guests alike enjoy access to the scenic Deschutes and Crooked Rivers, offering opportunities for activities such as hiking, fishing, and water recreation. Furthermore, the Ranch boasts convenient proximity to motorized and non-motorized trails overseen by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The proposed campground location is positioned in close proximity to Eagle Rock and provides access to the existing recreational offerings within Crooked River Ranch and in the surrounding federal and state lands.

The Crooked River Ranch Site, located in unincorporated Deschutes County, encompasses tax lots 141214B 100, 200, and 300. Situated along a segment of the Deschutes River designated as a State Scenic Waterway by the State of Oregon, this site offers a unique natural setting. The majority of the area falls under the Rural Residential 10 (RR10) zoning, with a Landscape Management (LM) Combining Zone. In the northwest corner, near the Deschutes River, a section is zoned as Floodplain (FP). The adjacent properties to the east are designated as Exclusive Farm Use, while the properties to the north, west, and south maintain an RR10 zoning. Additionally, the eastern property is under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Notably, the site holds the designation of a Rural Residential Exception Area (RREA) within the Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan. This unique location provides an excellent backdrop for the proposed campground.

Fort Thompson Site

The potential site at Fort Thompson Lane is located approximately one mile from the Bend Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and roughly five miles from downtown Bend. These six county-owned undeveloped tax lots are situated in unincorporated Deschutes County to the west of Highway 97. Much of the property is covered in grasses, shrubs, and juniper vegetation, with the Swalley Canal running through it, providing some greenery and wildlife habitat. Its proximity to highway access, amenities, and retail options makes it an attractive choice, being on the edge of an urban area.

Among the potential properties, the Fort Thompson Site is the largest, spanning approximately 550 acres. It incorporates several tax lots, including 1612340000400 and 800, 1612330000700, 1712040000100, and 171200000700 and 800. The site is zoned EFUTRB (Exclusive Farm Use, Tumalo / Redmond / Bend) which is an exclusive farm use (EFU) zone. Highway 97 runs through the southeastern corner of tax lot 1712030 800. To the north, neighboring properties have an EFUTRB zoning, while those to the east are designated as EFUAL (Alfalfa Subzone), and those to the west and south have a Multiple Use Agricultural 10-Acre Minimum (MUA10)

zoning. Additionally, Highway 97 is subject to a Landscape Management (LM) Combining Zone overlay that extends approximately a quarter-mile into the site.

Drafter Road Sites

Situated within the La Pine Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), Deschutes County possesses multiple undeveloped lots under consideration for a potential RV park or hybrid campground. Each of these lots is currently unimproved, sharing a Commercial-Mixed Use (CMX) zoning designation and covering approximately one acre of land per lot. These sites offer a strategic advantage as they are conveniently positioned just off Highway 97, accessible via Drafter Road, which serves as a minor collector road. Within a short walking distance from these lots, visitors can find a few dining establishments, a bowling alley, and retail stores offering essential goods and services.

Moreover, these sites are in close proximity to a wealth of recreational activities and attractions, including La Pine State Park, golf courses, snow parks, the renowned Newberry Volcano, as well as Paulina Lakes and hot springs, making them an enticing option for potential campers and outdoor enthusiasts. Additionally, the Drafter Road site holds the highest potential for offering short-term transient lodging options due to a distinct code variation. Unlike the Deschutes County Code, which imposes a maximum stay of 30 days, this site's code does not specify a maximum length of stay.

Initial Site Visit Summaries

On August 28, 2023, site visits were carried out in the company of Jen Patterson and Kristie Bollinger from Deschutes County, as well as the ECONorthwest project team, including Mark Buckley and Alicia Milligan. These site visits had several objectives: to establish a spatial understanding of each site, to compare ESA's site analysis with elements that correspond to various types of campgrounds or RV park development, and to formulate additional inquiries for engagement with stakeholders and County officials. It's essential to acknowledge that the observations and findings presented here reflect initial impressions during the site visits. Nevertheless, further assessments, encompassing transportation, geotechnical, and cultural considerations, will be necessary to determine the feasibility in subsequent stages of site design.

Crooked River Ranch

Upon our assessment of the Crooked River Ranch site, we uncovered that the current zoning, designated as RR10 (Rural Residential with a 10-acre lot minimum), prohibits the development of a campground or RV park. Our initial impression of the site had leaned towards its suitability as a potential trailhead or walk-in tent site. However, several constraints, including road enhancements, utility access, significant rock removal requirements in the opportunity area, and steep slopes, make the Crooked River Ranch site the least feasible among the three potential locations. Subsequent discussions with CDD and County officials may guide future decisions regarding development options for this site.

Fort Thompson Site

The Fort Thompson site appeared to offer adequate space for the potential establishment of a recreational campground and RV park. Opportunity Area 1 in the southwest portion of the site boasted generally flat terrain, ideal for mixed recreational camping and RV sites. Notably, noise from Highway 97 was not a significant issue in Opportunity Area 1. However, Opportunity Areas 2, 3, and 4 presented more significant development challenges due to restricted access imposed by the Swalley Canal and lateral canal, which are subject to easements held by the Swalley Irrigation District. Construction restrictions and potential conflicts during the canal piping phase were also highlighted. Our vision for the potential of the Fort Thompson Road site primarily includes a recreational RV park and campground in Opportunity Area 1, complemented by recreational amenities such as walking trails, biking trails, picnic areas, and possibly a playground in Opportunity Areas 2, 3, and 4 in the northeast portion of the site. Despite its potential, the development challenges include, obtaining approval of a Goal exception, direct access issues, the presence of high-value farmland surrounding opportunity areas, and canal barriers.

Drafter Road

Drafter Road offers three potential opportunity areas within the City of La Pine, each surpassing the minimum 2-acre requirement for RV parks and campgrounds. Opportunity Area 1, the largest among them, slightly exceeds 3 acres, although its narrow shape and setback requirements may pose site design challenges. Two lots separate the three opportunity areas, but acquiring these lots could expand the RV park's capacity. If purchasing the lots proves feasible, we envision this site primarily as an RV park, potentially addressing short-term housing needs. Similar RV parks in the vicinity offer monthly rentals for full hookup-30amp sites in the \$600 to \$800 range. These opportunity areas benefit from direct Highway 97 access, as well as dining options and services bordering the western side of the site along Highway 97.

However, the site faces challenges including limited capacity in each opportunity area, issues with road access and walkability, the necessity of a conditional use permit for an RV park or campground in the Commercial-Mixed Use zone, and other site design requirements detailed in the ESA technical site feasibility analysis. On a positive note, local road circulation improvements proposed in the Wickiup Junction Refinement Plan could enhance vehicular access and walkability via a new "backage road." Among the three potential sites considered in this feasibility study, Drafter Road stands out as the most viable option for an RV park.

Stakeholder and Community Perspectives

As part of an attempt to gain community perspectives on the potential sites, we received a letter from Friends and Neighbors of Deschutes Canyon Area (FAN) on July 18, 2023 via Deschutes County Commissioner Phil Chang (see **Appendix 4** for full letter). The letter from FANs expressed concerns regarding the development of a campground on a 50-acre County land parcel near Lower Bridge Way (Crooked River Ranch Site), located on the west side of the

Deschutes River. FANs acknowledge the importance of offering additional recreational opportunities in the area but raised several key issues about the suitability of the chosen site. They emphasized their mission to preserve and restore the natural landscapes of the region.

The main points of concern raised by FANs are as follows:

1. The largely undisturbed natural state of the 50-acre parcel, which borders BLM property and is designated as Wild and Scenic River (W&SR) land. They argue that restoring previously abused land and promoting responsible recreation could be a more worthy effort.
2. The terrain and limited level areas of the parcel, with approximately 10 acres suitable for a drive-in campground.
3. The existing county, state, and federal restrictions on the use of W&SR-designated land.
4. The likelihood of local private landowners not supporting an overnight campground project.

FANs proposed a more suitable location for the campground on a 50-acre parcel within the Steamboat Rock Recreational Area (SRRA), located on the opposite side of the river south of Lower Bridge Way. They argue that this location, included in a proposed BLM plan for enhanced management, offers a more favorable terrain, better access for motor vehicles, lower development costs, and integration into the existing trail network. They suggest that the County pursue a land exchange with BLM for this alternative location, which they view as a "win-win" solution.

Overall, FANs expressed reservations about the chosen site for the campground and advocated for an alternative location with the potential for lower costs and better alignment with their mission.

5. Site Assessments

Environmental Science Associates (ESA) collaborated with ECONorthwest for the Deschutes County Camping Feasibility Study, focusing on the County's three sites of interest: Fort Thompson Lane, Drafter Road, and Crooked River Ranch. Their work included preliminary site and environmental analysis, gathering essential background information from various sources, conducting site visits, and assessing the sites for development potential, considering environmental impact, infrastructure requirements, easements and regulatory requirements, and potential neighboring concerns.

ESA's analytical approach encompassed a desktop analysis of current natural resource and land use data for three identified development sites suitable for RV parks or traditional campgrounds. Additionally, ESA sought insights from Deschutes County and La Pine land use planners regarding code interpretations. Notably, no technical field investigations were carried out as part of this assessment.

Current Regulatory Environment and Campground Development Considerations

Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) and Oregon Revised Statutes (ORSs)

A stakeholder interview with Deschutes County indicated that several OARs (Oregon Administrative Rules) and ORSs (Oregon Revised Statutes) might apply to the Fort Thompson Land and Drafter Rd sites. These rules and statutes were documented in a memo (**Appendix 5. CDD Memo - Review of Opportunities and Constraints** Error! Reference source not found.) from Will Groves, Planning Manager at Deschutes County, dated September 21, 2023. Two administrative rules require additional clarification and consideration:

- Proximity to an Urban Growth Boundary: OAR 660-033-0130 (19) - Private campgrounds shall not be allowed within three miles of an urban growth boundary (UGB) unless an exception is approved pursuant to ORS 197.732 and OAR chapter 660, division 4. Any application on the Fort Thompson Ln or Drafter Rd properties would require a Goal Exception. The outcome of this process is unknown and may add significant time, risk, and cost to the process.

Implication to the feasibility of campground development: This OAR referenced "private" campgrounds, which may not apply to the proposed project. Additional clarification of ownership and management of the campground is recommended. The Fort Thompson Ln and Drafter Rd sites are within 3 miles of an UGB.

- Proximity to Natural/Recreational Amenity: OAR 660-033-0130 (19) requires campgrounds to be established on a site or contiguous to lands with a park or other

outdoor natural amenity this is accessible for recreational use by the occupants of the campground.

Implication to the feasibility of campground development: If other regulatory obstacles could be achieved, this standard may be met by the establishment of an on-site park or natural amenity for the Fort Thompson Ln and Drafter Rd sites as they are not currently adjacent or contain these types of features.

State and County Land Use Regulations

Both the Crooked River Ranch and Fort Thompson sites are located in unincorporated Deschutes County and are subject to a range of state statutes as well the Deschutes County Code (DCC). Deschutes County Planning staff summarized relevant state statutes, administrative rules, and caselaw in a September 1, 2021 memorandum to the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners.⁶ Staff provided the following assessment of issues related to recreational vehicle park expansion;

“Assessment: In coordination with County Legal Counsel, based on recent Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) case law (see Section V), it will be extremely difficult to entitle RV park expansions. Even if Goal 14 exceptions are attained, the entitlement, infrastructure costs, and in most areas, groundwater conditions, will present significant challenges to resolve, leading to a time consuming and expensive process at the outset.”

While the memorandum pertained to seven existing RV parks in unincorporated Deschutes County, the assessment also pertains to the two study sites outside of UGBs (Fort Thompson Lane and Crooked River Ranch). The key point to underscore here is that obtaining the comprehensive plan amendments and zone changes for these sites is far from certain and may represent an unacceptable risk. Appeals could result in costly delays as well as impacting public perceptions.

DCC 18.128.015, which outlines General Standards Governing Conditional Uses, encompasses compatibility criteria for campgrounds. These criteria include:

- A. Suitability of the proposed use based on factors such as site characteristics, transportation access, and natural features.
- B. Compatibility of the proposed use with existing and projected uses on surrounding properties.

Moreover, DCC 18.128.016 and DCC 18.124 require Site Plan Review for any Conditional Use, addressing various aspects, including site landscaping, visual impacts, natural feature

⁶ Memo from Peter Gutowsky, AICP, Planning Manager to Deschutes County Board of Commissioners, September 1, 2021.

preservation, safety, ADA design compliance, on-site access, circulation, parking, and transportation.

Specific conditional use standards under DCC 18.128.320 pertain to campgrounds and cover outdoor recreation, access, water supply, and sewage disposal. These standards encompass:

- Maintaining a minimum of 65 percent open space/undeveloped.
- Campsite minimum size of 1,600 square feet.
- Providing at least one parking space for each campsite.
- Ensuring direct access from designated streets or roads.
- Establishing specific roadway width requirements.
- Adhering to setback regulations, with exceptions possible based on screening and buffering.
- Demonstrating availability of adequate potable water and sewage disposal systems, subject to approvals by relevant authorities.

Additionally, the project may be subject to further conditions imposed by the Planning Director or Hearing's Officer, as outlined in 18.128.020. These conditions could encompass various aspects, including operational hours, noise and lighting limitations, lot size adjustments, building specifications, street improvements, and protection of natural resources.

Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan

In Deschutes County, most rural areas are reserved for agricultural, forestry, or other resource-based purposes and are safeguarded as outlined in the Resource Management section of the Comprehensive Plan. The intent of this section of the plan is to steward the county's agricultural, forested, natural, and cultural resources efficiently, catering to current needs while preserving their benefits for future generations. The Fort Thompson project site includes Agricultural lands (Ag) and Open Space and Conservation (OS&C) resources.

Agricultural Lands – As mandated by Statewide Planning Goal 3, counties must conserve and sustain agricultural lands. Deschutes County acknowledges that much of its farmland is suboptimal, particularly without the aid of irrigation. The climate, marked by a brief growing season, poses significant challenges to commercial agriculture. Statewide Planning Goal 3 does not fully reflect Deschutes County's unique conditions, leading to agricultural zoning on lands without a history of farming and with scant prospects for profitable agriculture. There is substantial pressure to repurpose agricultural land for residential or other developments. This issue is intricate, with potential repercussions for the agricultural community when land is diverted to non-agricultural uses. For instance, farmers with residential neighbors may face challenges due to the noise, odor, or dust generated by farming activities. Any proposed campground development must consider the objectives and policies of Agricultural Lands (Section 2.2) detailed in the Plan, conducting a farmland assessment pursuant to DCC 18.16.040.

These policies aim to provide, within the parameters of State guidelines, the flexibility to ensure a diverse array of viable paths to profitability.

Open Spaces – These areas are protected by the Open Space and Conservation map designation and corresponding zoning district. The Plan's open space objectives promote development designs that harmonize with the natural terrain. The design for the proposed campground development should align with the Open Space policies (Section 2.7) of the Plan, fostering integration with the surrounding landscape.

City of La Pine Development Code

The Drafter Road Site falls within the La Pine city limits and is subject to the City of La Pine Development Code. It holds a Commercial-Mixed Use zoning, with camping and RV parks designated as conditional uses. The City of La Pine Development Code (Section 15.14.200) defines campgrounds and RV parks as follows:

- A. Definition. Campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks are park-like facilities containing sites or spaces for the temporary and recreational occupancy of persons in tents and/or recreational vehicles. Such a facility may also contain recreation and other support facilities subordinate to and serving only the camping occupants.
- B. Examples. Examples are limited to campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks.
- C. Accessory uses. Accessory uses may include common bathrooms and showers, common laundry facilities, offices, a caretaker dwelling, and recreational amenities.

Furthermore, the City of La Pine Development Code (15.108.020) outlines specific use standards for campgrounds, which encompass the following:

1. Recreational vehicles may not stay within the campground for more than 30 days within any 60-day period.
2. Required building spaces must meet specific criteria, including lighting, ventilation, heating, flooring, sanitary surfaces, and floor drainage.
3. A well-kept appearance must be maintained at all times, with no external storage of materials or equipment, excluding vehicles.
4. The project must provide evidence of eligibility for a sanitation certificate, as required by state law.

The project's compliance would extend to the conditional use approval criteria detailed in Chapter 15.316. These criteria comprise:

1. Adherence to specific standards, conditions, and limitations within the primary zone.
2. Evaluation to ensure the proposed use remains within resource and public facility carrying capacities, covering aspects such as transportation, water, sewer, and utility systems.

3. Evaluation for compliance with air, water, land, solid waste, and noise pollution standards.

Tax Lot Title Reports

A comprehensive title review was conducted for all tax lots situated within the opportunity areas of each site. Deschutes Title in Bend, Oregon undertook the report's creation, and an internal review was carried out to summarize any easements or encumbrances found on the properties. These findings were then relayed to ESA for inclusion in their Site Analysis. The memo detailing ECONorthwest's title review is available in Appendix 3.

Summary of Site Design Feasibility Results

A summary of expected site design standards, the land use approval process, and mapped natural resources for Deschutes County sites is provided in **Exhibit 12**. The Fort Thompson Ln and Drafter Rd sites are subject to OAR and ORS Goal exception requirements for proximity to UGB and/or being located adjacent to, or contain a natural amenity. Neither RV parks nor campgrounds are permitted outright or conditionally at the Crooked River and Fort Thompson Sites, where the Drafter Road site in La Pine would allow campgrounds and RV parks as a conditional use under city code.

Exhibit 12. Summary of Site Design/Land Use Requirements and Existing Natural Resources for Sites in Deschutes County

Source: ESA

Site	Site Features	Zoning ^a	Mapped Soils ^b	Type of Review	(NWI) and Irrigation Canal Resources	Floodplain	Site Design Standards / Setbacks	Nat. Res. / Irrigation Canal Setbacks
Crooked River Ranch	Access to the Deschutes River Intermittent streams Dramatic topography	-RR10 (Rural Residential 10-acre lot min.) -Landscape Management (LM) Combining Zone -FP (Floodplain)	63C, 81F, 128D – Non-hydric	Campgrounds and RV parks not Permitted – see notes in site design standards	-Perennial and Intermittent streams (R3UBH and R4SBC) -Palustrine, scrub-shrub wetland (PSSC)	100-yr floodplain of the Deschutes	Campgrounds and RV parks are not permitted outright or conditionally in RR10	N/A
Fort Thompson Road – tent campgrounds only	Large acreage Flat terrain with rock outcrops Hwy 97 access via private road Swalley Canal	EFUTRB (Exclusive Farm Use, Tumalo / Redmond / Bend) and LM Combining Zone	27A – High Value Farmland	Requires soil study	Swalley Canal and lateral canal Small, excavated ponds (PUSC _x)	None	EFU: Requires soil study by a certified soil scientist; see text for setbacks	Swalley Canal: 50 ft easement both sides Lateral canal: 25 ft easement both sides
		OS&C (Open Space & Conservation) and LM Combining Zone	38B – Non-high Value Farmland	Site Plan; Cond. Use and LM Combining Zone.			OS&C: see text for yard setbacks	
			38B, 58C – Non-high Value Farmland	Site Plan; Cond. Use and LM Combining Zone.				

^a Note: The Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan is currently being updated with a proposed adoption date of August 2023 to February 2024. RR10 does not allow campgrounds or RV parks either outright or conditionally EFU and OS&C do not allow RV parks outright or conditionally.

^b Soil codes: 27A = Clovkamp loamy sand; 38B = Deskamp-Gosney complex, 0-8% slopes; 58C = Gosney-Rock outcrop, 0-15% slopes; 63C = Holmzie-Searles complex, 0-15% slopes; 81F = Licksillet-Rock outcrop complex, 45-80% slopes; 128D = Statz-Deschutes complex, 15-30% slopes.

Site	Site Features	Zoning ^a	Mapped Soils ^b	Type of Review	(NWI) and Irrigation Canal Resources	Floodplain	Site Design Standards / Setbacks	Nat. Res. / Irrigation Canal Setbacks
Drafter Road	Developed area in La Pine Hwy 97 access	LPMUC or CMX (La Pine Mixed Use / Commercial)	115A - Non-hydric but with 1% hydric inclusions on terraces	Conditional Use	None	None	Min. lot sz = 2 ac. Arterial or collector access only 50-ft setback for tents/buildins along any property line The 50-ft setback along property lines does not apply to RV parks See text for more	None, no overlays or significant habitat present

^aNote: See: https://library.municode.com/or/la_pine/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICILAPIDECO_ART3ZODI_CH15.22COMIEZO

^bSoil codes: 115A = Shanahan loamy coarse sand, 0-3%

Crooked River Ranch Site Summary

The site is situated along a segment of the Deschutes River designated as a State Scenic Waterway by the State of Oregon. The majority of the site falls under the Rural Residential 10 (RR10) zoning, requiring a minimum of 10-acre lots, with a Landscape Management (LM) Combining Zone. A section in the northwest corner along the Deschutes River is zoned as Floodplain (FP). The neighboring property to the east is zoned Exclusive Farm Use, while the property to the north, west, and south is zoned RR10. Property to the east is also under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management. The site is designated as a Rural Residential Exception Area (RREA) in the Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan.

The site is situated at the terminus of NW 84th Court, designated as a local road according to the Deschutes County Transportation System Plan. However, this designation **does not meet the access requirements for campgrounds or RV parks** outlined in DCC 18.128.320.B.1.

The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) indicates an intermittent stream on the western portion of the site, flowing north to the Deschutes River. A narrow band of scrub-shrub wetland is also present along the Deschutes River. For RR10 zoned parcels, building and fixture setbacks for all streams are required to be at least 100 feet from the ordinary high water (OWH) line. Depending on the duration of streamflow and the nature of intermittent streams mapped by NWI, these may not qualify as regulated water bodies. A field investigation conducted by a wetland professional is necessary to confirm the presence and extent of wetlands and water resources on the property. FEMA maps delineate a 100-year floodplain along the Deschutes River.

The Crooked River site and its vicinity contain rocky outcrops within the LM zone that appear to meet the DCC's definition of rimrock, characterized as any ledge, outcropping, or top layer of rock with a face exceeding 45 degrees and located within the canyon of the Deschutes River. In LM zones, new buildings are required to have a minimum setback of 50 feet from the edge of rimrock.

The site features dynamic topography, providing dramatic internal views to visitors. Limited circulation routes are due to the canyon-like topography, but an existing double-track trail linking NW 84th Ct. to the Deschutes River riverbank offers a rewarding and immersive experience, characterized by exposed basalt cliffs, steep canyon walls, and a sense of exploration. Elevated vantage points across the site offer visitors views of the Deschutes River and select views of the Cascade Mountain range.

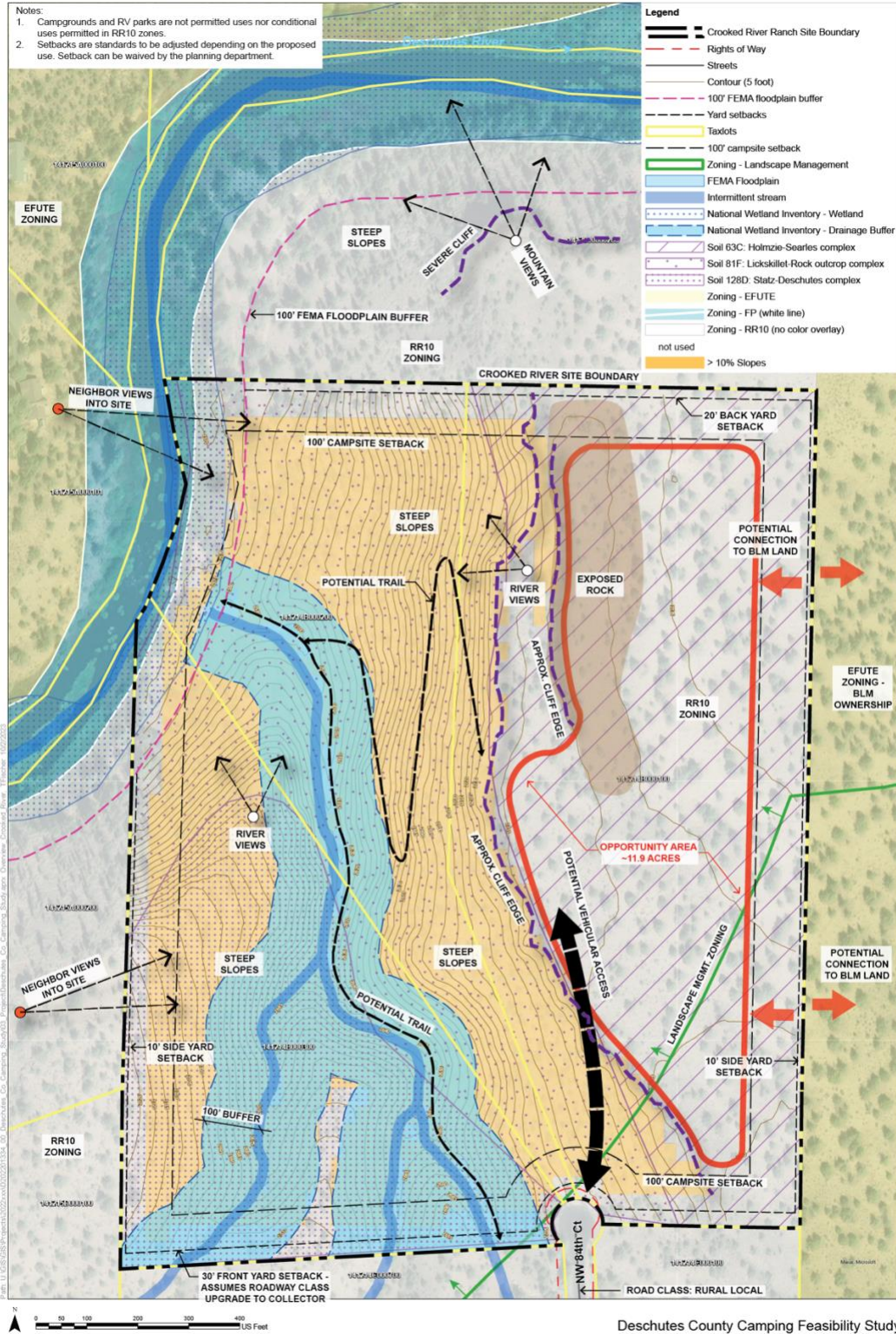
Tax lot 141214B000100 displays a sizable flat area with potential for program development. Establishing a vehicular access route to this opportunity area (refer to figure 1.0) may involve traversing the rocky terrain near the terminus of NW 84th Court, likely requiring re-grading. A geotechnical study is essential to assess the feasibility of entry drive construction and associated challenges.

It's important to note that Campgrounds and RV Parks are neither listed as Permitted Use (18.60.020) nor Conditional Use (18.60.030) in the RR-10 zone. Therefore, **developing this site for such purposes would not be permitted** unless there were a zoning change or other significant land use procedure.

You can view the land use regulation details, along with the specified opportunity area for a campground at the Crooked River Ranch site in **Exhibit 13**.

Exhibit 13. Crooked River Ranch Opportunities and Constraints Site Analysis

Source: ESA



Deschutes County Camping Feasibility Study

Figure 1.0 - Crooked River Ranch Site Analysis

Fort Thompson Lane Site Summary

The Fort Thompson Lane site is governed by Goal exceptions as stipulated in the "Current Regulatory Environment and Campground Development Considerations" section of this document. Additionally, under the Deschutes County Code for land use regulations, RV parks are not allowed on the Fort Thompson Lane Site, which is zoned as EFU and OS&C, rendering it inappropriate for such use. Should a Goal exception be granted, the Deschutes County Code mandates that campgrounds receive conditional use approval, necessitating a conditional use permit and an LM review, especially for plots zoned EFU. A soil study, to be undertaken by a certified soil scientist, is essential to pinpoint areas least conducive to agriculture, facilitating non-agricultural activities.

Access to the site is currently through a private road, which doesn't meet DCC 18.128.320.B.1 access requirements. To make the site viable for a campground, it must be accessible via a roadway classified as arterial or collector. The possibility of acquiring an easement or partial land from the adjacent tax lot 1612330000800 for driveway access from Hunnell Road, designated as a Collector, should be explored with input from Deschutes County transportation planners.

Mapped natural resources at the Fort Thompson Road Site include the Swalley Irrigation Canal, a lateral canal, and artificial ponds. Artificial/excavated ponds are exempt from stream or natural resource setbacks. Easements exist on both sides of the canals, presenting access challenges as no roads or utilities can cross them, effectively segregating the site into three unconnected areas.

Opportunity areas 1 and 2, primarily accessed through an easement or land acquisition from tax lot 1612330000800, are the most suitable for a traditional campground, as illustrated in **Exhibit 14**. These areas offer ample space to meet open space requirements and minimize complexities with the irrigation district. They also benefit from being away from highway 97 noise, provide views of surrounding landscapes, and offer a unique camping experience. Precise development boundaries necessitate a soil study and consideration of outcroppings within the LM zone (specific to opportunity area 2). You can view the land use regulation details, along with the specified opportunity areas for a campground at the Thompson Lane site in **Exhibit 15**. Refer to the **Appendix 2**, "Utility Needs and Availability – Deschutes County Campgrounds," for utility aspects.

Exhibit 14. Thompson Lane Site Opportunity Areas

Source: ESA

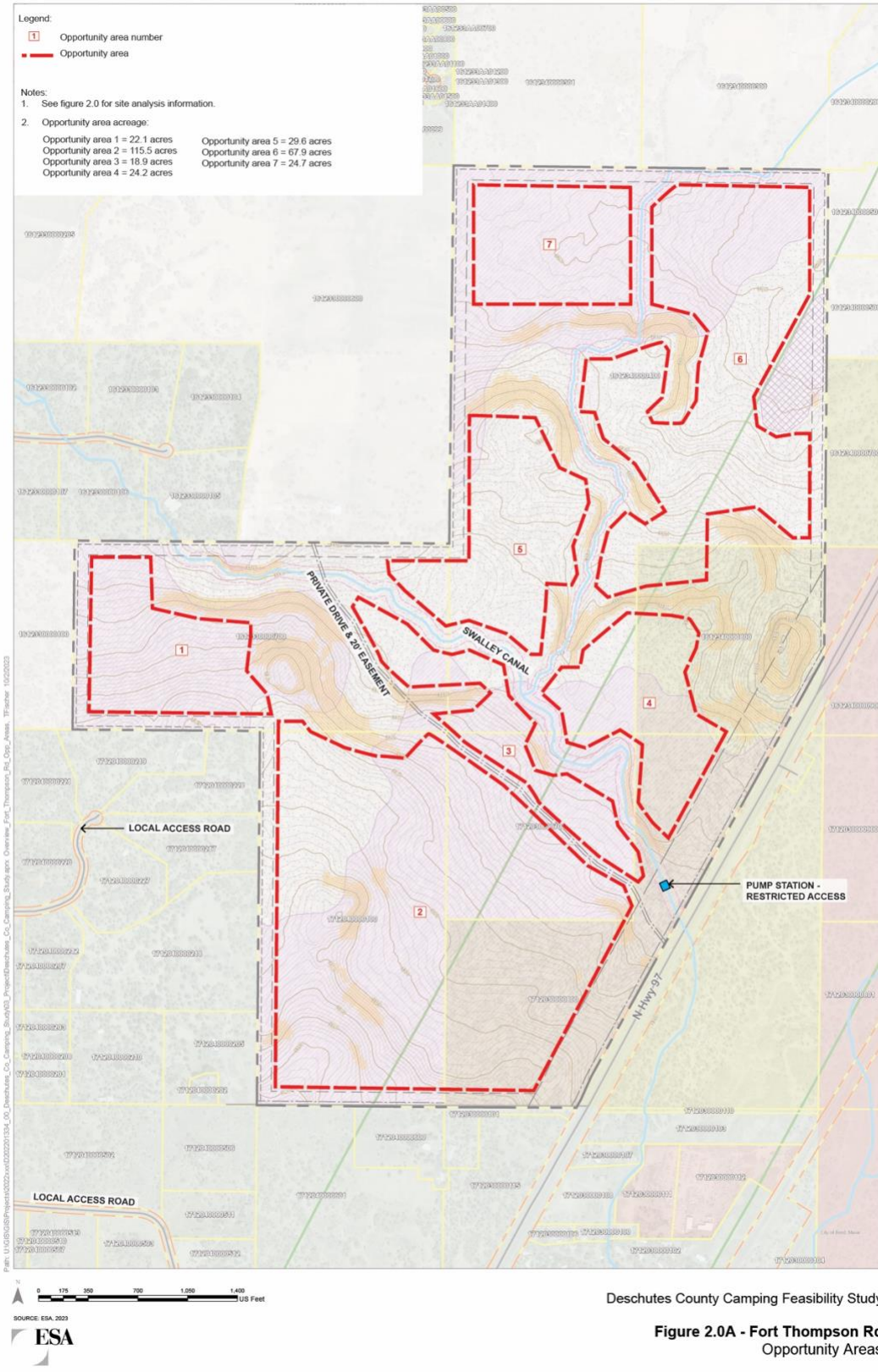
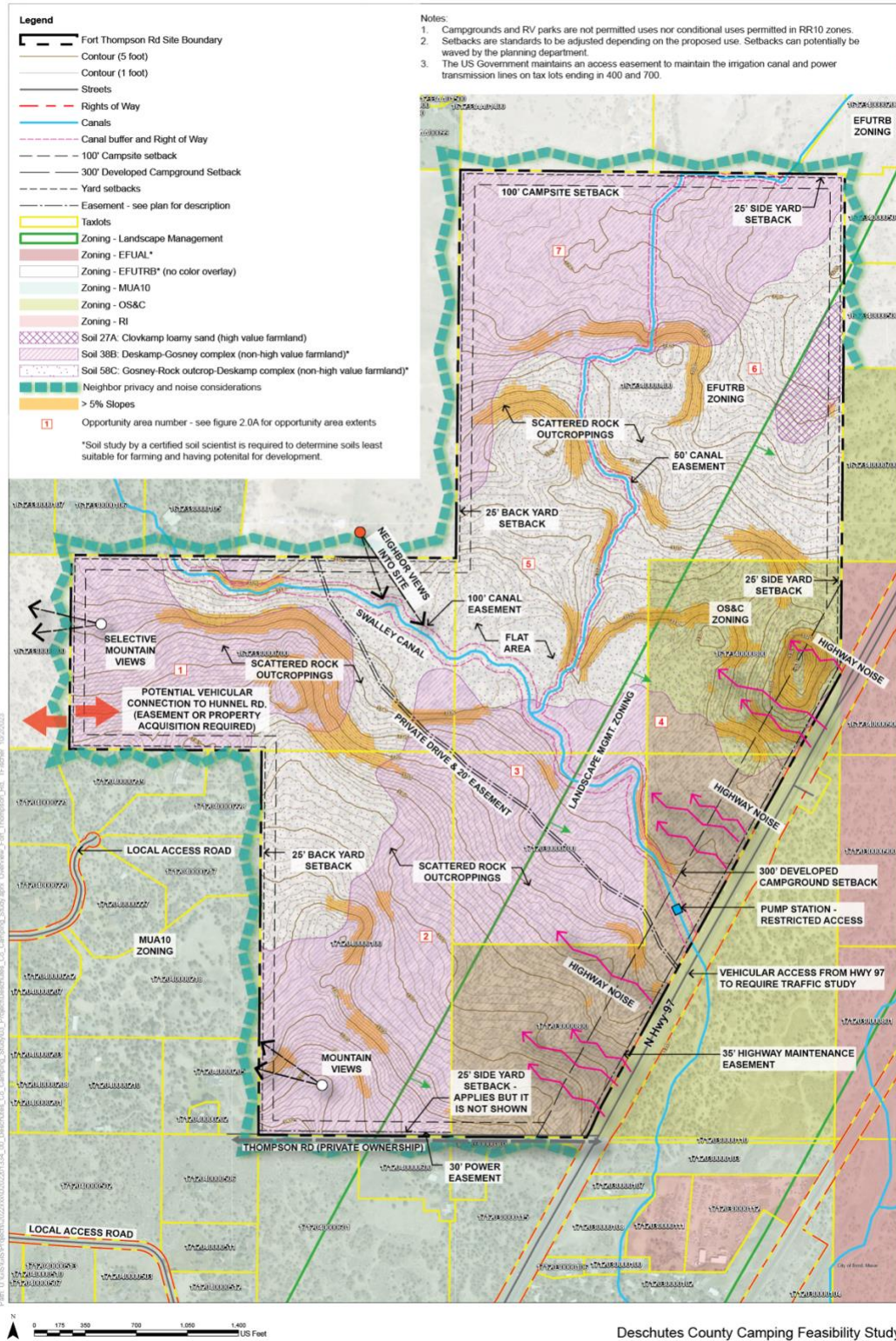


Exhibit 15. Thompson Ln Opportunities Site Analysis

Source: ESA



Deschutes County Camping Feasibility Study

Figure 2.0 - Fort Thompson Rd Site Analysis

Drafter Road Site Summary

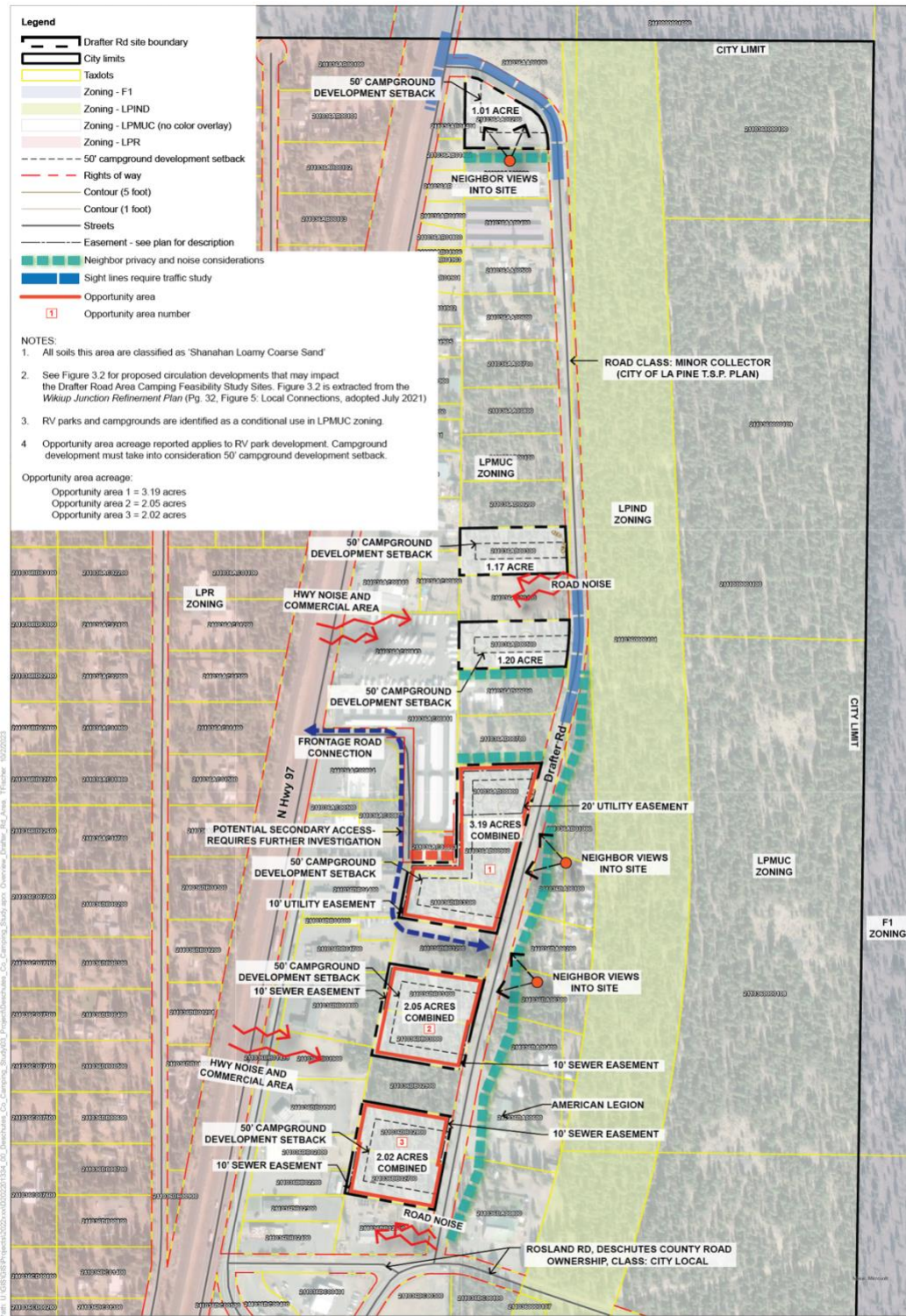
At the Drafter Road Site, securing a conditional use permit from the City is essential for establishing a campground or RV park, both defined under Section 15.14.200 of the city code. Notably, a 50-foot setback from property lines is mandated for camp sites, tents, and buildings, with an exception for recreational vehicles. Approval for RV parks or campgrounds on lots smaller than 2 acres isn't guaranteed, according to La Pine Planning. Development on conjoined lots that meet the 2-acre minimum requires a lot line adjustment through a Type 1 procedure to combine these lots. The implementation of the Wickiup Junction Refinement Plan may affect lot sizes within the study area, potentially reducing County-owned lots to less than 2 acres (see figure 3.2 in **Appendix 1. ESA Technical Memo - Land Use Review**). Sidewalk improvements may be necessary on Drafter Road. No other regulatory or environmental constraints have been identified.

Opportunity area 1, as illustrated in **Exhibit 16**, at Drafter Road Site stands out as the prime location for an RV park due to its ample acreage, design flexibility, and potential for multiple vehicular and pedestrian access points. Opportunity areas two and three meet the requirements for development, but it's important to note that if the Wickiup Plan advances and requires a right-of-way (ROW) dedication on the western part of these areas, their size may fall below the 2-acre threshold for RV park development. Lot line adjustments to combine lots will be necessary for all opportunity areas. For utility considerations, please refer to **Appendix 2. ESA Memo - Utility Needs and Availability - Deschutes County Campgrounds**.

While a traditional campground is permissible at this site, the region's developed nature suggests that better options may exist for campers seeking an immersive outdoor experience.

Exhibit 16. Drafter Rd Site Opportunity Areas and Analysis

Source: ESA



Deschutes County Camping Feasibility Study

Figure 3.0 Drafter Rd Area Site Analysis

Site Utilities and Accessibility

ESA investigated infrastructure needs and utilities accessibility for RV park or campground development. Deschutes County campgrounds must comply with specific infrastructure requirements, including providing clean water, restroom and shower facilities, sewage treatment, lighting, picnic areas, and waste disposal sites. Proposed campgrounds must have essential utility infrastructure, including clean water, sewage management, and electricity on-site. Stormwater management must adhere to the Central Oregon Stormwater Manual (COSM) guidelines. While natural gas is generally unnecessary due to most RVs using propane tanks, the potential for natural gas service was explored. There's also consideration for on-site propane filling stations. Telecommunications service may be required for on-site management, RV cable TV connections, or other amenities.

All three sites were evaluated to ensure utility availability for their proposed improvements, encompassing potable water, sanitary sewer, electricity, stormwater, natural gas, and telecommunications. The available or accessible infrastructure is summarized in the following **Exhibit 17**, while the complete utility needs and access report, including utility location maps, can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Exhibit 17. Summary of Utility Access for Each Site

Source: ESA

Site	Crooked River Ranch	Fort Thompson Road	Drafter Road
Water	Well	Avion Water or Well	City of La Pine
Sewer	Septic	Septic	City of La Pine
Power	Pacific Power	Pacific Power	Midstate Electric Co-op
Stormwater	Onsite surface treatment	Onsite surface treatment	Onsite surface treatment
Natural Gas	None available	None available	None available
Tele-communications	No wired service, fixed wireless available	Wired service available	Wired service available

6. RV Park and Campground Operational and Finance Plans

As part of our feasibility analysis, we formulated straightforward *pro formas* for hypothetical RV park developments in three Deschutes County-owned locations. Each *pro forma* involved the computation of the Internal Rate of Return (IRR) for the entire RV park development process. IRR serves as a robust metric for financial feasibility, effectively gauging the projected compound annual rate of return for the development.

Summary of Analysis Methods:

The analysis methods used in this study encountered a significant challenge due to the limited availability of consistent data concerning the RV park business in Oregon. Furthermore, the wide variations in RV park quality, design, amenities, target demographics, and operational standards added complexity to the assessment. Speculating on potential actions for each of the three locations was a daunting task. We made our best effort to gather valuable data and estimates by leveraging our expertise, various industry sources, and our understanding of the lodging industry's dynamics in Oregon. Subsequently, we constructed an Excel workbook that allows for adjustments to key assumptions as more information becomes accessible. The following section offers a summary of our modeling process and the underlying assumptions.

RV Park Segments

The RV park market in central Oregon can be divided into two segments: recreational and non-recreational. The primary distinguishing factor between these segments is seasonality. Both types attract vacationers, but non-recreational parks tend to have a higher number of long-term guests, resulting in more consistent monthly revenues. Recreational RV parks, on the other hand, host fewer long-term guests, and their occupancy rates exhibit greater seasonality.

In our analysis, we assumed that the Crooked River Ranch site would fall under the recreational category, and we constructed our model using data from RV parks at Tumalo and LaPine Oregon State Parks. In contrast, we categorized the Drafter Road and Fort Thompson Lane sites as non-recreational. For these sites, we modeled their seasonal demand patterns using historical data from the Deschutes County Expo Center RV Park.

It's essential to note that our *pro formas* are constructed based on limited data, serving the purpose of comparing the relative financial feasibility of the three locations. If the County decides to advance from the conceptual phase to the planning stage, we strongly recommend dedicating resources to refine the assumptions used in the *pro formas* presented here. This process can lead to the expansion of the *pro formas*, which are provided in the accompanying Excel workbook.

Determining the Natural Occupancy Rate

One common mistake in lodging studies, whether they pertain to hotels or RV parks, is to rely solely on recent trends. This approach can be misleading because building an RV park represents a long-term investment. What truly matters is not the current conditions, but where market conditions tend to stabilize over time.

Two critical data points for assessing market conditions are the occupancy rate and the average daily rate (ADR). The occupancy rate signifies the percentage of available RV sites that are typically sold on an average day. The ADR, on the other hand, represents the price paid for a one-night stay in the average site, excluding taxes or additional charges.

In instances where occupancy rates are unusually high, ADRs tend to be exceptionally elevated, and RV parks demonstrate significant profitability. During these periods, additional supply is introduced into the market. However, it can take several years for this new supply to materialize. Conversely, when rates are exceptionally low, RV parks can become unprofitable, leading to gradual closures. This adjustment process unfolds slowly because it requires time for supply to adapt to shifting demand. This cyclical pattern is why the hotel and RV park businesses are cyclical.

Investment *pro formas* should be grounded in the rates at which long-term supply and demand reach equilibrium, commonly referred to as the **natural occupancy rate**⁷. These rates vary from one market to another, primarily influenced by factors such as climate and the types of visitors the market attracts. For example, locales primarily catering to business travelers typically maintain high natural occupancy rates because business visits tend to be non-seasonal. In contrast, destinations catering to family vacationers, with seasonality in their visits, tend to have lower natural occupancy rates.

While calculating the natural occupancy rate for lodging in Deschutes County based on historical market data, unfortunately, we couldn't find consistent historical data specific to RV parks in the county for calculating the natural rate. However, prior research has indicated a close relationship between RV park supply and demand and hotel room supply and demand. To estimate the natural rate, we utilized data from STR Global, encompassing 160 months of hotel room supply, demand, and ADR information from over 70 hotels in Deschutes County.

Natural Occupancy Rate Findings

Our analysis indicates that the natural occupancy rate for hotels in Deschutes County is 58.7 percent, with a corresponding **natural real ADR** of \$130.96 (in 2022 dollars)⁸. These rates are slightly lower than the current market conditions. For the year ending in April 2023 (the last 12

⁷ deRoos, J.A. (1999) "Natural Occupancy Rates and Development Gaps – A Look at the U.S. Lodging Industry," Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly Volume 40, No. 2, April 1999, 14-22.

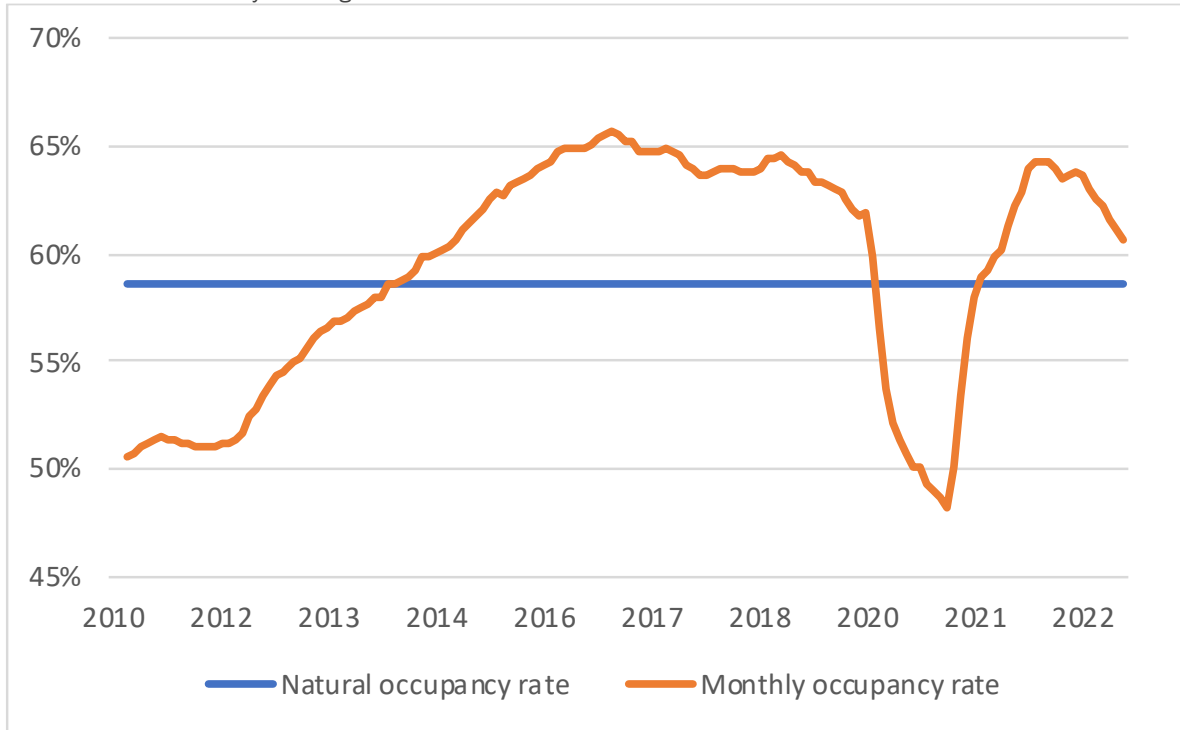
⁸ Real ADR is expressed in 2022 dollars. Real ADRs are the actual reported amounts adjusted by taking out inflation and expressing them in 2022 dollars. Doing this improves the accuracy of the analysis.

months of historical data available for this project), the occupancy stood at 60.7 percent, and the real ADR was \$150.61 per room night.

Exhibit 18 visually represents the relationship between the natural occupancy and the actual occupancy rate using a 12-month moving average. This moving average helps eliminate seasonal fluctuations from the exhibit.

Exhibit 18. Deschutes County Hotel Market Natural and Actual 12-Month Moving Average Occupancy Rates, 2010 – April 2023

Source: ECONorthwest analysis using STR Global data.



Based on our analysis, it's evident that the lodging market in the County has been operating above its long-term equilibrium in the past year. To reach a balance between supply and demand, an additional 98 hotel rooms would have been required. It's worth noting that the average hotel in Deschutes County currently boasts 68 rooms.

Notably, hotel market demand has been steadily increasing at an annual rate of 3.4 percent since 2009. If this trend continues, the lodging market will necessitate more capacity in the future. The anticipated higher occupancy and real ADRs will provide a solid foundation for investments in new supply. Given that RV parks operate within the same general market, an expansion in RV site capacity is indeed justified.

Utilizing the Natural Occupancy Rate to Estimate Monthly Occupancy at RV Parks

As previously mentioned in the introduction, we were provided with monthly occupancy data for three existing RV parks in Deschutes County. In **Exhibit 19**, we present the occupancy rates

since January 2021 (post-pandemic) for Deschutes County hotels. Throughout this period, the annual occupancy rate exceeded the natural occupancy rate of the market by 3.4 percent. We adjusted the observed hotel occupancies to reflect what they would have been if long-term supply and demand in the market had been in balance, denoted under the heading "County hotels at NOR." Subsequently, we recalibrated the rates for the two types of RV parks to align with the natural occupancy rates and the broader market trends.

**Exhibit 19. Deschutes County Hotel and RV Occupancy Rates by Month Since January 2021
Recalibrated to the Natural Occupancy Rate for the County**

Source: ECONorthwest analysis using STR Global, Oregon State Parks, and Deschutes County data.

Month	Deschutes County hotels since Jan. 2021	County hotels at the NOR	Non-recreational RV at NOR	Recreational RV at NOR
Jan	44.4%	42.0%	29.8%	27.8%
Feb	50.6%	47.8%	31.0%	31.1%
Mar	59.2%	55.9%	37.3%	51.2%
Apr	60.7%	57.3%	47.7%	66.7%
May	64.6%	61.0%	59.0%	77.6%
Jun	75.9%	71.7%	71.5%	95.1%
Jul	79.2%	74.8%	77.4%	88.3%
Aug	75.6%	71.4%	64.0%	83.9%
Sep	72.7%	68.6%	69.4%	74.7%
Oct	64.7%	61.1%	53.9%	76.6%
Nov	50.5%	47.7%	32.6%	49.2%
Dec	47.1%	44.5%	31.7%	33.9%
Annual	62.1%	58.7%	50.4%	63.0%

The estimated annual natural occupancy rate for non-recreational RV parks is 8.3 percent lower than that of hotels. This discrepancy mirrors similar findings from our previous research in other regions of Oregon. RV use is notably seasonal due to weather conditions impacting recreational activities and travel conditions. In contrast, for recreational RV parks, the natural rate is 4.3 percent higher than hotels, as expected. This reflects a visitor market where outdoor recreation serves as the primary draw. Moreover, in Oregon, RV parks in recreational settings offer a level of access that few hotels can rival.

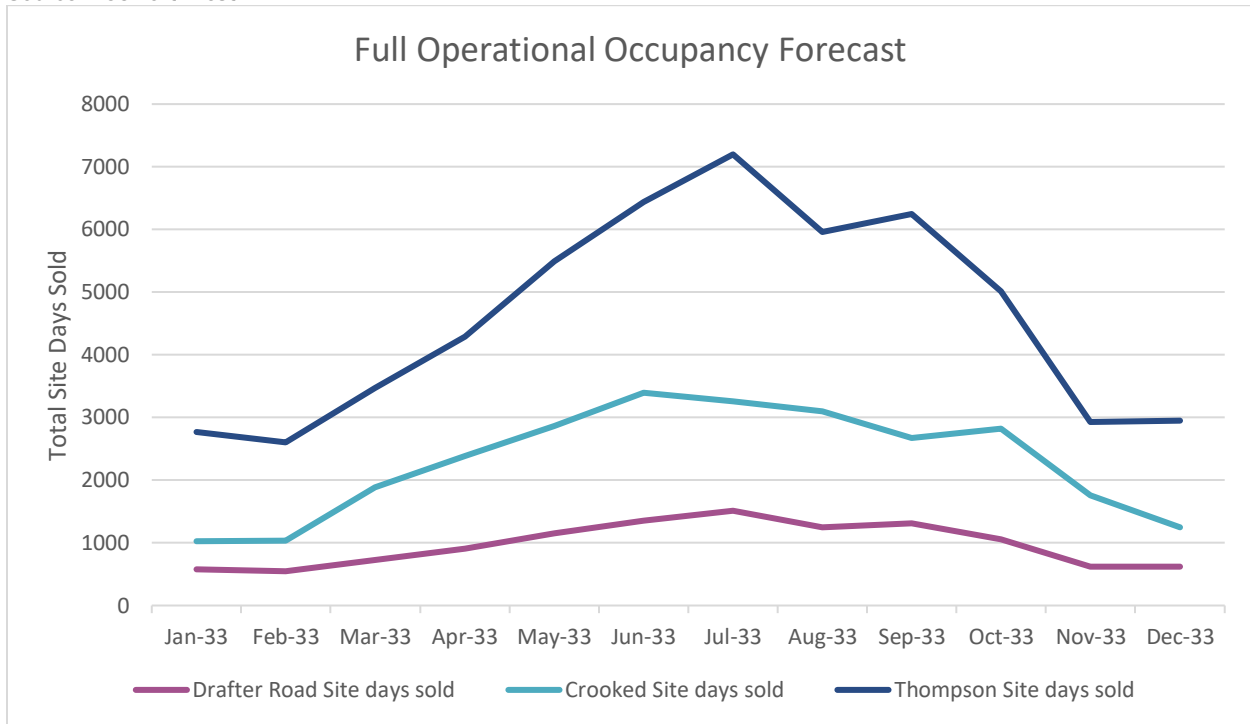
For our *pro formas*, we employed the monthly natural occupancy rate pattern of non-recreational RV parks. However, we assumed that these rates would be achieved after the 36th month of opening. Such a pattern for stabilization is typical in the lodging industry due to the time required for repeat business to develop and for market awareness to grow⁹. Consequently, a 36-month stabilization pattern was applied in the *pro forma*.

⁹ O’Neill, John. “Hotel occupancy: Is the three-year stabilization assumption justified?” Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, April 2021.

As a representation of potential forecasted full operational occupancy, a monthly projection for the year 2033, based on site days sold using values from the Excel Workbook, illustrates a typical year after rate stabilization (**Exhibit 20**).

Exhibit 20. Full Operational Occupancy Forecast Post Stabilization Period

Source: ECONorthwest



Notes: Full operational occupancy expected by 2030 following a 4-year ramp up in visitation (based on 2026 opening).

Other Pro Forma Assumptions

For this preliminary comparative analysis, we have generated two *pro formas* outlining the project cash flows for the two hypothetical RV sites. Cash flow represents the difference between cash generated by the RV parks and cash outlays. It's important to note that these assumptions can be adjusted within the accompanying Excel workbook, as this analysis serves as a preliminary assessment.

Cash outflows can be categorized into three main areas. The first is the **opening costs**, encompassing the expenditures necessary for planning, construction, furnishing, staffing, marketing, and supplying an RV park. For simplicity, we assume that all these expenses occur in June 2025.

The second category comprises **other operating costs**, which include personnel costs (wages, benefits, and employer-paid payroll taxes) and general operating expenses. We anticipate that the County will manage the RV parks and have applied a 41 percent benefit rate on top of wages for the relevant job positions.

The third category relates to **ongoing capital expenses**, covering capital investments like new equipment, replacement assets, structures, and property improvements.

It's important to clarify that the *pro formas* assume that the development of these RV parks is carried out on a cash basis. This approach is chosen to eliminate the risk of miscalculating the fundamental profitability of the parks. Therefore, we did not factor in debt, as financing is considered unnecessary in determining financial feasibility.

Furthermore, all dollar amounts in the forecast account for inflation, which we have incorporated using ECONorthwest's internal forecast for the consumer price index. The inflation rate stands at 4.0 percent at the beginning of 2025 and gradually decreases to approximately 3.4 percent over time.

Our forecast presumes that all construction, development, and pre-opening expenses will take place in the calendar year 2025. Subsequently, we have projected the monthly operations of the RV parks, with the final year of the forecast extending to 2040. For completion, we assume a terminal value in 2041, which equals the cash flow for 2040 divided by a 10 percent capitalization rate.

Regarding the square footage of the opportunity areas on which the RV parks could be constructed, we adhere to the industry rule of thumb, which suggests 10 to 15 RV sites per acre. This allocation allows ample space for access, separation between RVs, communal areas, and support structures. The ten-site allocation is appropriate for recreational RV parks, while the fifteen-site allocation suits non-recreational parks. It's worth noting that in the western U.S., half of all RV parks occupy 14 acres or less, with half of them reserving undeveloped acreage for potential expansion. On average, RV parks comprise 118 sites, and half of them have 80 sites or fewer.¹⁰

Below is a breakdown of the three locations, the number of RV sites, and our assumptions regarding average daily rates. Additionally, we factor in the assumption that guests would spend an additional 10 percent on amenities and other charges, excluding taxes.

Property	Total Opportunity Area Acreage	Potential Sites	In-season Average Daily Rates (2023\$)	Off-season Average Daily Rates (2023\$)
Drafter Road	4.2 acres	63 RV	\$45	\$40
¹ Crooked River	11.9 acres	119 Tent/RV	\$70	\$50
Thompson	98 acres	*300 RV	\$45	\$40

¹ Crooked River Ranch potential number of sites is solely based on area available to develop and comparable rates for RV parks of similar size. The land use code does not allow camping of any type as it is currently regulated.

*Note: Although there is room for a more substantial number of sites, we have conservatively assumed 300 sites, as the market may not have the capacity to absorb many more.

¹⁰ "2019 Industry Trends and Insights Report." National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds.

Market Cannibalization

The addition of new supply to a market inevitably results in some patrons choosing the new RV park over existing ones, thus affecting the latter's occupancy. In economic terms, this phenomenon is referred to as cannibalization. It's important to note that cannibalization is a transient effect, as new RV parks tend to stimulate increased RV visits. Furthermore, in Deschutes County, demand has been experiencing robust growth. Hotel room demand has shown a 3.2 percent compound annual rate of growth since 2010, according to STR Global. Nationally, RV park demand, as reported by IBIS, has been growing at a 2.4 percent rate over the past decade. Despite these favorable economic conditions, some level of cannibalization is expected to occur, albeit for a brief period. Our *pro forma* takes this into account.

The Drafter Road RV Park, relative to the overall supply of RV sites in the County, will be of a modest size. As a result, its cannibalization impact is expected to be similarly modest. In contrast, the Thompson property has enough land to accommodate over 1,100 RV sites. However, constructing such a vast number of sites in a single location would be imprudent. Consequently, our *pro forma* assumes a more reasonable count of 300 sites.

Permitting Costs

Typical permitting costs are included in the initial setup expenses for the three sites analyzed in this study, based on similar-sized campgrounds in other locations. Permitting costs for public and private entities are not expected to significantly differ at these sites. The Drafter Road site adheres to the permitting requirements of the City of La Pine, while the Crooked River Ranch and Thompson Road sites fall under Deschutes County permitting regulations.

For relatively straightforward permitting procedures, a County planner or a contracted service could be employed, typically costing between \$20,000 and \$50,000. These permitting expenses would typically follow a design phase, which could cost \$100,000 or more if outsourced. These cost estimates are most relevant to the Drafter Road site, given its current land use code and zoning conditions.

However, the Crooked River Ranch and Thompson Road sites pose more design and permitting uncertainties, likely resulting in higher associated costs. Overcoming the land use code challenges outlined in the site analyses could be complex and, if contracted out, potentially costly. The process of updating the County's Comprehensive Plan and amending County code would likely exceed \$100,000, especially if zoning changes are required. These steps must be addressed before commencing the land use process and permitting. Further exploration of options would be necessary if these avenues were to be pursued.

Financial Feasibility Results

Drafter Road appears to be the least expensive location to develop, with an estimated cost of approximately \$3.7 million as summarized in Exhibit 21. However, being a smaller RV park,

achieving cost efficiencies may present more challenges, and we project its internal rate of return (IRR) to be 11.0 percent.

Exhibit 21. Summary Results

Source: ECONorthwest

Property	Cost to Open 2025\$	Project IRR
Drafter Road	\$3,654,000	11.0%
Crooked River	\$17,850,000	9.9%
Thompson	\$21,600,000	10.6%

Crooked River Ranch presents a challenging development opportunity, and we have reservations about its feasibility. Our best, albeit speculative estimate suggests it would require an investment of nearly \$18 million to establish, with an anticipated return of approximately 10 percent.

Thompson Lane is the largest site and could entail a cost of \$21.6 million. However, there are uncertainties regarding these costs, and we recommend further research by engineers, architects, and construction experts to refine our estimate. The projected IRR stands at 10.6 percent. This assumption operates under the premise that it functions as a non-recreational RV park, essentially serving as an alternative to hotels.

The County may want to contemplate enhancing the property by adding amenities and expanding mountain bike trails to boost its average daily rate (ADR) and improve peak-season occupancy rates. A higher recreational orientation in the park can lead to increased summer occupancies and ADRs, ultimately enhancing the IRR, provided the County effectively manages incremental capital and operating costs. It's worth noting that Thompson Lane site holds a unique competitive advantage due to its proximity to Bend, allowing it to potentially position itself as a hybrid recreational and non-recreational facility.

The *pro forma* tables (**Exhibits:** Exhibit 22, Exhibit 23, Exhibit 24, Exhibit 25, Exhibit 26, Exhibit 27) illustrate the fundamental cash flows for the three RV location projects, spanning from construction through operations. In 2041, we introduce a terminal value that captures cash flows beyond 2040. RV parks in the United States typically have a long operating life, with half of all RV parks and campgrounds nationally having operated for at least 32 years.¹¹

As an alternative framing of the financial feasibility of these campground sites, we can also evaluate the net present value (NPV) of the stream of costs and revenue applying a discount rate for future cash flows. Assuming a 5 percent discount rate, these same financial results from the *pro forma* analyses indicate an NPV of \$3.0 million for Drafter Road, \$11 million for Crooked River Ranch, and \$15 million for Thompson Road. These are over a 15-year timeframe, and do

¹¹ *Ibid.*, P. 6.

not include the additional costs associated with permitting, zoning, and other land use challenges expected for the Crooked River Ranch and Thompson Road sites.

Pro Formas

Drafter Road *Pro Forma*

Exhibit 22. Drafter Road *Pro Forma*, 2025-2033

Drafter Rd	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Site days available	-	22,995	22,995	23,058	22,995	22,995	22,995	23,058	22,995
Site days sold	-	8,003	9,779	10,981	11,594	11,625	11,625	11,644	11,625
Inflation rate	3.82%	3.50%	3.43%	3.38%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%
Occupancy rate	-	34.8%	42.5%	47.6%	50.4%	50.6%	50.6%	50.5%	50.6%
ADR	-	\$49.00	\$50.66	\$52.37	\$54.12	\$55.93	\$57.81	\$59.73	\$61.74
Revenues									
RV space rentals	-	392,162	495,447	575,036	627,444	650,212	671,994	695,518	717,769
Miscellaneous	-	46,811	59,140	68,649	74,894	77,609	80,209	83,031	85,674
Terminal value	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total revenue	-	\$438,973	\$554,587	\$643,685	\$702,338	\$727,821	\$752,203	\$778,549	\$803,443
Cash outflows									
Costs to open	\$3,654,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ongoing capital expenses	-	18,908	23,468	28,305	33,433	38,873	44,638	50,747	57,214
Personnel costs	-	133,514	138,091	142,759	147,544	152,486	157,594	162,875	168,328
Other operating costs	-	88,035	106,422	120,619	130,488	135,156	139,685	144,359	149,201
Total cash outflows	\$3,654,000	\$240,457	\$267,981	\$291,683	\$311,465	\$326,515	\$341,917	\$357,981	\$374,743
Project cash flow	(\$3,654,000)	\$198,516	\$286,606	\$352,002	\$390,873	\$401,306	\$410,286	\$420,568	\$428,700

ECONorthwest analysis

Exhibit 23. Drafter Road *Pro Forma*, 2034-2041

Drafter Rd	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041
Site days available	22,995	22,995	23,058	22,995	22,995	22,995	23,058	-
Site days sold	11,625	11,625	11,644	11,625	11,625	11,625	11,644	-
Inflation rate	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%
Occupancy rate	50.6%	50.6%	50.5%	50.6%	50.6%	50.6%	50.5%	-
ADR	\$63.81	\$65.95	\$68.15	\$70.44	\$72.80	\$75.24	\$77.75	-
Revenues								
RV space rentals	741,815	766,672	793,513	818,896	846,314	874,683	905,301	-
Miscellaneous	88,544	91,512	94,729	97,744	101,021	104,404	108,075	-
Terminal value	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,993,880
Total revenue	\$830,359	\$858,184	\$888,242	\$916,640	\$947,335	\$979,087	\$1,013,376	\$4,993,880
Cash outflows								
Costs to open	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ongoing capital expenses	64,059	71,298	78,950	87,034	95,572	104,584	114,090	-
Personnel costs	173,969	179,797	185,822	192,045	198,480	205,128	211,998	-
Other operating costs	154,200	159,363	164,697	170,221	175,922	181,816	187,900	-
Total cash outflows	\$392,228	\$410,458	\$429,469	\$449,300	\$469,974	\$491,528	\$513,988	\$0
Project cash flow	\$438,131	\$447,726	\$458,773	\$467,340	\$477,361	\$487,559	\$499,388	\$4,993,880

ECONorthwest analysis

Crooked River Ranch Pro Forma

Exhibit 24. Crooked River Ranch Pro Forma, 2025-2033

Crooked River	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Site days available	-	43,435	43,435	43,554	43,435	43,435	43,435	43,554	43,435
Site days sold	-	18,755	22,943	25,805	27,308	27,441	27,441	27,478	27,441
Occupancy rate	-	43.2%	52.8%	59.2%	62.9%	63.2%	63.2%	63.1%	63.2%
ADR	-	\$73.82	\$76.36	\$78.91	\$81.59	\$84.33	\$87.15	\$90.04	\$93.09
Revenues									
RV space rentals	-	1,384,523	1,751,953	2,036,365	2,228,130	2,313,992	2,391,509	2,474,117	2,554,440
Miscellaneous	-	135,840	171,815	199,768	218,447	226,864	234,463	242,640	250,435
Terminal value	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total revenue	-	\$1,520,363	\$1,923,768	\$2,236,133	\$2,446,577	\$2,540,856	\$2,625,972	\$2,716,757	\$2,804,875
Cash outflows									
Costs to open	\$17,850,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ongoing capital expenses	-	92,371	114,646	138,274	163,323	189,893	218,061	247,902	279,498
Personnel costs	-	205,810	212,867	220,061	227,436	235,053	242,927	251,064	259,477
Other operating costs	-	220,241	269,453	307,659	334,286	346,946	358,567	370,581	382,993
Total cash outflows	\$17,850,000	\$518,422	\$596,966	\$665,994	\$725,045	\$771,892	\$819,555	\$869,547	\$921,968
Project cash flow	(\$17,850,000)	\$1,001,941	\$1,326,802	\$1,570,139	\$1,721,532	\$1,768,964	\$1,806,417	\$1,847,210	\$1,882,907

ECONorthwest analysis

Exhibit 25. Crooked River Pro Forma, 2034-2041

Crooked River	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041
Site days available	43,435	43,435	43,554	43,435	43,435	43,435	43,554	-
Site days sold	27,441	27,441	27,478	27,441	27,441	27,441	27,478	-
Occupancy rate	63.2%	63.2%	63.1%	63.2%	63.2%	63.2%	63.1%	-
ADR	\$96.21	\$99.43	\$102.73	\$106.20	\$109.76	\$113.44	\$117.20	-
Revenues								
RV space rentals	2,639,974	2,728,516	2,822,694	2,914,328	3,011,976	3,112,855	3,220,374	-
Miscellaneous	258,827	267,495	276,824	285,716	295,289	305,179	315,824	-
Terminal value	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21,697,060
Total revenue	\$2,898,801	\$2,996,011	\$3,099,518	\$3,200,044	\$3,307,265	\$3,418,034	\$3,536,198	\$21,697,060
Cash outflows								
Costs to open	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ongoing capital expenses	312,931	348,295	385,673	425,167	466,873	510,898	557,346	-
Personnel costs	268,168	277,151	286,438	296,034	305,949	316,198	326,791	-
Other operating costs	395,826	409,087	422,789	436,952	451,592	466,720	482,355	-
Total cash outflows	\$976,925	\$1,034,533	\$1,094,900	\$1,158,153	\$1,224,414	\$1,293,816	\$1,366,492	\$0
Project cash flow	\$1,921,876	\$1,961,478	\$2,004,618	\$2,041,891	\$2,082,851	\$2,124,218	\$2,169,706	\$21,697,060

ECONorthwest analysis

Thompson Lane Pro Forma

Exhibit 26. Thompson Pro Forma, 2025-2033

Thompson	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Site days available	-	109,500	109,500	109,800	109,500	109,500	109,500	109,800	109,500
Site days sold	-	36,687	45,244	51,275	54,671	55,353	55,353	55,446	55,353
Inflation rate	3.82%	3.50%	3.43%	3.38%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%
Occupancy rate	-	33.5%	41.3%	46.7%	49.9%	50.6%	50.6%	50.5%	50.6%
ADR	-	\$49.00	\$50.66	\$52.37	\$54.12	\$55.93	\$57.81	\$59.73	\$61.74
Revenues									
RV space rentals	-	1,797,742	2,292,250	2,685,106	2,958,691	3,096,018	3,199,730	3,311,871	3,417,686
Miscellaneous	-	265,678	338,759	396,866	437,250	457,533	472,862	489,511	505,072
Terminal value	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total revenue	-	\$2,063,420	\$2,631,009	\$3,081,972	\$3,395,941	\$3,553,551	\$3,672,592	\$3,801,382	\$3,922,758
Cash outflows									
Costs to open	\$21,600,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ongoing capital expenses	-	111,775	138,730	167,321	197,634	229,786	263,873	299,983	338,218
Personnel costs	-	336,471	348,009	359,769	371,829	384,283	397,157	410,462	424,213
Other operating costs	-	407,298	495,318	565,298	616,392	643,560	665,118	687,402	710,429
Total cash outflows	\$21,600,000	\$855,544	\$982,057	\$1,092,388	\$1,185,855	\$1,257,629	\$1,326,148	\$1,397,847	\$1,472,860
Project cash flow	(\$21,600,000)	\$1,207,876	\$1,648,952	\$1,989,584	\$2,210,086	\$2,295,922	\$2,346,444	\$2,403,535	\$2,449,898

ECONorthwest analysis

Exhibit 27. Thompson Pro Forma, 2034-2041

Thompson	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041
Site days available	109,500	109,500	109,800	109,500	109,500	109,500	109,800	-
Site days sold	55,353	55,353	55,446	55,353	55,353	55,353	55,446	-
Inflation rate	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%	3.35%
Occupancy rate	50.6%	50.6%	50.5%	50.6%	50.6%	50.6%	50.5%	-
ADR	\$63.81	\$65.95	\$68.15	\$70.44	\$72.80	\$75.24	\$77.75	-
Revenues								
RV space rentals	3,532,179	3,650,543	3,778,500	3,899,206	4,029,763	4,164,836	4,310,811	-
Miscellaneous	521,992	539,479	558,477	576,232	595,534	615,484	637,158	-
Terminal value	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28,445,330
Total revenue	\$4,054,171	\$4,190,022	\$4,336,977	\$4,475,438	\$4,625,297	\$4,780,320	\$4,947,969	\$28,445,330
Cash outflows								
Costs to open	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ongoing capital expenses	378,675	421,466	466,698	514,489	564,956	618,229	674,435	-
Personnel costs	438,425	453,111	468,289	483,979	500,191	516,948	534,265	-
Other operating costs	734,228	758,823	784,245	810,517	837,669	865,732	894,736	-
Total cash outflows	\$1,551,328	\$1,633,400	\$1,719,232	\$1,808,985	\$1,902,816	\$2,000,909	\$2,103,436	\$0
Project cash flow	\$2,502,843	\$2,556,622	\$2,617,745	\$2,666,453	\$2,722,481	\$2,779,411	\$2,844,533	\$28,445,330

ECONorthwest analysis

Potential Funding and Financing Sources

If Deschutes County were to pursue the development of one of these sites directly, as opposed to partnering with another public or private entity or selling the sites for private development, the primary source of funding would likely come from the County itself. The County's current strong financial position is reflected in its debt level, having recently earned an Aa1 rating from Moody's credit rating, which indicates the County's capacity to take on additional debt if necessary. According to recent County debt forecasts, the expected cost of borrowing is approximately 5 percent. While actual borrowing for one of these candidate sites may not be needed for a few years, making it challenging to forecast the actual cost of capital, there are also supplemental grant opportunities available. A summary of some of these grant opportunities is provided here, with more detailed information on each available in **Appendix 6**.

Land and Water Conservation Fund: For public outdoor facilities including trails, sports fields, playgrounds, picnic facilities, campgrounds, and park support facilities such as parking or restrooms.

County Opportunity: Awarded to counties to develop, improve or plan county-operated camping facilities.

Local Government: For public outdoor facilities including trails, sports fields, playgrounds, picnic facilities, campgrounds, and park support facilities such as parking or restrooms.

Recreational Trails: For motorized and non-motorized trail development and restoration projects.

US EDA-Economic Development Administration: Promoting America's Tourist Communities in support of travel, tourism and outdoor recreation.

Funds generated within the region through the Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) are increasingly considered as a viable source for such investments. Communities like Deschutes County and Bend are utilizing these funds to not only support traditional local public services and tourism advertising but also invest in tourism-related infrastructure. Visit Central Oregon and Deschutes County have directed these funds toward trail investment and maintenance. Visit Bend, on the other hand, has introduced the Bend Sustainability Fund, offering grants for capital projects that promote tourism, particularly in outdoor recreation. New campgrounds would likely be strong contenders for funding from these programs, which allocate millions of dollars annually.

7. Organizational Structure for Campground Functionality

General RV Park Industry Development and Permitting Costs

The cost of opening an RV park in Oregon can vary significantly, influenced by factors such as park quality, location, and the necessary infrastructure to accommodate RVs and utilities. Estimates from various sources highlight this variability.

For instance, KOA¹² provides an average estimate ranging from \$45,000 to \$60,000 per site. The startup cost for a new RV park or campground can vary significantly based on factors like location and specific requirements. Establishing a new campground typically ranges from \$15,000 to \$50,000 per site, which covers full hookups, gravel roads, and RV pads. A campground with 75 to 90 sites is considered ideal for revenue. Various factors, including utility availability, topography, zoning, and code requirements, influence startup costs. Electric hookup costs approximately \$1,500 to \$2,500 per site, while water expenses can be \$5,000 to \$12,000 for a well or \$1,200 per site for city water connections.

In addition to site-related expenses, campground owners must budget for essential buildings. An office building may range from \$15,000 to \$80,000, while quality restrooms can add around \$20,000 to the total costs. Overall, starting a new campground may require an investment of \$100,000 to \$2 million, depending on the specific project and any necessary repairs. Furthermore, campground owners should account for ongoing expenses like insurance, typically ranging from \$450 to \$1,500 per year for general liability, and internet connectivity, with an initial setup cost of about \$3,000 and monthly fees of \$250 to \$500 to meet campers' preferences.

Significant portions of these expenses are typically attributed to land clearing, utility installations, road construction, marketing efforts (often costly), and the construction of office and amenities facilities. The specific cost for opening an RV park can vary widely based on these factors, making it essential for developers to conduct a detailed financial analysis for their specific project.

Permit fees can significantly differ based on the structures and site development needs for each prospective campground or RV park. Moreover, there are permit fees for various phases of development, including site design. These permit fees are essential components of the developer's comprehensive financial analysis for each site plan.

¹² Own A KOA. "How much does it cost to open a camp site?". Website: <https://ownakoa.com/2023/04/06/how-much-does-it-cost-to-start-a-campground/> - :~:text=A new campground often costs,acre to the startup cost. Accessed: 10.16.2023

RV Park and Campground Management and Operational Costs

The operational organization structure of campground functionality refers to how the various roles, responsibilities, and departments within a campground or RV park are organized to ensure the efficient operation and management of the facility. The structure typically includes both on-site and off-site personnel responsible for various aspects of running the campground. Here are some common examples of roles and departments within the organizational structure of a campground:

- **Campground Manager/Director:** This is the top-level position responsible for overseeing the entire operation. The manager or director is in charge of making strategic decisions, setting policies, and ensuring that all departments work together smoothly.
- **Office Staff:** This department handles reservations, guest check-ins and check-outs, customer inquiries, and administrative tasks. It often includes receptionists, reservation agents, and administrative assistants.
- **Grounds Maintenance:** This team is responsible for the physical upkeep of the campground, including landscaping, cleaning, waste management, and maintenance of facilities, such as restrooms and shower buildings.
- **Campground Hosts:** These are often volunteers or part-time staff who assist campers with information, check-ins, and minor issues. They serve as a welcoming presence at the campground.
- **Security and Safety:** This department ensures the safety and security of campers and the campground facilities. They may handle issues related to fire safety, first aid, and security patrols.
- **Recreation and Activities:** Some campgrounds offer organized recreational activities for guests. This department plans and coordinates events such as nature walks, campfire programs, and games.
- **Food Services:** Campgrounds with on-site restaurants or snack bars have staff responsible for food preparation, service, and hygiene.
- **Retail/Store:** Campground stores often sell camping supplies, firewood, and convenience items. Staff here manage inventory and sales.
- **Reservations and Marketing:** This department manages online and phone reservations, as well as marketing and promotion efforts to attract new campers.
- **Finance and Accounting:** Responsible for managing the campground's financial transactions, including budgeting, payroll, and accounts payable and receivable.
- **Environmental and Sustainability:** As campgrounds become more conscious of their environmental impact, some have staff dedicated to eco-friendly practices, waste reduction, and sustainable initiatives.

- **Guest Services:** This department focuses on enhancing the guest experience, addressing complaints or concerns, and seeking feedback to make improvements.
- **Compliance and Regulations:** Ensuring the campground adheres to local, state, and federal regulations and maintains any necessary permits or licenses.

The specific organizational structure can vary widely depending on the size and complexity of the campground. Smaller campgrounds may have fewer staff and departments, while larger ones, especially those within national or state park systems, can have more extensive structures with specialized roles. The goal of this structure is to provide campers with a safe, enjoyable, and well-maintained environment while ensuring the smooth operation of the facility.

Public vs. Private Ownership

There are several options for operating an RV park, with three primary types differing in ownership.

1. The simplest approach is for the county to construct and manage the RV park itself. This, however, requires a substantial upfront investment, and the RV park/campground would be exempt from property taxes. It's worth noting that the public sector typically incurs higher benefits costs compared to the private sector (41 percent versus about 30 percent).
2. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the county could permit a private company to build and operate the RV park on a long-term basis, in exchange for a percentage of the revenues, in addition to lodging taxes. This option is straightforward and secures future revenue for the county. It avoids substantial initial investments, the daily operational challenges of an RV park, and the need to compete with private sector RV park owners.
3. An intermediate approach involves the county building an RV park and hiring a manager to operate it in exchange for a revenue share. This method provides the county with some control over service quality and maintenance, but these contracts often have relatively short terms. The downside is that the county still needs to make significant upfront investments in RV park development, and it won't receive property tax revenue.

For general assumptions regarding operation and management costs, please refer to Excel Workbook Tab – List of Assumptions, which provides detailed assumptions for each category within the organizational structure.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

This report explored the feasibility of developing new county-owned campgrounds at three potential sites in Deschutes County: Crooked River Ranch, Fort Thompson Lane, and Drafter Road. The goal is to meet the growing demand for camping and outdoor recreation in the region.

Our analysis indicates substantial increases in visitation and engagement in outdoor activities in Deschutes County, especially among local users. Camping sees steady but slower growth than activities like downhill skiing, hiking, and nature exploration.

Of the three sites, Drafter Road appears most viable for an RV park due to its size, highway access, zoning allowances, and infrastructure. Challenges include limited capacity and the need for permits, as well as Goal exceptions. It could address seasonal housing needs.

The Fort Thompson site offers space for a traditional campground but has issues with canal access segregating the property. Opportunity Areas 1 and 2 are best suited for tent camping if Goal exceptions, zoning and access hurdles can be resolved.

Crooked River Ranch is least feasible due to terrain, lack of utilities, and zoning prohibiting camping. It may be better suited as a trailhead or walk-in tent site if zoning changes and access issues were further investigated. The site has limited space and development potential.

Development costs range from \$3.7 million for Drafter Road to \$21.6 million for Fort Thompson for a 300-site RV park. Projected returns vary from 9.9 percent to 11 percent. Further refinement of assumptions is recommended.

Financing could come from County funds, transient lodging taxes, or grants. Operations could be County-run or utilize public-private partnerships. Drafter Road is most viable but continued growth justifies expansion at all sites.

In conclusion, RV park development shows strong potential, but each site has unique and challenging constraints. Drafter Road emerges as the most feasible but larger investments at Fort Thompson could also be financially viable given sufficient demand and approval of many land use regulation exceptions.

9. Appendix

ESA Technical Memo and Site Maps

Technical Memo

Appendix 1. ESA Technical Memo - Land Use Review



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memorandum

date October 5, 2023

to ECONorthwest

cc Project file

from Susan Cunningham, Sarah Hartung and Matthew Crampton, ESA

subject Analysis of site design standards, anticipated land use approvals and mapped existing natural resources for the Deschutes County Camping Project

Introduction

At the request of ECONorthwest, ESA prepared this memorandum to provide a review of existing natural resources and local land use permit requirements for three potential camp sites in Deschutes County: 1) Crooked River Ranch, 2) Fort Thompson Road Property and 3) Drafter Road. Deschutes County is evaluating options for developing a public RV park / campground in a rapidly growing region. The attached figures reflect regulatory constraints, known natural resource sites and development opportunities that should be taken into consideration when developing site plans.

Methods

ESA conducted a desktop analysis of existing natural resource and land use data for three potential development sites identified as having the potential to support an RV park or traditional campground. ESA also contacted land use planners at Deschutes County and La Pine for input on code interpretations.

No technical field investigations were conducted as part of this effort. Personnel contacted and sources reviewed include:

- Brent Bybee, Principal Planner, La Pine, August 1, 2023 – email and phone call;
- Peter Gutowsky, Planning Director, Deschutes County, September 7, 2023 – email and phone call;
- Avery Johnson, Assistant Planner Deschutes County, September 11, 2023 – email and phone call;
- Will Groves, Planning Manager, Deschutes County, September 21, 2023 – meeting notes with ECONorthwest;
- Local Wetland Inventory (LWI), (ESA Adolfson 2010); National Wetland Inventory (NWI), (USFWS 2020): <https://www.fws.gov/program/national-wetlands-inventory/wetlands-mapper>
- Federal Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Maps (1988, 2007): <https://msc.fema.gov/portal/home>
- USFWS IPaC Threatened and Endangered Species Act Planning Tool: <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/>
- National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Web Soil Survey (WSS) (NRCS and USDA, 2020): <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>
- Oregon Explorer Natural Resources Digital Library: <https://oregonexplorer.info/tools/oe-atlas>
- Deschutes County zoning and development code: <https://deschutescounty.municipalcodeonline.com>
- Deschutes County Property Information: <https://dial.deschutes.org/Real/InteractiveMap>
- La Pine city code: https://library.municode.com/or/la_pine/codes/code_of_ordinances

Jurisdiction

Deschutes County

Both the Crooked River Ranch and the Fort Thompson sites are in unincorporated Deschutes County and subject to the Deschutes County Code (DCC). DCC 18.128.015, General Standards Governing Conditional Uses, applies compatibility criteria for campgrounds, which includes the following:

- A. The site under consideration shall be determined to be suitable for the proposed use based on the following factors:
1. Site, design and operating characteristics of the use;
 2. Adequacy of transportation access to the site; and
 3. The natural and physical features of the site, including, but not limited to, general topography, natural hazards and natural resource values.
- B. The proposed use shall be compatible with existing and projected uses on surrounding properties based on the factors listed above.

DCC 18.128.016 and DCC 18.124 also require Site Plan Review for any Conditional Use. Any development application would need to address site landscaping, visual impacts, preservation of natural features, safety, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design, on-site access and circulation, parking and transportation.

There are also specific conditional use standards that apply to campgrounds under DCC 18.128.320 that pertain to outdoor recreation, access, water supply, and sewage disposal, as follows:

- Open space (the site must maintain a minimum of 65% as open space/undeveloped). [Note: a “site” is typically defined as a parcel or group of parcels under the same ownership.]
- Campsites will be minimum size of 1,600 square feet.
- Each campsite requires at least one parking space.
- Sites must have direct access from a street or road designated as an arterial or collector by the Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan.
- Roadways permitting one-way traffic shall be not less than 10 feet wide and those permitting two-way traffic shall not be less than 20 feet wide.
- Yards and Setbacks:
 - a. Campsites or parking spaces shall not be located within the yard and setback areas required by the County for permanent buildings in the zone in which the campground is located.
 - b. No developed portion of the campground shall be located within 100 feet of the right of way of any road or property line of a lot not part of the campground.

Note: setback requirements may be waived if the campground can be sufficiently screened and buffered from neighboring properties or the protected landscape area.
- Demonstrate that there is adequate potable water available at the site to serve the campground. Plans for water supply and sewage disposal improvements must be approved by the State Health Division and the Department of Environmental Quality. Demonstrate that the campground will be

eligible for a certificate of sanitation as required by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

In addition to the design and setback standards listed above, the project may be subject to several additional conditions imposed by the Planning Director or Hearing's Officer. These additional conditions are listed in 18.128.020 and may relate to: limiting hours of operation; limiting noise and outdoor lights; changing the lot size or dimension; limiting building height, size and location; increasing the required street dedication, roadway width or requiring additional improvements within the street right of way; and requiring protection and preservation of existing trees, vegetation, water resources, wildlife habitat or other significant natural resources.

La Pine

The Drafter Road Site is within La Pine city limits and subject to the City of La Pine Development Code. The Drafter Road Site is zoned Commercial-Mixed Use and camping and RV parks are a conditional use. Under the City of La Pine Development Code (15.108.020), campgrounds allow for transient (nonresidential) use. Campgrounds are also subject to the following use standards:

1. No recreational vehicle shall remain in the campground for more than 30 days in any 60-day period.
2. Required building spaces shall be lighted at all times of night and day, shall be ventilated, shall be provided with heating facilities which shall maintain a room temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit, shall have floors of waterproof material, shall have sanitary ceiling, floor and wall surfaces and shall be provided with floor drains adequate to permit easy cleaning.
3. A neat appearance shall be maintained at all times. Except for vehicles, there shall be no outside storage of materials or equipment belonging to the campground or to any guest of the park.
4. Evidence shall be provided that the campground will be eligible for a certificate of sanitation as required by state law.

The project would need to comply with the conditional use approval criteria of Chapter 15.316, including:

- A. The proposal is in compliance with specific standards, conditions and limitations the primary zone.
- B. An assessment that the proposed use does not exceed resource or public facility carrying capacities, including, but not limited to, transportation water, sewer, and utility systems.
- C. An assessment that shows the proposed use is in compliance with air, water, land, solid waste and/or noise pollution standards.

Results

A summary of anticipated site design standards, land use approval process, and mapped natural resources for sites in Deschutes County is presented in Table 1a. RV parks are neither permitted outright nor conditionally permitted at the Crooked River site and Fort Thompson Site. Campgrounds are also neither permitted outright nor conditionally permitted at the Crooked River site.

5. Refer to a Table 1b for a summary of site design standards and land use standards for the Drafter Road site in La Pine where campgrounds and RV parks are allowed as conditional uses.

Table 1a: Summary of Site Design/Land Use Requirements and Existing Natural Resources for Sites in Deschutes County

Site	Site Features	Zoning ^a	Mapped Soils ^b	Type of Review	National Wetland Inventory (NWI) and Irrigation Canal Resources	Floodplain	Site Design Standards / Setbacks	Nat. Res. / Irrigation Canal Setbacks
Crooked River Ranch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to the Deschutes River - Intermittent streams - Dramatic topography 	RR10 (Rural Residential 10-acre lot min.) and Landscape Management (LM) Combining Zone FP (Floodplain)	63C, 81F, 128D – <u>Non-hydric</u>	Campgrounds and RV parks not Permitted – see notes in site design standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perennial and Intermittent streams (R3UBH and R4SBC) - Palustrine, scrub-shrub wetland (PSSC) 	100-yr floodplain of the Deschutes	Campgrounds and RV parks are not permitted outright or conditionally in RR10	N/A
Fort Thompson Road – campgrounds only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large acreage - Flat terrain with rock outcrops - Hwy 97 access via private road - Swalley Canal 	EFUTRB (Exclusive Farm Use, Tumalo / Redmond / Bend) and LM Combining Zone	27A – High Value Farmland	Requires soil study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Swalley Canal and lateral canal - Small, excavated ponds (PUSC_x) 	None	EFU: Requires soil study by a certified soil scientist; see text for setbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Swalley Canal: 50 ft easement both sides - Lateral canal: 25 ft easement both sides
		OS&C (Open Space & Conservation) and LM Combining Zone	38B, 58C – Non-high Value Farmland	Site Plan; Cond. Use and LM Combining Zone.				
		OS&C (Open Space & Conservation) and LM Combining Zone	38B – Non-high Value Farmland	Site Plan; Cond. Use and LM Combining Zone			OS&C: see text for yard setbacks	

^aNote: The Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan is currently being updated with a proposed adoption date of August 2023 to February 2024. RR10 does not allow campgrounds or RV parks either outright or conditionally. EFU and OS&C do not allow RV parks outright or conditionally.

^bSoil codes: 27A = Cloykamp loamy sand; 38B = Deskamp-Gosney complex, 0-8% slopes; 58C = Gosney-Rock outcrop, 0-15% slopes; 63C = Holmzie-Searles complex, 0-15% slopes; 81F = Licksillet-Rock outcrop complex, 45-80% slopes; 128D = Statz-Deschutes complex, 15-30% slopes.

Table 1: Summary of Site Design/Land Use Requirements for a Public Campground and/or RV Park

Site	Site Features	Zoning ^a	Mapped Soils ^b	Type of Review	National Wetland Inventory (NWI) and Irrigation Canal Resources	Floodplain	Site Design Standards / Setbacks	Nat. Res. / Irrigation Canal Setbacks
Drafter Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developed area in La Pine - Hwy 97 access 	LPMUC or CMX (La Pine Mixed Use / Commercial)	115A – Non-hydric but with 1% hydric inclusions on terraces	Conditional Use	None	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Min. lot sz = 2 ac. - Arterial or collector access only - 50-ft setback for tents/buildings along any property line - The 50-ft setback along property lines does not apply to RV parks - See text for more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None, no overlays or significant habitat present

^aNote: See: https://library.municode.com/or/la_pine/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICILAPIDECO_ART3ZODI_CH15.22COMIEZO

^bSoil codes: 115A = Shanahan loamy coarse sand, 0-3% slopes

Crooked River Ranch Site *(Figure 1.0)*

The Crooked River Ranch Site is located in unincorporated Deschutes County and consists of tax lots 141214B 100, 200, and 300. The site is located along a reach of the Deschutes River that is designated by the State of Oregon as a State Scenic Waterway. A majority of the site is zoned Rural Residential 10 (RR10, 10-acre lot minimum) with a Landscape Management (LM) Combining Zone. A section in the northwest corner along the Deschutes River is zoned as Floodplain (FP). The surrounding property to the east is zoned Exclusive Farm Use, and the property to the north, west and south is zoned RR10. Property to the east is also administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The site is designated Rural Residential Exception Area (RREA) in the Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan.

The site is at the terminus of NW 84th Court. This street is designated as a local road by Deschutes County Transportation System Plan. This does not meet the campground or RV park access requirements of DCC 18.128.320.B.1.

The NWI indicates an intermittent stream on the western portion of the site that flows north to the Deschutes River and a narrow band of scrub-shrub wetland is present along the Deschutes River. Building and fixture setbacks for all streams on RR10 zoned parcels are 100 feet from the ordinary high water (OWH) line. Based on aerial photo interpretation and depending on duration of streamflow, the NWI-mapped intermittent streams may not be regulated waterbodies. A field reconnaissance by a wetland professional should be conducted to verify presence and extent of wetlands and water resources on the property.

FEMA maps a 100-year floodplain along the Deschutes River.

The Crooked River site and vicinity contain rocky outcrops within the LM zone that appear to meet the definition of rimrock (See Table 1), defined by the DCC as: any ledge, outcropping or top or overlying stratum of rock, which forms a face in excess of 45 degrees, and which creates or is within the canyon of the Deschutes River (among other rivers listed in the DCC). New buildings must be set back at least 50' from the edge of rimrock in an LM zone.

The site demonstrates dynamic topography and offers associated dramatic internal views to visitors. Circulation routes through the site are limited due to the canyon-like topography but an existing double track trail linking NW 84th Ct. to the Deschutes River riverbank offers visitors a rewarding, immersive experience defined by exposed basalt cliffs, steep canyon walls and a sense of exploration. Elevated vantage points across the site offer visitors views of the Deschutes River as well as select views of the Cascade Mountain range.

Tax lot 141214B000100 exhibits a large flat area that has the potential to support program development. A vehicular access route to this opportunity area (see figure 1.0) could be achieved by traversing the topography that characterizes the western edge of the lot, near the terminus of NW 84th Court. Access will likely require re-grading through rocky terrain. Geotechnical study is required to better study entry drive feasibility and associated challenges.

Deschutes County Code

Campgrounds and RV Parks are not listed as either a Permitted Use 18.60.020 or Conditional Use 18.60.030 in the RR-10 zone. Development of an RV park or campground on this site would not be permitted unless there was a zoning change or other significant land use procedure.

Fort Thompson Road Site *(Figure 2.0)*

The Fort Thompson Road Site is located in unincorporated Deschutes County and consists of tax lots 1612340000400 and 800, 1612330000700, 1712040000100, and 171200000700 and 800. The site is located along Highway 97, which traverses diagonally through the southeast corner of tax lot 1712030 800. The surrounding properties to the north are zoned EFUTRB, to the east are zoned EFUAL (Alfalfa Subzone), and to the west and south are zoned Multiple Use Agricultural 10-Acre Minimum (MUA10). Highway 97 has a Landscape Management (LM) Combining Zone overlay that extends 0.25 mile into the site.

Tax Lot	Zoning	Comprehensive Plan Designation
1612340000400	EFUTRB	AG
1612340000800	OS&C	OS&C
1612330000700	EFUTRB	AG
1712040000100	EFUTRB	AG
1712030000700	EFUTRB	AG
1712030000800	OS&C	OS&C

Notes: EFUTRB = Exclusive Farm Use Tumalo/Redmond/Bend Subzone; OS&C = Open Space & Conservation; AG = Agriculture

The Natural Resource Conservation Service maps two major types of soils as occurring within EFU on the site: Deskamp-Gosney Complex, 0-8 percent slopes (38B); and Gosney-rock outcrop-Deskamp Complex, 0-15 percent slopes (58C). Neither is considered high-value farmland per DCC 18.04.030; however, a soil study would be needed to precisely identify soil types across the site (W. Groves, Planning Manager and A. Johnson, Assistant Planner, Deschutes County, pers. comm. 2023). A small portion of the site is also mapped as Clovkamp loamy sand (27A), which is considered high-value farmland if irrigated. A field investigation would also confirm the presence of rimrock and whether the features would meet the definition of rimrock, which has setback requirements.

Under DCC 18.16.031.D, campgrounds are considered Conditional Uses on non-high value farmland. Information from Deschutes County planning indicates the project would require a soil study by a certified soil scientist to determine the areas that are least suitable for farming.

The site is accessed by a private road south of the property. This does not meet the access requirement of DCC 18.128.320.B.1. To be a viable option as a campground, the site must be accessed from a roadway with the classification of either arterial or collector. Access roads are allowed through high value farmland. Figure 2.0 indicates that a possible easement through or partial land acquisition of adjacent tax lot 1612330000800 could provide driveway access from Hunnell Road, identified as a Collector in the current comprehensive plan. Additional analysis and input from Deschutes County transportation planners is recommended.

Mapped natural resources for the Fort Thompson Road Site include the main Swalley Irrigation Canal, a lateral canal and excavated small ponds. Artificial/excavated ponds are exempt from stream or natural resource setbacks as they are artificial features. Coordination with the irrigation district indicates that a 50-foot easement is established on both sides of the Swalley Canal and a 25-foot easement exists on both sides of the lateral canal. The irrigation district advised that no roads or utilities may cross the easements.

There are no other environmental overlay zones mapped for the site and there are no other known or recorded biological, water, or natural resources on the site.

The site is defined by generally flat terrain punctuated with basalt outcroppings. Views are limited due to the nearly homogeneous vegetation cover across the site. Notably, however, the SW corner of the site has a region of sparse vegetation which coincides with the topographic high point on the site allowing selective views to Black Butte and the Cascade Mountain range to the west and Powell Buttes to the east.

Highway noise is a constant reminder of the proximity to highway 97. At approximately 1/3 of a mile from the highway, the noise noticeably reduces, providing visitors with a sense of removal from built environments. This characteristic is a significant benefit to opportunity areas west of the landscape management zone (see Figure 2.0).

Deschutes County Code

A conditional use permit would be required for campgrounds in either EFU or OS&C zoned land. The General Standards Governing Conditional Uses DCC 18.128.015 would need to be addressed, along with the development standards of DCC 18.128.320 Campgrounds. Access to the site does not meet the requirement of DCC 18.128.320.B.1. Further evaluation of site access is required to see if this requirement can be met.

In EFU, under DCC 18.16.031.D, campgrounds are considered conditional uses on non-high value farmland. Only those portions of the site that are the least suitable for the production of farm crops could be developed as a campground and would be subject to applicable provisions of the Comprehensive Plan and DCC 18.16.040 and other applicable sections of DCC Title 18. The conditional use permit application will require an assessment in accordance with DCC 18.16.040, including a study of the soil types on-site by a certified soil scientist to classify soils and determine which areas are the least suitable for farming.

In the OS&C zone, campgrounds are conditional uses and subject to general and specific conditional use requirements (DCC 18.48.030, DCC 18.128.015, and 18.128.320) and specific limitations described below (DCC 18.48.060).

DCC 18.16 Exclusive Farm Use

Campgrounds are conditional uses permitted on non-high value farmland under DCC 18.16.031, and may be established under DCC 18.16.040 provided the proposed use:

- Will not force a significant change in accepted farm or forest practices on surrounding lands devoted to farm or forest uses; and

- Will not significantly increase the cost of accepted farm or forest practices on surrounding lands devoted to farm or forest use; and
- That the actual site on which the use is to be located is the least suitable for the production of farm crops or livestock.

Yard setbacks for EFU parcels are outlined in 18.16.070 and summarized as follows:

- Front yard: minimum of 40 feet from a property line fronting on a local street, 60 feet from a property line fronting on a collector street, and 100 feet from a property line fronting on an arterial street.
- Side yard: each shall be a minimum of 25 feet, except that for a nonfarm dwelling proposed on property with side yards adjacent to property currently employed in farm use, and receiving special assessment for farm use, the side yard shall be a minimum of 100 feet.
- Rear yards: minimum of 25 feet, except that for a nonfarm dwelling proposed on property with a rear yard adjacent to property currently employed in farm use, and receiving special assessment for farm use, the rear yard shall be a minimum of 100 feet.
- The setback from the north lot line shall meet the solar setback requirements in Section 18.116.180.

DCC 18.48 Open Space & Conservation

The following limitations (DCC 18.48.060) will need to be addressed in the conditional use application in an OS&C Zone:

2. The proposed use is sufficiently dependent upon the recreational resources of the area.
3. The proposed use shall not significantly increase fire hazard or significantly increase risks to fire suppression personnel.
4. The natural grade of land and native vegetation will be retained as much as possible to prevent or minimize erosion, pollution or degradation of the natural attractiveness of the area.
5. The proposed use would not exceed the carrying capacity of the area or would not be detrimental to the natural features or resources of the area.
6. The proposed use is in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan.
7. The proposed use would force a significant change in, or significantly increase the cost of accepted farming practices on agriculture adjacent lands.

Required setbacks for OS&C are outlined in 18.48.050 and summarized as follows:

- Minimum setbacks: 60 feet from an arterial or collector street or road right of way and 20 feet from a street within a platted and recorded subdivision.
- Side setback: minimum of 15 feet for each, except on a corner lot where it should be 30 feet from the street side.
- North lot line: meet the solar setback requirements in DCC 18.116.180.

At the Fort Thompson site, the 65 percent open space requirement for campgrounds is anticipated to be satisfied by the undeveloped adjacent high value farmland areas.

Landscape Management (LM) Combining Zone

A portion of the site along Highway 97 is within the Deschutes County LM Combining Zone which requires LM review if a building is proposed within 0.25 mile of the roadway. A planner would do a site visit as part of the review of the application to confirm whether or not a proposed building would be visible. Screening or a planting plan may be required as part of the LM review if existing vegetation cannot be retained within the LM Combining Zone. It appears that rock outcroppings in the LM zone may also meet the definition of rimrock, requiring a 50' building setback. Due to the constant sound generated by highway 97, it is worth considering opportunity areas west of the LM zone where highway sound is reduced (see figure 2.0a).

Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan

In Deschutes County most rural lands are designated for farms, forests or other resources and protected as described in the Resource Management chapter of this Plan. The purpose of the Resource Management chapter is to effectively manage Deschutes County's agricultural, forest, natural and cultural resources to meet the needs of today while retaining their value for future generations. The project site has Agricultural lands (Ag) and Open Space and Conservation (OS&C) resources.

Agricultural Lands – Statewide Planning Goal 3 requires counties to preserve and maintain agricultural lands. In Deschutes County it is recognized that much of the local farm land is marginal, particularly without irrigation. The climate, especially the short growing season, makes commercial farming challenging. Statewide Planning Goal 3 does not really account for the conditions in Deschutes County, resulting in agricultural zoning being applied to land with no history of farming and limited potential for profitable farming. There is considerable pressure to convert agricultural land to residential or other uses. The debate is complicated because there are impacts to the farming community from converting agricultural lands to other uses. It can be challenging for a farmer who has residential neighbors because farming activities can have noise, odor or dust impacts. The proposed use of a campground will need to take the goals and policies of Agricultural Lands (Section 2.2) of the Plan into consideration in the farmland assessment under DCC 18.16.040. The goals and policies are intended to provide, within State guidelines, flexibility and ensure a variety of alternative paths to profitability.

Open spaces are protected through an Open Space and Conservation map designation and zoning district. The open space goals of the Plan are to encourage development design that fits with the natural landscape. The proposed development of a campground can be designed to meet the Open Space policies (Section 2.7) of the Plan.

Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) and Oregon Revised Statutes (ORSs)

Recent coordination with Deschutes County indicates that several OARs and ORSs may apply to the Fort Thompson site. These rules and statutes are documented in a memo from Will Groves, Planning Manager, Deschutes County, dated September 21, 2023. Two administrative rules in particular require additional clarification:

- Proximity to Bend Urban Growth Boundary: OAR 660-033-0130 (19) - Private campgrounds shall not be allowed within three miles of an urban growth boundary (UGB) unless an exception is approved pursuant to ORS 197.732 and OAR chapter 660, division 4. Any application on this property would require a Goal Exception. The outcome of this process is unknown and may add significant time, risk, and cost to the process.

Analysis: This OAR references “private” campgrounds, which may not apply to the proposed project. Additional clarification is recommended. The Fort Thompson site is within 3 miles of the UGB.

- Proximity to Natural/Recreational Amenity: OAR 660-033-0130 (19) requires campgrounds to be established on a site or contiguous to lands with a park or other outdoor natural amenity this is accessible for recreational use by the occupants of the campground.

Analysis: this standard may be met by the establishment of an on-site park or natural amenity.

Drafter Road Site *(Figure 3.0)*

The Drafter Road Site consists of 9 tax lots along Drafter Road within the city limits of La Pine. The parcels are all zoned Commercial-Mixed Use (CMX) and each lot has an approximate acreage of 1ac. The CMX zone allows for flexible uses that can respond to market demand. A campground or RV park is considered a conditional use per La Pine Code 15.108.020.

The site is accessed by Drafter Road which is designated as a minor collector by the La Pine Transportation System Plan. Local circulation improvements proposed in the Wickiup Junction Refinement Plan may provide increased vehicular access to the study sites as well as improved walkability via a new “backage road” and new local circulation roads serving the western edge of the properties (figure 3.2). These improvements will require ROW and coordination with property owners.

There are no mapped floodplains on the parcels. There are no other environmental overlay zones mapped for the site. There are no other known or recorded biological, water, or natural resources on the site.

The Drafter Road site is characterized by very flat terrain, stands of ponderosa pine and patchy understory vegetation. Due to the proximity to highway 97, all tax lots experience consistent highway noise. Due to the developed nature of the study area, all tax lots have neighbor sensitivities that include high visibility into and out of the sites, privacy considerations and noise considerations.

City of La Pine Development Code

A Conditional Use permit would be required for campgrounds and RV parks in the Commercial-Mixed Use zone. The city defines campgrounds and RV parks as follows:

Sec. 15.14.200. - Campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks.

A. Definition. Campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks are park-like facilities containing sites or spaces for the temporary and recreational occupancy of persons in tents and/or recreational

vehicles. Such a facility may also contain recreation and other support facilities subordinate to and serving only the camping occupants.

B. Examples. Examples are limited to campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks.

C. Accessory uses. Accessory uses may include common bathrooms and showers, common laundry facilities, offices, a caretaker dwelling, and recreational amenities.

The general use and development standards of La Pine City Code 15.108.020 (below) would need to be addressed along with the conditional use approval criteria of La Pine City Code 15.316.040.

15.108.020 Campgrounds and Recreation Vehicle Parks

The following are site design standards for campgrounds and RV parks:

1. Minimum lot area shall be two acres. [Note: a variance on the minimum lot size would need to demonstrate that the condition is not a “self-created difficulty” per [LPDC 15.320.040](#). The La Pine Planning staff indicated they could not guarantee the outcome of an application submitted for a campground on a property that is less than two acres.]
2. Access to the site shall be from an arterial or collector street. [Note: transportation improvements such as sidewalks along Drafter Road may be required and warrants confirmation with La Pine Planning.]
3. Except for the access roadway into the campground, the campground shall be screened on all sides by a sight obscuring fence not less than six feet in height, unless otherwise approved by the city.
4. Drainage of increased stormwater runoff caused by the development shall be managed so as to prevent ponding, accelerated erosion, or flooding of adjacent properties and roads.
5. No tent, camp site, or building shall be located within 50 feet of a neighboring lot line.
6. Trash receptacles for the disposal of solid waste materials shall be provided in convenient locations for the use of guests of the campground and located in such number and of such capacity that there is no uncovered accumulation of trash at any time.
7. The space provided for each recreational vehicle shall not be less than 700 square feet exclusive of any space used for common areas such as roadways, general use structures, walkways, parking spaces for vehicles other than recreational vehicles and landscaped areas.
8. A space provided for a recreational vehicle shall be covered with crushed gravel or paved with asphalt, concrete, or similar material and be designed to provide for the control of runoff of surface water. The part of the space, which is not occupied by the recreational vehicle, not intended as an access way to the recreational vehicle or part of an outdoor patio, need not be paved or covered with gravel provided the area is landscaped or otherwise treated to prevent dust or mud.

9. A recreational vehicle space shall be provided with piped potable water and sewage disposal service. A recreational vehicle staying in the park shall be connected to the water and sewage service provided by the park if the vehicle has equipment needing such service.
10. A recreational vehicle space shall be provided with electrical service.
11. The total number of parking spaces in the campground, except for the parking provided for the exclusive use of the manager or employees of the campground, shall be one space per recreational vehicle space. Parking spaces shall be covered with crushed gravel or paved with asphalt, concrete or similar material.
12. The campground shall provide toilets, lavatories and showers for each sex in the following ratios: For each 15 recreational vehicle spaces or any fraction thereof, one toilet, one urinal, one lavatory and one shower for men; two toilets, one lavatory and one shower for women. The toilets and showers shall afford privacy and the showers shall be provided with private dressing rooms. Facilities for each sex shall be located in separate buildings, or, if in the same building, shall be separated by a soundproof wall.
13. The campground shall provide one utility building or room containing one clothes washing machine, one clothes drying machine and 15 square feet of space for clothes drying lines for each ten recreational vehicle spaces or any fraction thereof, unless such facilities are available within a distance of three miles and are adequate to meet these standards.

Due to the fact that each lot is ~1ac, ESA was advised by Coty of LaPine planning staff that development of a campground or RV park on conjoined lots that meet the 2ac minimum will require a lot line adjustment (see LPDC 15.414). The adjustment will require a Type 1 procedure as outlined in LPDC 15.204.010.

Summary

A meeting with the planning departments (County and La Pine) is recommended to discuss the findings.

Crooked River Ranch Site

Campgrounds and RV Parks are not listed as an either a Permitted Use 18.60.020 or Conditional Use 18.60.030 in the RR-10 zone. Development of this site as such would not be permitted unless there was a zoning change or other significant land use procedure.

Fort Thompson Road Site

RV parks are not permitted outright or by conditional use at the Fort Thompson Road Site, zoned EFU and OS&C thereby eliminating the Fort Thomson Road site from consideration for a RV park. A campground is permitted as a conditional use and would require site plan review, a conditional use permit and a LM review from the County, at a minimum. On the lots zoned as EFU, a soil study by a certified soil scientist would be required to determine the areas that are least suitable for farming and for non-farming uses to be allowed.

The site is accessed by a private road south of the property. This does not meet the access requirement of DCC 18.128.320.B.1. To be a viable option as a campground, the site must be accessed from a roadway with the classification of either arterial or collector. Access roads are allowed through high value farmland. Figure 2.0 indicates that a possible easement through or partial land acquisition of adjacent tax lot 1612330000800 could provide driveway access from Hunnell Road, identified as a Collector in the current comprehensive plan. Additional analysis and input from Deschutes County transportation planners is recommended.

Mapped natural resources for the Fort Thompson Road Site include the Swalley Irrigation Canal, a lateral canal, and artificial ponds. Artificial/excavated ponds are exempt from stream or natural resource setbacks as they are artificial features. A 50-foot easement is established on both sides of the Swalley Canal and a 25-foot easement exists on both sides of the lateral canal. The canals pose access challenges to the site. ESA was advised that no roads or utilities may cross the canals which effectively segregates the Fort Thompson site into three areas that cannot be connected. See figures 2.0 and 2.0a.

On the Fort Thompson Road site, opportunity areas 1 and 2 (see figure 2.0a) are the best candidates to support a traditional campground with the following considerations. The amount of available space at each area could easily support a campground and the required open space component in support of DCC 18.128.320. An access easement or land acquisition from the neighboring tax lot 1612330000800 (not County property) is required for access to the site from Hunnell Rd. If access is acquired through adjacent tax lot 1612330000800, opportunity areas 1 and 2 benefit from avoiding the complexities of negotiating with the irrigation district on how to cross the canals. The entirety of opportunity area 1 and the western half of opportunity area 2 benefit from their distance from highway 97 and the associated noise. High points within or adjacent to these opportunity areas could provide users with views to the surrounding mountains and majestic landscapes, offering a unique user experience to campers.

Identification of exact development extents will require a soil study by a certified soil scientist to determine the areas that are least suitable for farming and thus able to support a traditional campground. Additionally, any outcroppings within the LM zone (pertains to opportunity area 2) will require review as to whether they meet the definition of rimrock and associated buffers will apply. Refer to the technical memorandum, *Utility Needs and Availability – Deschutes County Campgrounds*, for utility considerations.

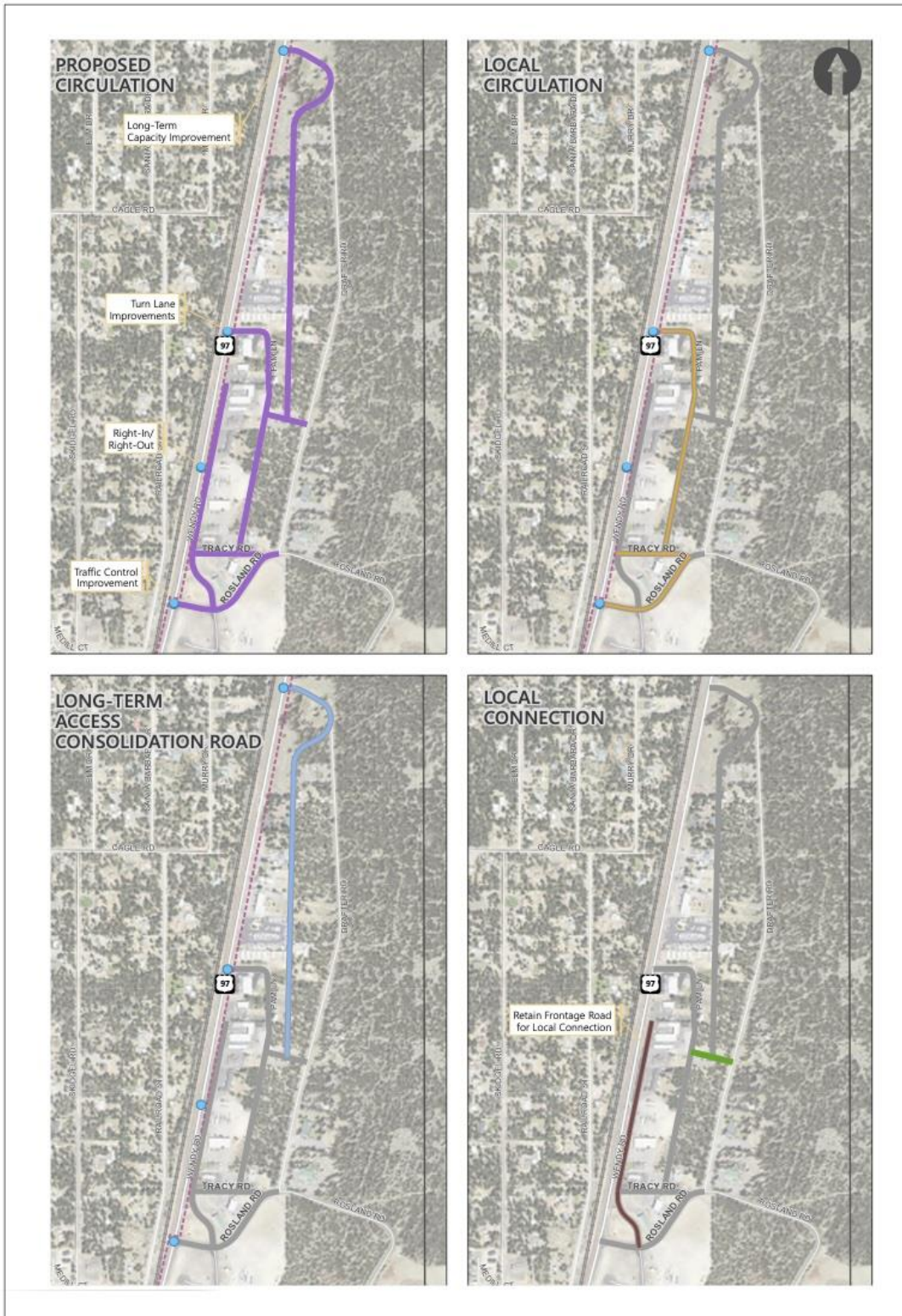
Drafter Road Site

The Drafter Road Site would require a conditional use permit from the City for either a campground or RV park. Both uses are defined under Section 15.14.200 of the city code. The 50-foot setback from property lines required for camp sites, tents, and buildings does not apply to recreational vehicles. Lot sizes less than 2 acres cannot be guaranteed approval as an RV or Campground according to information from La Pine Planning. Development of a campground or RV park on conjoined lots that meet the 2ac minimum will require a lot line adjustment via a Type 1 procedure to combine lots. The development of improvements identified in the Wickiup Junction Refinement Plan may impact the lot sizes of the study area and reduce the County owned lots to less than 2 acres if implemented (see figures 3.0 and 3.2).

Drafter Road will likely require improvements such as sidewalks. There are no other identified regulatory or environmental constraints.

It is ESA's conclusion that at the Drafter Road site, opportunity area 1 presents the best opportunity for development of an RV park by virtue of the available acreage, associated design flexibility, and potential to benefit from multiple vehicular and pedestrian access points. While opportunity areas two and three meet the requirements for development, it is worth noting that, should the Wickiup Plan advance and require a ROW to be dedicated on the western portion of the opportunity areas, areas two and three could potentially be reduced in size below the two-acre threshold required to develop an RV park. All opportunity areas will require lot line adjustments to combine lots. Refer to the technical memorandum, *Utility Needs and Availability – Deschutes County Campgrounds*, for utility considerations.

While a traditional campground is permissible at this site, the developed nature of the region suggests that there would be better options for campers seeking an immersive outdoor experience.



Deschutes County Camping Feasibility Study

Figure 3.2 Drafter Rd Area
Proposed Circulation Developments

Source: Wikip Junction Refinement Plan (Pg. 32, Figure 5: Local Connections, adopted July 2021)

Note:
Figures are based on available GIS data and do not constitute surveyed information. Figures and data are to be used for reference purposes only.



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technical memorandum

date August 25, 2023

to Mark Buckley, ECONorthwest
Jen Patterson, Deschutes County

from Mason Lacy, ESA

subject Utility Needs and Availability – Deschutes County Campgrounds

Introduction

Environmental Science Associates (ESA) is contracted with ECONorthwest to evaluate infrastructure availability and needs for three potential RV Park and Campgrounds for Deschutes County. The three sites are located on existing County owned land and for the purposes of this study are referred to as follows: 1) Crooked River Ranch, 2) Fort Thompson Road and 3) Drafter Road. The Crooked River Ranch and Fort Thompson Road sites are in unincorporated Deschutes County, while the Drafter Road site is located within LaPine city limits.

Infrastructure Needs

Campgrounds within Deschutes County are required to provide potable water, toilet and shower facilities, wastewater treatment, lighting, picnic tables and garbage collection sites. For any campground proposed, minimum utility infrastructure includes adequate potable water, sewage disposal, and power at the site. Any improvements will need stormwater infrastructure meeting the requirements of the Central Oregon Stormwater Manual (COSM). It is not expected that natural gas would be necessary at the sites as most RVs have a propane tank, though availability of natural gas service was still investigated as part of this study. A propane filling station on-site could be

considered, which would be a standalone system. Telecommunications service at the sites may be desired for on-site management, RV cable TV hookups, or other amenities.

All three sites were evaluated for utility availability to meet the needs of the proposed improvements, including:

- Potable Water
- Sanitary Sewer
- Electricity
- Stormwater
- Natural Gas
- Telecommunications

Infrastructure Availability

Crooked River Ranch Site

The Crooked River Ranch site is located in unincorporated Deschutes County along the Deschutes River, far from the incorporated cities (and associated municipal infrastructure) of Central Oregon. The site is accessed from the south side by NW 84th Ct, on which several nearby taxlots have been developed with residential homes.

Potable water for the site would be provided by a groundwater well. A search of the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) Groundwater Information System Mapping Tool yielded information on a well located on one of the neighboring properties, with a max depth of 320 ft. It is anticipated that a well of similar depth would be necessary to provide water to the site.

A septic system would need to be developed to handle the sanitary sewer needs of the project and provide wastewater treatment at the site. Based on the size of the property, it is anticipated that developing a septic system for the project is feasible. However, due to the rocky soils and steep slopes located at the site, further analysis would be required to confirm feasibility and properly locate the leach field.

Pacific Power is the electric power provider for the area, and currently serves the neighboring homes. Overhead power lines currently extend down NW 84th Ct to the nearest developed residential lot, as well as along NW Teater Ave, NW 83rd Pl, and NW 89th Ct. It is expected that extending power to the site would be feasible.

All new impervious surfaces would need to be designed with on-site stormwater management. Based on the size and undeveloped nature of the property, it would be no issue to treat all stormwater with surface facilities (no Underground Injection Control (UIC) systems necessary (drywells, etc.)).

Cascade Natural Gas (CNG) is the gas service provider in Central Oregon. There are no gas lines anywhere near the site.

Based on the Oregon Broadband Mapping Tool, there is no wired service availability for the site. There is licensed fixed wireless service available at the site with max advertised download speeds of 10 Mbps.

Refer to figure 1.2 for available utilities and ROW delineations at the Crooked River Ranch site.

Fort Thompson Road Site

The Fort Thompson Road site is located in unincorporated Deschutes County, along Highway 97 between the incorporated cities of Redmond and Bend. Being closer to Bend, there are more developed nearby utilities, though still no municipal utilities servicing the site.

The City of Bend's Water Service Area mapping shows Avion's service area map covering a western portion of the property. Avion reported that the nearest service line within Hwy 97 ROW is over a mile to the south near Space Age Fuel at the north end of Bend. Avion estimated that connecting a line within Hwy 97 ROW to the southern boundary of the site would cost in excess of \$1 million and is not considered feasible. Avion also has a 12" water main along Hunnel Road, with several lines servicing the neighboring homes. There is currently no access to the site from Hunnel Road, but if additional property was purchased or easements acquired it may be possible to connect water service to Hunnel Road. If connecting to Avion Water lines is infeasible, potable water could be provided to the site by a groundwater well.

The closest City of Bend gravity sewer main is the Northeast Interceptor located over a half mile south of the southern property boundary on the east side of Hwy 97 and is not feasible to connect to. A septic system would need to be developed to serve the campground, which is anticipated to be feasible based on the size of the property.

Pacific Power is the electric power provider for the area, and currently serves the neighboring homes. Overhead power lines currently extend along Fort Thompson Road, Hunnel Road, and Hwy 97. It is expected that extending power to the site would be feasible.

All new impervious surfaces would need to be designed with on-site stormwater management. Based on the size and undeveloped nature of the property, it would be no issue to treat all stormwater with surface facilities (no Underground Injection Control (UIC) systems necessary (drywells, etc.)).

Cascade Natural Gas (CNG) is the gas service provider in Central Oregon. The nearest service line is over a mile to the south, near Deschutes Memorial Chapel and Gardens, and is not feasible to connect to.

Based on the Oregon Broadband Mapping Tool, there is wired service available at the site with max advertised download speeds of 1,000 Mbps.

Refer to figure 2.2 for available utilities and ROW delineations at the Fort Thompson Road site.

Drafter Road Site

The Drafter Road Site includes nine taxlots owned by Deschutes County along Drafter Road within the City of La Pine.

Potable water would be provided by the City of La Pine. There is an existing City water main running along Drafter Road that could be used to provide water to any of the taxlots.

The site would connect to the City of La Pine's sanitary sewer system. There is an existing sewer pipe that runs along the western boundary of all the lots on the west side of Drafter Road, and an existing sewer pipe that runs up Drafter Road, terminating near the southernmost County owned taxlot. There is one County owned taxlot located on the east side of Drafter Road (211036AD01000), located north of the existing Drafter Road sewer pipe. To provide sanitary sewer service to this tax lot, the existing sewer main within Drafter Road would need to be extended north.

Midstate Electric Co-op is the electric power provider for the area, and currently serves the neighboring homes and businesses. Overhead power lines currently extend along Drafter Road, and it is expected that providing power to the site would be relatively straightforward.

All new impervious surfaces would need to be designed with on-site stormwater management. Based on the City of La Pine lot size and setback requirements for the development, it is expected that all stormwater could be treated with surface facilities (no Underground Injection Control (UIC) systems necessary (drywells, etc.)).

Cascade Natural Gas (CNG) is the gas service provider in Central Oregon. We contacted CNG and there is no natural gas in the vicinity. The closest gas lines are south of Reed Rd, over 2.5 miles from the site.

Based on the Oregon Broadband Mapping Tool, there is wired service available at the site with max advertised download speeds of 1,000 Mbps.

Refer to figure 3.2 for available utilities and ROW delineations at the Drafter Road site.

Table 1: Summary of Utilities by Site

Site	Crooked River Ranch	Fort Thompson Road	Drafter Road
Water	Well	Avion Water or Well	City of La Pine
Sewer	Septic	Septic	City of La Pine
Power	Pacific Power	Pacific Power	Midstate Electric Co-op
Stormwater	Onsite surface treatment	Onsite surface treatment	Onsite surface treatment
Natural Gas	None available	None available	None available
Tele-communications	No wired service, fixed wireless available	Wired service available	Wired service available

Figure 1.1 Crooked River Ranch Utilities Site Map

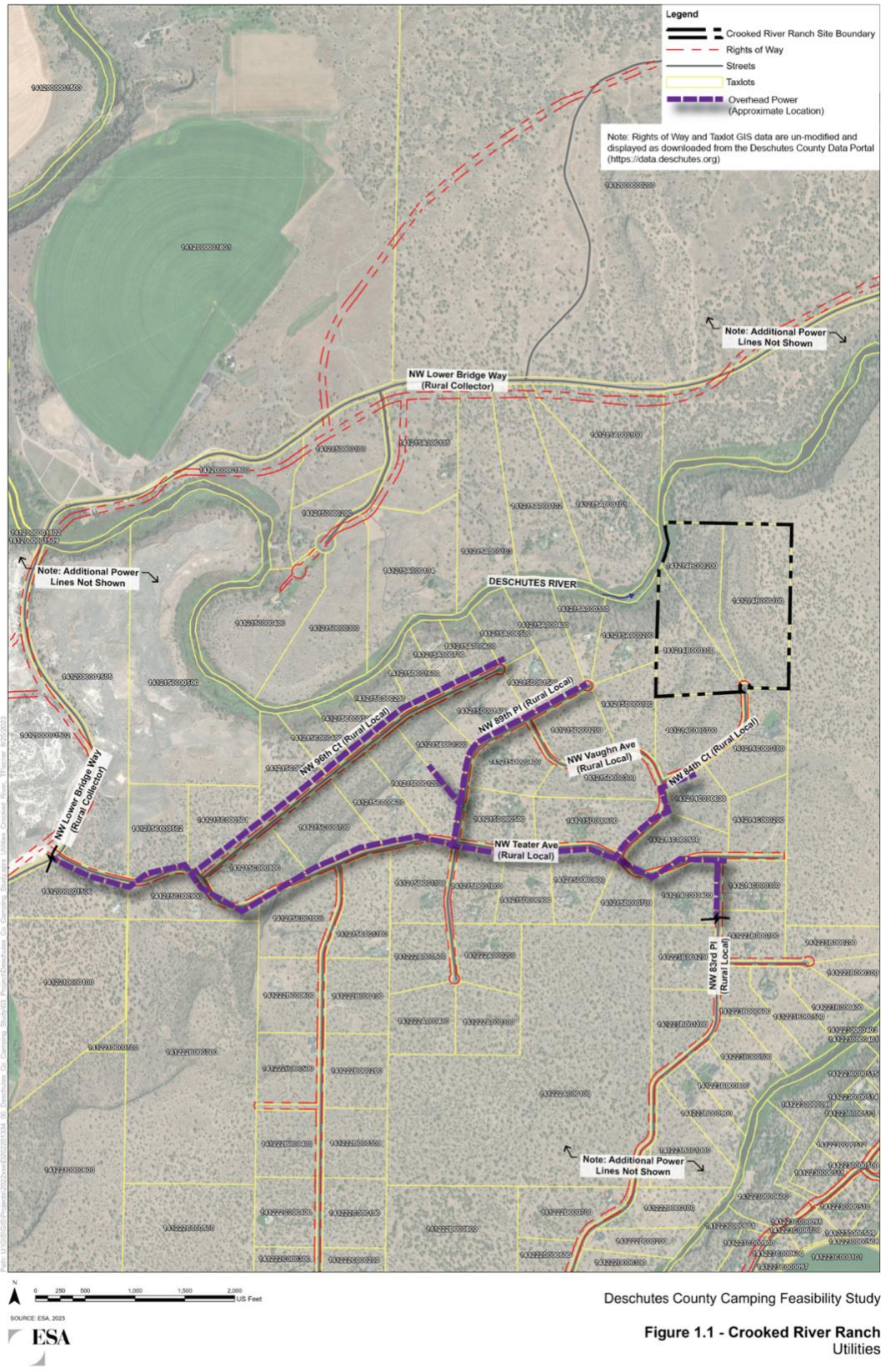


Figure 2.1 Fort Thompson Lane Utilities Site Map

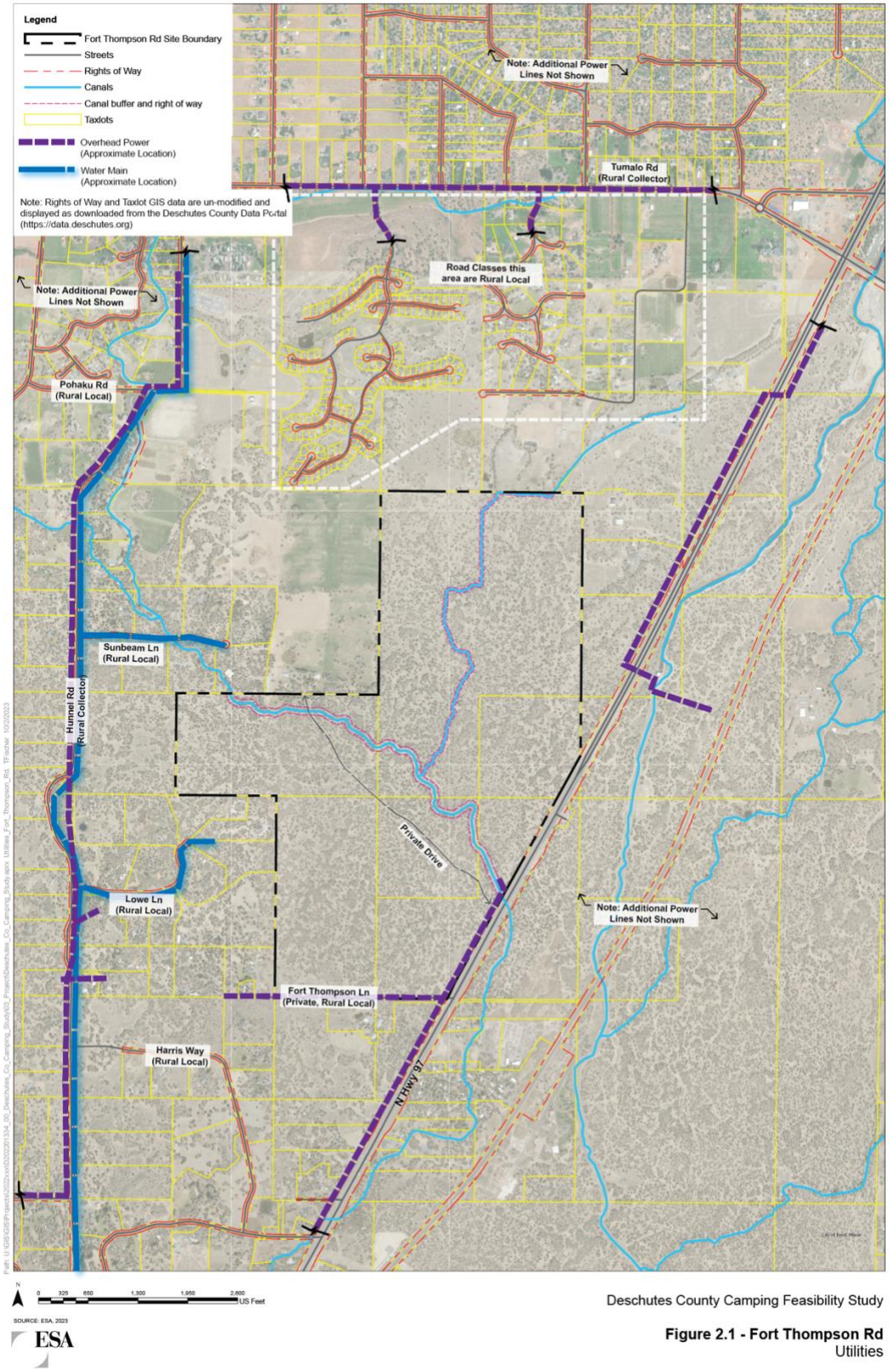
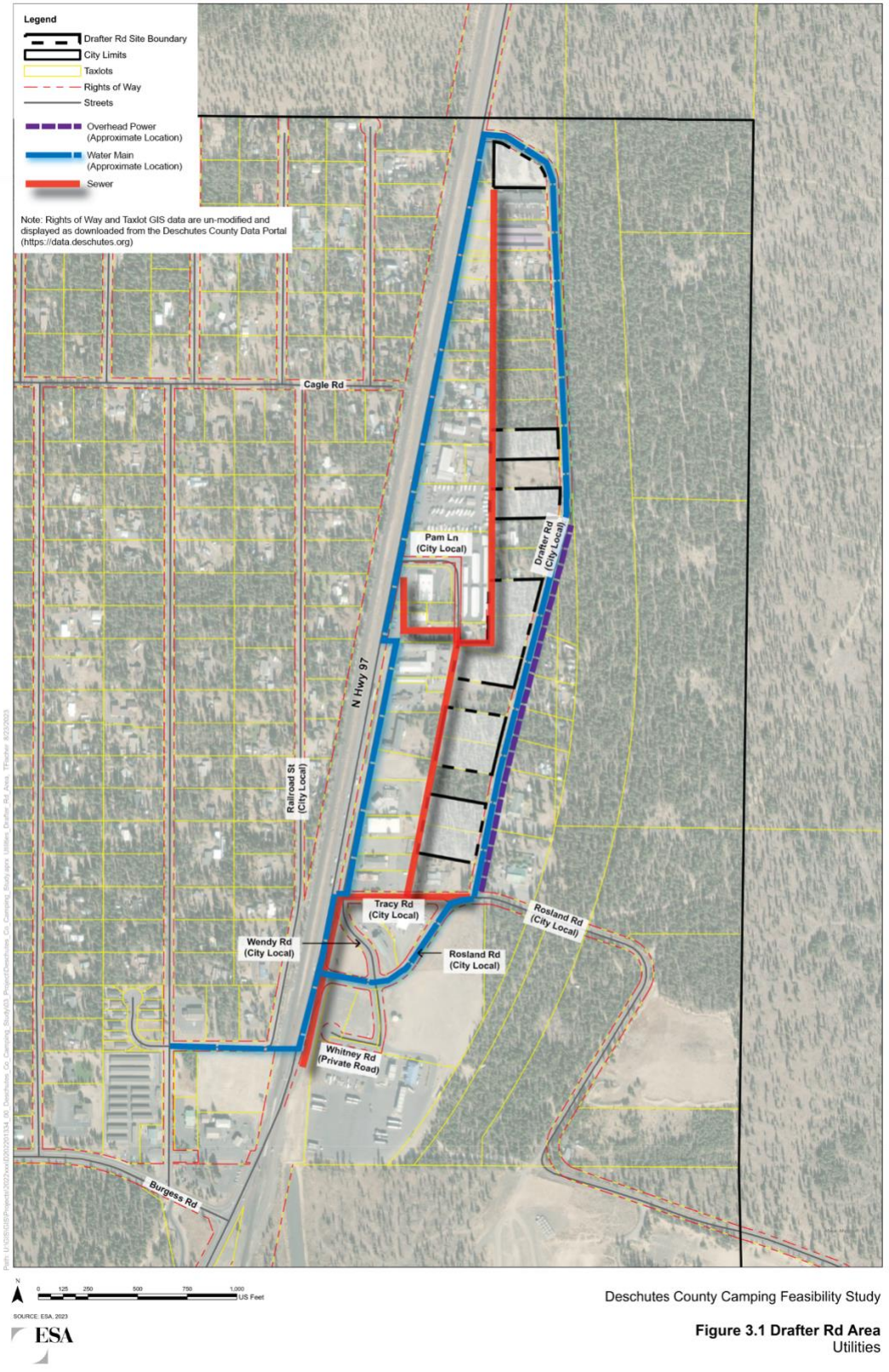


Figure 3.1 Drafter Road Utilities Site Map



Properties Title Reports and Findings

Appendix 3. Review of Title Reports for Land Use Constraints



DATE: **September 19, 2023**
TO:
FROM: Alicia Milligan and Amanda Ufheil-Somers, ECONorthwest
SUBJECT: Review of Land Use Constraints for Potential Deschutes Campgrounds

Overview

The parcels being considered for conversion to campgrounds or RV parking sites are subject to a number of easements related to utility infrastructure and their proximity to Highway 97. Additionally, the Crooked River and Drafter Road sites belong to subdivisions that are governed by covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs) which may present challenges to changing the land uses. The land use constraints for each site are described below and summarized in table format in Exhibit 1.

Crooked River

These taxlots are governed by the CC&Rs of a homeowners' association (HOA), the Lower Bridge Estates Property Owners' Association. The current CC&Rs prohibit uses that are not residential and require site-built construction of permanent homes. The bylaws have also been amended to exclude government owners within the association from counting toward the voting quorum to modify HOA policies. There are no specific deannexation provisions in the CC&Rs or bylaws of the HOA that specify how to remove parcels from the association. Deannexation may be possible through a vote of the HOA or legal action.

Drafter Road

The taxlots near Drafter Road belong to the LaPine Meadows North HOA. The CC&Rs of LaPine Meadows do not explicitly prohibit nonresidential uses, but define dwellings as permanent structures—including mobile homes—that have a minimum area of 700 square feet. The CC&Rs allow temporary structures with the proper county permits. These lots are also subject to utility easements for the construction and maintenance of electrical, water, and sanitary sewer service to the properties.

Fort Thompson Road

The taxlots near Fort Thompson Road have access and maintenance easements related to power transmission lines, Highway 97, and existing irrigation canals and ditches maintained by the Swalley Irrigation District.

There is also one access easement of note that applies to a private drive on taxlot 1612330000700. This drive provides access between Highway 97 and a residential property north of the taxlot, a distance of approximately 4,000 feet. The drive is currently maintained by the neighboring property owner. The easement grants the County the right to convert this private drive to a public right of way at which point the County will assume the costs of road maintenance.

Exhibit 1. Summary of Land Use Constraints by Taxlot and Type

Source: ECONorthwest summary of Deschutes County recorded documents

	Utility Easements	Other Easements	Land Use Restrictions
Crooked River			
141214B000100	-	-	Single-family residential only, site-built construction type
141214B000200			
141214B000300			
Drafter Road			
211036AD00800	20-foot along all lot lines for all utilities	-	Minimum residential building area of 700 SF, temporary structures allowed with county permits
211036AD00900	10-foot along western lot line for sewer district		
211036AD02800	10-foot along eastern lot line for sewer district		
211036AD03000			
211036DB02700	10-foot along western lot line for sewer district		
211036DB03100			
211036DB03300			
Fort Thompson Road			
1612330000700	-	1) Irrigation canal access and maintenance 2) Road access from Hwy 97 to property to the north	-
1612340000400	-	Irrigation canal access and maintenance	-
1612340000800	-	35-foot buffer from Hwy 97	-
1712040000100	30-foot easement for power transmission lines along southern lot line	-	-

Memos:

FANs Community Perspectives

Appendix 4. FANs Community Perspectives

To: Deschutes County Commissioners

From: Robin Galloway, President, Friends and Neighbors of the Deschutes Canyon Area (FANs)

Jeff Scheetz, Stewardship Coordinator, FANs

Date: July 18, 2023

Re: Developing a County Campground in the Lower Bridge Area of the Middle Deschutes River

This spring FANs became aware of the feasibility study that the County is conducting that will assess the viability and desirability of developing a campground on 50 acres of County land on the west side of the Deschutes River off Lower Bridge Way.

FANs is supportive of the idea that the County would provide additional recreational opportunities in the area. We have worked closely with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Prineville District on BLM property off Lower Bridge Way for over ten years as a part of FANs stewardship program.

Upon learning of the County's interest, we have some concerns about the suitability of the site for a campground. FANs members Jeff Scheetz and Marilynne Keyser invited Commissioner Chang to the property to review the terrain, existing vegetation, and current patterns of use and conducted a walking tour on June 25, 2023. Following up on this discussion, we would like to suggest an alternative concept for providing camping and expanded recreation opportunities in this area.

Our involvement with BLM has produced extensive knowledge of the condition and history of the area, including many years of neglect and abuse. Major trash clean-ups and attempts to curb abuse through signage have dominated our efforts to restore the natural beauty of the Deschutes River Wild and Scenic River (W&SR) segment in the area. Our partnership with BLM has resulted in a renewed effort by the BLM to properly manage the land. An integrated travel management plan addressing signage, kiosks, barriers to illegal entry, and law enforcement response has recently been proposed. Recent local changes in BLM leadership make us hopeful that BLM will respond favorably to the recommendations provided by FANs.

Consistent with FANs mission of “preserving and restoring the wild landscapes of the middle Deschutes and lower Crooked Rivers,” we urge you to consider the following in making any decisions about the location of a county campground near Lower Bridge Way:

Some public land has received less human impact over the years and maintains significant natural character which should be preserved. Previously abused land should be restored to some standards set by the land manager. Recovering some natural qualities by undoing historical damage is a worthy effort.

Public education through managed access and responsible recreation will hopefully mitigate current abuse. Experiencing the natural beauty of the area could result in public appreciation and foster conservation efforts.

Accordingly, FANs does not support the development of the 50 acre county parcel because of its largely undisturbed natural state. The parcel is bordered on two of four sides by BLM property designated as W&SR. The terrain is mostly "hilly" with several minor drainages, and only about 10 acres are level enough for a drive-in campground. Additionally, the entire piece is also designated W&SR and, therefore, subject to some county, state and federal restrictions on use. This river section is classified by the state as a scenic river. It is likely that the local private landowners (residents of Lower Bridge Estates) would not support an overnight campground project even if these other restrictions were resolved.

We believe that a more suitable location for such a campground project would be a 50 acre parcel in the Steamboat Rock Recreational Area (SRRA) on the opposite side of the river south of Lower Bridge Way. This is about two miles east of the county property. This area has experienced misuse in the past such as illegal motor vehicle trespass, dumping, illegal camping, etc., but it is included in the proposed BLM plan for enhanced management and could provide a quality scenic camping experience if properly designed and managed.

Siting a campground there would resolve FANs concerns about the County’s 50 acres expressed above. Additionally, the terrain is much flatter and has better access for motor vehicles than the county parcel. Development costs should be significantly lower due to the favorable terrain. At this location, a hike to the river’s edge for spectacular views is less than a mile. A well-planned campground might consist of a drive-in section as well as a hike-in section for BLM-allowed dispersed camping. The SRRA currently supports hiking and equestrian trails and some authorized motor vehicle trails (Class I/III only) and the campground could be integrated into this trail network.

To address the cost concerns of procuring new property, we suggest that the County seek a land exchange with BLM. Since the proposed SRRA site is outside the W&SR segment, the previously-mentioned restrictions would not likely apply. To address the

timing considerations associated with an exchange, the county could pursue a conveyance agreement with BLM, in accordance with the Recreation & Public Purposes Act. Also note that BLM has assigned a land tenure classification of "retention with the option to exchange" to the proposed area.

FANs views a land exchange scenario as a "win-win" solution for all parties, and it fully supports our stewardship mission. We would be willing to advocate to our Congressional delegation and the BLM for such a land exchange or conveyance and campground development. Feel free to contact us for additional information or to tour the areas.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

CDD Review of Opportunities and Constraints

Appendix 5. CDD Memo - Review of Opportunities and Constraints



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deschutes County Property Management

FROM: Will Groves, Planning Manager

DATE: September 21, 2023

RE: ECONorthwest – Preliminary Study of Opportunities and Constraints for Deschutes County Campground Feasibility Study, dated August 31, 2023

The Community Development Department (CDD) has participated in a limited role in the County's RV Park/Campground Feasibility Study. This memo serves as a follow up to the meeting held on Monday, September 11, 2023, and is based on the information contained in the August 31, 2023 report prepared by ECONorthwest as well as independent research conducted by CDD staff.

As a disclaimer, please note this memo is a matter of first impression and is a general analysis of additional information to consider as part of the opportunities and constraints for the sites below. The information is an informal statement made in accordance with DCC 22.20.005 and shall not be deemed to constitute final County action effecting a change in the status of a person's property or conferring any rights, including any reliance rights, on any person.

Additional engagement with CDD is requested as these projects evolve.

I. Crooked River

- **Site Plan Review:** Any Conditional Use is also subject to Site Plan Review pursuant to DCC 18.124 and DCC 18.116. These applications would be submitted and processed concurrently. Site Plan Review addresses requirements including but not limited to site landscaping, visual impacts, preservation of natural features, safety, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design, on-site access and circulation, parking and transportation access.

- **Rimrock:** As noted in the report the Crooked River site and vicinity contain features that likely meet the definition of rimrock¹. It is important to note that property containing rimrock is subject to additional setback regulations contained in DCC 18.84.090 or 18.116.160.
- **Access:** Pursuant to DCC 18.128.320, a campground shall obtain direct access from a street or road designated as an arterial or collector. NW 84th Court is a local roadway and would not meet this requirement.
- **Proximity to Natural/Recreational Amenity:** OAR 660-033-0130 (19) requires campgrounds to be established on a site or contiguous to lands with a park or other outdoor natural amenity this is accessible for recreational use by the occupants of the campground. The subject property is near the Deschutes River, but it is not clear how access or recreational use could or would be provided given regulated wetland and floodplain constraints.

II. Fort Thompson

- **Site Plan Review:** Any Conditional Use is also subject to Site Plan Review pursuant to DCC 18.124 and DCC 18.116. These applications would be submitted and processed concurrently. Site Plan Review addresses requirements including but not limited to site landscaping, visual impacts, preservation of natural features, safety, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design, on-site access and circulation, parking and transportation access. The memo did not include reference to these code sections or required application.
- **Soils:** Per DCC 18.04.030, soil type 38B is not included in the definition of "high value farmland²." The memo references 38B as high-value farmland. The NRCS soil classifications are helpful, but a soil study would be needed to precisely identify soil types across the site.

¹ "Rimrock" means any ledge, outcropping or top or overlying stratum of rock, which forms a face in excess of 45 degrees, and which creates or is within the canyon of the following rivers and streams: (1) Deschutes River, (2) Crooked River, (3) Fall River (4) Little Deschutes River (5) Spring River (6) Paulina Creek (7) Whychus Creek and (8) Tumalo Creek. For the purpose of DCC Title 18, the edge of the rimrock is the uppermost rock ledge or outcrop of rimrock.

² "High-value farmland" means land in a tract composed predominantly of the following soils when they are irrigated: Agency loam (2A and 2B), Agency sandy loam (1A), Agency-Madras complex (3B), Buckbert sandy loam (23A), Clinefalls sandy loam (26A), Clovkamp loamy sand (27A and 28A), Deschutes sandy loam (31A, 31B and 32A), Deschutes-Houstake complex (33B), Deskamp loamy sand (36A and 36B), Deskamp sandy loam (37B), Era sandy loam (44B and 45A), Houstake sandy loam (65A, 66A and 67A), Iris silt loam (68A), Lafollette sandy loam (71A and 71B), Madras loam (87A and 87B), Madras sandy loam (86A and 86B), Plainview sandy loam (98A and 98B), Redmond sandy loam (104A), Tetherow sandy loam (150A and 150B) and Tumalo sandy loam (152A and 152B). In addition to the above described land, high-value farmland includes tracts growing specified perennials as demonstrated by the most recent aerial photography of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture taken prior to November 4, 1993. For purposes of this definition, "specified perennials" means perennials grown for market or research purposes including, but not limited to, nursery stock, berries, fruits, nuts, Christmas trees or vineyards but not including seed crops, hay, pasture or alfalfa.

- Campground Open Space Requirement: Pursuant to DCC 18.128.320, 65 percent of a parcel developed as a campground shall be retained as open space. The study states the open space requirement would be met by adjacent high value farmland areas.

It is Staff's understanding that the open space requirement associated with a campground development must also be satisfied by non high-value farmland. It is also important to note DCC 18.16.040(A)(3) pertaining to "least suitable" siting standard as it relates to the subject site.

- Roads. DCC 18.128.320(D)(6) does not allow vehicular or pedestrian access out of the campground, except for the access roadway serving the campground. The potential vehicular connection to Hunnell Road would not be permissible under this criterion.
- Proximity to Bend Urban Growth Boundary: OAR 660-033-0130 (19) - Private campgrounds shall not be allowed within three miles of an urban growth boundary (UGB) unless an exception is approved pursuant to ORS 197.732 and OAR chapter 660, division 4. Any application on this property would require a Goal Exception. The outcome of this process is unknown and may add significant time, risk, and cost to the process.
- Proximity to Natural/Recreational Amenity: OAR 660-033-0130 (19) requires campgrounds to be established on a site or contiguous to lands with a park or other outdoor natural amenity this is accessible for recreational use by the occupants of the campground. Based on surrounding lands, it is not clear how this location would meet this requirement. However, it is staff's understanding that this standard may be met by the establishment of onsite park or natural amenity.

These comments below pertain generally to both sites:

- ORS 446: The campground shall be licensed as a tourist facility by the State Department of Health as specified in ORS 446, unless operated by a public entity, timber company or private utility.
- OAR Chapter 918, Division 650; Recreation Parks and Organizational Camps: Staff includes reference to these standards as these would need to be addressed as part of any land use application.
- OAR Chapter 333, Division 31; Operation and Maintenance of Recreation Parks: Staff includes reference to these standards as these would need to be addressed as part of any land use application.
- OAR Chapter 333, Division 61; Drinking Water: Staff includes reference to these standards as these would need to be addressed as part of any land use application.

- Campground Signage: Signs associated with the campground must be reviewed and approved pursuant to Title 15, Chapter 15.08.

Potential Financing Sources

Appendix 6. Financial Grant Opportunities

Of the potential financial grant opportunities to develop a campground or RV park, the most promising options are a mix of federal, state, and local grants geared toward supporting outdoor recreation.

<https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/gra/pages/gra-overview.aspx>

Federal Grants

Land and Water Conservation Fund:

For development or acquisition of public outdoor facilities including trails, sports fields, playgrounds, picnic facilities, campgrounds, and park support facilities such as parking or restrooms. Project types include developing outdoor recreation activities and support facilities needed by the public for recreation activities, including providing basic facilities and improvement of basic facilities. Eligible applicants include cities, counties, park and recreation districts, METRO, Indian Tribes, and Oregon State Agencies. The Land and Water Conservation Fund provides up to 50 percent project funding. Eligible matches include local budgeted funds, donated funds, and the value of property, equipment, materials, and/or labor.

Grant website: <https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/GRA/Pages/GRA-lwcf.aspx>

Recreational Trails Program: The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federally funded grant program administrated by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. Since 1993, Oregon has funded over 500 projects with RTP funds to develop, improve, or expand motorized and non-motorized trails and their facilities.

Eligible applicants include local, state, federal, Tribal, and other governments. Non-profits registered with the Oregon Secretary of State for at least three years prior to application may also be eligible to apply.

Eligible projects include:

- Construction of new trails
- Major rehabilitation of existing trails
- Development or improvement of trailhead or other support facilities
- Acquisition of land or easements for the purpose of trail development
- Safety and education projects

Eligible trail types include motorized (OHV, snowmobile), non-motorized (hiker, biker, equestrian), and water trails.

Funding: Oregon's annual RTP allocation is approximately \$1.6 million. At least 30% of funds are set aside for motorized trail projects. The minimum grant request amount is \$10,000. There is a recommended grant request maximum of \$150,000 for non-motorized proposals and no

maximum for motorized proposals. Applicants must commit to at least 20% match. Match can include volunteer labor or other donations.

Grant website: <https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/GRA/Pages/GRA-rtp.aspx>

US EDA-Economic Development Administration: Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Promoting America’s Tourist Economies.

Through this ARPA Tourism NOFO, EDA aims to assist communities and regions in recovery from the coronavirus pandemic’s significant negative impact on the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors.

EDA’s ARPA Tourism NOFO is designed to provide a wide-range of financial assistance to communities and regions to rebuild and strengthen their travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industry through various infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Under this NOFO, EDA solicits applications under the authority of the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, which is flexible and responsive to the economic development needs and priorities of local and regional stakeholders.

EDA’s travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation grants will be delivered through two components: (1) State Tourism Grants and (2) EDA Competitive Tourism Grants.

Grant website: <https://www.eda.gov/funding/programs/american-rescue-plan/travel-tourism>

State Grants

County Opportunity Grant Program (COGP):

Awarded to counties to develop, improve or plan county-operated camping facilities. The County Opportunity Grant Program (COGP) is funded by a portion of recreational vehicle registration fees, and is administrated by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. Typically, the program awards about \$800,000 annually to qualified projects. The program has benefitted Oregon counties since 1983. Project types include:

Acquisition of property for public camping facilities, including new areas or additions to existing parks

Development of new campgrounds, adding onto existing campgrounds or developing new support facilities such as restrooms, parking lots, landscaping, and sewer/water/electrical systems. Potential projects include building picnic facilities, playground areas, trails and other facilities that enhance an overnight camping experience.

Rehabilitating grounds or structures to meet the access requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Potential projects include

remodeling restrooms and shower facilities, campsites and replacing sewer/water/electrical systems in overnight campgrounds.

Planning – Planning for future development of overnight camping facilities, including feasibility studies and park master plans.

Funding amounts are dependent upon county residents population and would require a 25% local match for counties with fewer than 30,000 residents, and 50% local match for counties with more than 30,000 residents.

Grant website: <https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/GRA/Pages/GRA-cogp.aspx>

Local Grants

Local Government Grant Program:

The Local Government Grant Program (LGGP) is a voter approved, State lottery funded grant program administrated by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. Typically, the program awards over \$5 million annually to qualified projects, and has awarded over \$60 million in grant funding since the program began in 1999. For public outdoor facilities including trails, sports fields, playgrounds, picnic facilities, campgrounds, and park support facilities such as parking or restrooms.

Eligible applicants include Local government agencies that are obligated by state law to provide public recreation facilities.

This includes:

- Cities (municipal corporations)
- Counties (political subdivisions)
- Metropolitan Service Districts
- Park and recreation districts
- Port districts

Eligibility is limited to public outdoor park and recreation areas and facilities. These areas and facilities must be open and accessible to the public-at-large.

Project Types:

Eligible projects involve land acquisition, development, and major rehabilitation projects that are consistent with the outdoor recreation goals and objectives contained in the [Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#).

Acquisition – Acquiring land for public outdoor recreation areas, including new park land or additions to existing parks, wildlife areas, and open spaces.

Development – Developing basic outdoor recreation facilities including sports and playfields, picnic facilities, camping facilities or interpretive facilities. Other potential projects include roads, parking areas and restroom buildings.

Rehabilitation – Repairing, restoring or reconstruction on normal wear and tear of facilities. Rehabilitation projects are also those that help meet the access requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Planning and Feasibility Studies

Preliminary studies undertaken to determine and document a project's viability such as a city developing a plan as to where future parks will be located.

The results are used to make decisions whether to proceed with the project, its public need and benefit, how many, locations, activities and likely users, etc. It is an analysis of possible alternative solutions and a recommendation on the best alternative.

The above definition's intent is to provide help for communities who do not have a park master plan in place or whose plan or studies are significantly outdated.

Match Criteria:

The eligible match by the Applicant may include local budgeted funds, local agency labor or equipment, federal revenue sharing, other eligible grants, state and county inmate labor, donated funds, the value of private donated property, equipment, materials, labor, the value of land acquired within the past six year period, cost of appraisals, pre-development costs within the past two year period (cannot exceed 15 percent of total project costs), or any combination thereof.

The Local Government Grant Program match requirements:

At least 50 percent match required for-

- Cities and districts over 25,000 population
- Counties over 50,000 population

At least 40 percent match required for-

- Cities and districts with a population between 5,000 and 25,000
- Counties with a population between 30,000 and 50,000

At least 20 percent match required for-

- Cities and districts under 5,000 population
- Counties under 30,000 population.

Large, Small and Planning Grants:

Annual grant funds are available upon Legislative approval of OPRD's budget. Project funding depends on the amount of money available and the project's standing on the small or large project priority list.

- Small Grants – projects with a maximum \$75,000 grant request. Up to fifteen percent (15%) of funds are available for these projects.
- Large Grant Requests - Other than for land acquisitions, projects with a maximum \$750,000 grant request. Applicants may request up to \$1,000,000 for land acquisition projects.
- Small Community Planning Grants – Maximum awards for planning grants will be \$40,000

RV Parks and Campground Research Sources:

- Oregon state parks campgrounds - <https://oregonstateparks.reserveamerica.com/unifSearchResults.do>
- Campgrounds and RV parks in and around Bend - <https://www.visitbend.com/where-to-stay/rv-campgrounds-parks/>
- Campgrounds and RV parks in and around Redmond - <https://www.visitredmondoregon.com/lodging-in-redmond-oregon/rv-parks-camping/>
- Crook County Campgrounds - <https://www.ccprd.org/camping>
- Reservation.gov for federal campgrounds
- Creekside Campground at Sisters - <https://www.ci.sisters.or.us/creekside-campground>
- Central Oregon page for RV parks and campgrounds - <https://visitcentraloregon.com/lodging/rv-campgrounds/>



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