

# Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities – Bend

## Community Leader Interview Summary

### February 2023

#### **Background and Purpose**

The Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission adopted the Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) rules on July 21, 2022. As part of these new rules, local governments are required to study, identify, and designate climate-friendly areas by December 31, 2025. The CFEC rules provide the following definition of climate friendly areas:

*“Climate-friendly areas” are intended to be places where people can meet most of their daily needs without having to drive by having housing located near a mix of jobs, businesses, and services. This means that some cities and urban areas across Oregon may see a higher intensity of development over time.”*

In Bend, this will most likely occur adjacent to downtown, along corridors or in existing mixed-use zones where high-quality pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure can be implemented. For people living in Climate-Friendly areas, most housing, jobs, businesses, services, and schools could be accessed by walking, riding a bicycle, or taking a bus. The goal of these rules is to build cities in a way that reduce the need for a vehicle. Fewer cars on the road means less carbon emissions contributing to climate change.

The first phase of the process is to study and determine potential locations of climate-friendly areas by the end of 2023. The second phase is to adopt development standards for these areas by the end of 2025.

Due to the impacts that potential, redevelopment may have on gentrification and displacement in certain areas, the project includes a strong focus on ensuring the voices of historically underserved and vulnerable communities are centered in the engagement process.

The first step is conducting interviews with key community leaders to better understand community priorities and criteria for choosing these areas. These interviews will inform the activities we conduct with the community over the next two years to identify potential locations for these “climate-friendly areas” and discuss the burdens and benefits of each.

#### **Key Themes**

The initial round of community engagement offered feedback to help inform the upcoming engagement efforts. The stakeholder interviewees were asked two categories of questions: general engagement and Climate Friendly Area specific discussion. The following highlights some key findings from these conversations:

- Housing affordability is critical in ensuring Climate Friendly Areas are equitable.

- Transportation options and accessibility should be prioritized when designating a Climate Friendly Area.
- Groceries, medical services, and daycare facilities for lower income households would best serve the community in these designated areas.
- Designating these areas could provide the community opportunities to connect with one another, and potentially create more inclusive options including higher density affordable housing alongside market-rate.

### **Interview Summary**

- **What are potential priorities or criteria for your community that should be considered when choosing an area to be designated as a “Climate Friendly Area”?**
  - Housing availability at all levels of income.
  - On a bus route.
  - Easy accessibility to services for all income groups.
  - Affordable housing.
  - Multi-generational housing.
  - Transit, biking/walking paths, and reducing travel time.
  - Affordable housing.
  - Creating a space for folks to be able to access services without a vehicle.
  - Walkability.
  - Ensuring designation of areas does not result in exclusionary practices.
  - Important to consider connectivity between centers. Bikeable to key destinations.
  - More public gathering places, parks, and childcare.
  - Better equity in planning for new neighborhoods and places.
  - Housing that is affordable to lower income levels is top priority.
  - Better accessibility and safe connections (example of eastside to downtown). Snow on sidewalks makes walking dangerous/inaccessible.
  - Electric bike stations expanded to other neighborhoods.
  - There is too much able-ist thinking.
  - There is good access to affluent neighborhoods but lacking easy access for lower income areas.
  - When there is snow transit is on Sunday schedule and people can't get to work.
  - Invest more in green energy solutions, solar, Wi-Fi hubs. Consider more innovative solutions.
- **What services, amenities, or development types would best serve your community? What does the community need from these designated areas?**
  - Grocery stores for lower income households.
  - Medical for lower income households.
  - Affordable daycare.
  - Parks and green spaces, free community space.
  - Shopping, food, and amenities that are not offered online.

- Mixed-use housing with groceries below housing.
- Childcare.
- Think about why people need to get out of the house (work, childcare, groceries).
- Multi-family access to groceries is important.
- Trash and water services for homeless community members.
- Increase transportation options.
- More dense, mixed-use development where people can live, work, and shop.
- Transit-oriented design and pedestrian only areas.
- Housing with parks is needed. Safer routes to parks. One car and no car families need to be able to access transit, parks, grocery stores on sidewalks with safe crossings.
- **What do you see/think are some of the benefits of mixed-use, walkable, compact development for your community?**
  - Reducing stigma of people in low-income housing if it is better mixed in with other income levels.
  - Generational housing and daycare options.
  - Ways to connect groups that don't necessarily connect otherwise.
  - Areas for people to get exercise and be outside.
  - This type of density is something that could benefit homeless folks in terms of being able to get what they need without walking as far.
  - Increase of safety and reduction of emissions.
  - Quality of life.
  - Denser housing near services that are a short, walkable distance. This would enable a car-less and community-oriented environment.
  - Housing would appeal to younger, new to Bend and provide options. Be sure to provide room for families and extended families. Consider shared storage for bikes, sleds, and other needs.
  - Storage for houseless and potentially shared kitchens.
- **What do you see/think are some of the burdens of this type of development on your community?**
  - If this is another high-end west end development, it won't change anything.
  - Use this as an opportunity to break the cycle of focusing on affluent development.
  - Convincing people that this type of affordable housing is beneficial.
  - Lack of connectivity to other parts of Central Oregon (without a personal vehicle).
  - Think meaningfully about how this type of development will impact folks that will be displaced.
  - The risk that these areas become oases within the community versus a model for the surrounding communities.
  - Apartments are all high-end/expensive.
  - Need to ensure does not spiral into gentrification.

- Lack of space and parking can cause conflict with street spaces, etc.
- Better pay for employees that must live further and further from jobs and lead to closures of local restaurants and retail (example of commuters from Prineville).
- Breweries need to pay for transit not parking.
- **What elements of this process might be of particular interest to your community?**
  - Where are these areas going to be?
  - What kind of development will this bring?
  - Being able to offer actual feedback on the areas proposed.
  - Engagement efforts based on the locations of the proposed areas.
  - Focus groups with homeless shelter providers and the folks they assist.
- **Who else should we talk to ensure an inclusive process?**
  - Environmental Center.
  - Neighborhood associations.
  - Neighbor Impact.
  - Including non-homeowners in the process.
  - Speak to people who would have interest in living or renting in these areas.
- **From the information we have shared today, what questions do you have, or do you think your community might have, about this new process for designating “climate-friendly areas” in Bend?**
  - Being completely forthcoming about this process early.
  - This will not be on the radar of people trying to make ends meet. But, if this process can offer better paying jobs, affordable housing, and better livability people will be engaged.
  - How much will the housing cost?
  - What are the amenities of these areas?
- **Would you or another representative of your organization want to be involved in a focus group? We are offering compensation and other accommodations to participants.**
  - Yes, reach out to FAN.
  - Habitat for Humanity staff may be interested.
  - Yes, reach out to COIC but there are some funding constraints.
    - Homeless leadership coalition meets first Friday of each month.
- **How can we make sure we have information that is easy to understand, access and easy for your community to provide comments about?**
  - Have casual conversations with people about what is going on.
  - Being clear about how this impacts communities.
  - Having a well-thought-out plan regarding next steps and impacts.
- **Any other ideas, suggestions, or recommendations as we plan for engagement on climate-friendly areas?**
  - Please keep FAN involved.
  - More details and information that can help people visualize this.
  - Financial incentive for folks that have lived experiences (homeless).
  - Include COCC students and Catholic Spanish Ministries.