



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deschutes County Board of Commissioners

FROM: Haleigh King, AICP, Senior Planner

DATE: July 24, 2025

SUBJECT: McKenzie Meadow Village Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Zone Change – Work Session

The Board of County Commissioners (“Board”) will conduct a Work Session on July 29, 2025, in preparation for a public hearing on August 6, 2025, to consider a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Zone Change (file nos. 247-24-0000839-PA, 840-ZC) affecting a total of 58 acres adjacent to the City of Sisters.

I. BACKGROUND

The applicant and property owner, McKenzie Meadow Village LLC, is requesting a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to re-designate the subject properties from Forest to Rural Residential Exception Area and a Zoning Map Amendment to rezone the properties from Forest Use 2 (F-2) to Multiple Use Agricultural – 10 Acre Minimum (MUA-10). The application request includes a Goal 4 (Forest Lands) exception request.

The applicant states that the purpose of this request is to ultimately be brought into the City of Sisters Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) so the applicant can develop a needed housing residential development that includes 30% NET developed units that qualify as affordable housing to meet the City's future housing needs. However, this application request does not include a request to expand the City of Sisters UGB, nor does it include or review a specific development plan under the proposed County zoning designation or any future City zoning designation.

The applicant asserts that the properties qualify for a Goal 4 exception and do not meet the definition of “forest lands” pursuant to State Statute. The applicant provided a supplementary soil study that identifies Class 7 soils on a majority of the property and none of the trees inventoried are considered members of Forest Productivity Class 1 to 4, which are trees considered to be commercial or merchantable in their growth habit. There is nothing in the record indicating the subject property has a known history of commercial timber operations.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

As of the date of this memo, Staff received six public comments opposing the proposal in the time period after the Hearing's Officer Recommendation was issued. Comments received after the date of this memo will be included in their entirety in the application record.

Staff received over 150 public comments from neighbors, stakeholders, local interest groups and public agencies related to the April 7, 2025, Hearing's Officer hearing and proceedings. Staff received comments both in favor of the application and those in opposition.

Comments received in support reference the City of Sisters' ongoing UGB expansion process and the subject property's logical inclusion due to proximity to urban services, "moderate" wildfire hazard risk, and potential to provide affordable housing opportunities. Comments received in opposition note concerns with potential traffic impacts, availability of groundwater, wildfire risk, compatibility with and preservation of open space and forested land, and impacts to local wildlife and plant species.

On the day of the initial hearing, Staff received an agency comment from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development ("DLCD") raising several issues but primarily focused on the criteria for a Goal 4 exception request and insufficient evidence in the record to support such a request. DLCD also states the soil survey was not reviewed by DLCD pursuant to Oregon Administrative Rules. Lastly, DLCD emphasizes the application cannot rely on a separate UGB expansion effort as a basis for redesignation.

Approximately 15 people, not including the applicant's team, provided verbal testimony during the hearing with additional written testimony received during the open record periods.

III. HEARINGS OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

The Deschutes County Hearings Officer held a public hearing on April 7, 2025. The written record was left open for a total of 28 days to allow for new evidence and testimony and rebuttal evidence with an additional seven (7) days for the applicant's final legal argument. DLCD did not provide any additional comments during the written open record period.

On June 25, 2025, the Hearings Officer issued a recommendation for approval of the proposed Plan Amendment and Zone Change evaluating compliance with all applicable review criteria.

IV. BOARD CONSIDERATION

As the property includes land designated for forest use and a request for a Goal 4 exception to the Statewide Planning Goals, Deschutes County Code 22.28.030(C) requires the application to be heard *de novo* before the Board, regardless of the recommendation of the Hearings Officer. Per DCC Section 22.20.040(D), the review of the proposed quasi-judicial Plan Amendment and Zone Change is not subject to the 150-day review period typically associated with land use decisions. The record is

available for inspection at the Planning Division and at the following website:
<https://www.deschutes.org/mckenziemeadowvillage>.

V. NEXT STEPS

The Board will conduct a public hearing on this matter on August 6, 2025.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Area Map
2. Hearings Officer Recommendation