

Meeting Minutes

Joint Meeting of the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners and the Bend City Council

September 29, 2025

Barnes Sawyer Rooms, Deschutes County Services Building
1300 NW Wall Street, Bend, Oregon

Joint Meeting of the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners and the Bend City Council

1. Called to order at 4:02 p.m. by roll call

Present from the Bend City Council (“the Council”) were Mayor Melanie Kebler, Mayor Pro Tem Megan Perkins, Councilor Gina Franzosa, Councilor Ariel Méndez, Councilor Mike Riley, Councilor Megan Norris, and Councilor Steve Platt.

Present from the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners (“the Board”) were Commissioner Tony DeBone (Chair), Commissioner Patti Adair (Vice Chair), and Commissioner Phil Chang.

2. Temporary Safe Stay (TSSA) Update

- a. Housing Focused Case Management
- b. Overview of Rules and Enforcement
- c. Joint City/County Strategy
- d. Gales’ property update

Presentation by City of Bend Real Estate, Facilities and Housing Director Matt Stuart, City of Bend Senior Program Manager of Houselessness Solutions Amy Fraley and Deschutes County Deputy County Administrator Erik Kropp.

Stuart introduced the presentation and discussion topic of whether the Council and the Board want to maintain or extend the TSSA closure date of December 31, 2026.

Kropp provided a brief history of the creation of the TSSA, including a map of current use and a timeline of past City and County events leading to its establishment. Kropp reminded the Council and



the Board of the intent of the TSSA, which was to mitigate and improve the health and safety risks associated with unmanaged camping, and to provide improved sanitation services and case management to facilitate people camping at Juniper Ridge moving into safer shelter or housing. The intent was to reduce the TSSA's area by approximately 50% in Year 2 (2026) and fully close the area on or before December 31, 2026.

Kropp outlined continued efforts by the City, the County and partners, including hygiene stations, security patrol, infrastructure protection, fuels and fire mitigation, housing focused case management, and the adoption and enforcement of rules and guidelines.

Fraley discussed the level of engagement between clients and houseless services providers and highlighted that the level was much higher than anticipated. Fraley shared that 241 unique individuals have worked with community partners to build rapport and engage in services. Fraley shared August 2025 data from the Case Management Dashboard, which can be found on the City of Bend website. Fraley shared the expenditures to date of the grant-funded service providers.

Fraley shared metrics regarding the population and transitional needs of the campers:

- ~191 campers/143 camps as of 9/16/2025
 - The TSSA has seen a decrease in population for the third consecutive week.
- 70 campers have current Housing Equity Assessment Tool (HEAT) assessments as of 9/16/2025
- City-supported shelters are at 95% utilization for the current calendar year
- 5-6 families with 8-10 minor children currently reside in the TSSA

Fraley shared estimates on the shelter and housing needs of the residents. Fraley stated that this estimate was based on anecdotal information and conversations, and that data and responses were limited due to lack of available housing options. Staff estimated that:

- 25% of people (48 people) may qualify for permanent supportive housing
- 25% of people may wish to access safe parking (24-35 additional spaces)
- 25% of people may wish to access non-congregate shelter beds or motel (28 motel rooms)
- 25% of people may wish to access a managed camp (48 spaces)

Stuart reviewed the TSSA Rules and Regulations, adopted by the Council and the Board. Stuart stated that enforcement implemented a "remedy and removal" system in which notices of remedy are issued, and if no remedy occurs, a removal notice is issued. Certain violations are grounds for immediate removal. Stuart shared that 10 notices to remedy have been issued since August 2025, and 6 individuals were removed from the site. Stuart stated that population was the biggest challenge for the TSSA and attributed the population growth to the closure of China Hat. Additional challenges included compliance and enforcement of rules due to limited staffing, land management costs (including hygiene, security, trash, area closures and cleanup, staffing management, and enforcement costs), and lack of housing and shelter options to transition into.

Kropp outlined Deschutes County expenses, broken down by water, portable toilets and handwashing stations, dumpsters, security, general cleanup, and miscellaneous categories. The total spent since FY24 was about \$600,000, and the two highest categories were general cleanup (\$250,000) and security (\$128,000).

Stuart outlined next steps in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the City and the County:

- Increase compliance and enforcement efforts; remove individuals and camps that do not remedy or comply with the Rules and Regulations.
- Continue to support efforts for safer shelter and/or housing to increase the number of successful exits and transitions in the area.
- Coordinate a closure plan for the area in or before December 2026.

Stuart provided next steps for a December 31, 2026, closure:

- Aim for full closure October/November 2026 (provides a buffer before the December 31, 2026, deadline)
- Phased closure with noticing beginning in March 2026
- Close a section every 60-90 days between May and October/November 2026
- Start with area at the north end adjacent to Central Oregon Irrigation District (COID) infrastructure (section 1)

Stuart provided next steps for a closure extension:

- Extend closure into 2027 (date TBD)
- Reduce TSSA area by 50% in 2026
- Phased closure of sections 1 and 2 (northern area, located around COID hydro facility) beginning in March 2026, complete by July 2026
- Allow individuals/camps located in sections 1 and 2 to relocate to sections 3 and 4 (southern area) until the TSSA is fully closed

Discussion

Mayor Kebler summarized general concern from the Council regarding where campers would go following a full closure of the TSSA. Mayor Kebler summarized information received at a prior City Council Meeting and reported positively that service providers are engaging with residents and provider coordination is working well, but heard concerns around the COID canal. The Council provided general support to explore an extension.

Councilor Méndez asked if staff had looked at costs of displacement around increased public safety calls.

Stuart responded that staff could estimate costs to house displaced residents, but did not have costs associated with potential increases in calls for public safety. Stuart noted that because the City knows where people are, fuels mitigations efforts and the ability to respond to fires have been more successful, which is a cost savings, and knowing where people are is helpful to service providers.

Commissioner Chang stated that he had received a presentation from the National Vehicle Residency Collective at the Coordinated Homeless Response Office. The Collective presented vehicle residency as a first strategy rather than a last option. Commissioner Chang recognized that managed vehicle camping does require cost resources and management but provides residency opportunities for hundreds at a relatively low cost. Commissioner Change recommended considering a vehicle-based shelter system as a potential option.

Chair DeBone expressed support for committing to a December 31, 2026, closure. Chair DeBone felt that postponing the closure by any amount would result in at least another year of camping in the TSSA due to seasonal challenges and encouraged closure because the TSSA is located along a very dangerous, high-speed highway, land use doesn't allow for this type of use, and there is not a plan for long-term funding.

Mayor Kebler asked what the County was doing to create more resources or housing options. Mayor Kebler noted that some housing/shelter projects are in the works, but did not think they would be ready for a phased closure beginning in March 2026.

Chair DeBone responded that the County does not have options and would appreciate support from the Governor and Legislature regarding the state land use system, which restricts options.

Mayor Pro Tem Perkins reminded the Council and the Board that when the TSSA was established, the City and County agreed it wouldn't be perfect and that they would need to be nimble. Mayor Pro Tem Perkins highlighted that many things are working: rules compliance, the remedy/removal system, fires mitigation, transitions to safer housing, and high engagement with service providers. Mayor Pro Tem Perkins expressed concerns that if the TSSA closed as scheduled, the City and County will have to start all over again somewhere else. Mayor Pro Tem Perkins stressed that 191 people are at risk of being removed, retraumatized, and will need to start over again and added that City shelters are at 95% utilization rate for the coming year and there are no other places for TSSA residents to go.

Councilor Riley expressed concern that TSSA occupants have no where else to go. Councilor Riley stated that the Council has received lots of emails from the community voicing concerns about impacts on business owners, neighborhoods and increased fire risk if the TSSA is closed and campers have no housing alternatives. Councilor Riley felt that the City and County need time to adapt and provide places to go in conjunction with the closure. Councilor Riley suggested closing 50% and keeping another portion open for a longer period of time.

Vice Chair Adair asked for more information on how many TSSA campers have moved on to more permanent housing.

Fraley responded that the TSSA has seen 26 residents move on to more permanent housing.

Councilor Franzosa felt strongly that the TSSA area was unsafe in terms of access and supported the closure deadline of December 31, 2026. Councilor Franzosa also felt it was important to stick to the deadline given to the community, but stressed the need to develop a plan to transition everyone out safely. Councilor Franzosa suggested using the Juniper Ridge Urban Renewal Area for a long-term vehicle area or managed camp, but was not sure if land use would allow that.

Councilor Méndez agreed that there are multiple problematic elements of the TSSA, but felt that closing 50% would mitigate some of these issues. Councilor Méndez felt that safety related to the highway would not be resolved by a partial closure, but emergency access could be mitigated if the area was reduced.

Councilor Franzosa agreed that some problems could be mitigated through a partial closure, but expressed concern over winter weather and would like a managed camp to be located closer to services.

Mayor Pro Tem Perkins did not agree that service providers have access issues.

Fraley responded that at times there are concerns from service providers regarding access, but the overall response from service providers is that the TSSA is working well in moving people to permanent housing.

Chair DeBone expressed concern over the safety of the location.

Commissioner Chang agreed that the TSSA should not be open in perpetuity and identified two main questions: How fast do we close it down, and where do people go? Commissioner Chang acknowledged that he would be more eager to move forward with the December 31, 2026, closure if there were more options for housing. Commissioner Chang felt that the main barrier to alternatives was funding and finding landowners willing to partner, not the State land use planning system. Commissioner Chang suggested exploring a more sustainable funding model in which residents contribute financially.

Councilor Norris suggested another model in which residents participate in clean-up, which could reduce costs.

Mayor Kebler stated that she has not heard a viable option of where people can go if the December 31, 2026, closure is maintained. Mayor Kebler supported reducing the area by 50% and extending the closure deadline to allow time to set up an alternative. Mayor Kebler felt that the TSSA was working and that a closure would create a bigger problem. Mayor Kebler felt that having seen what happened following the China Hat closure and the reality of State funding, a December 31, 2026, closure would be irresponsible.

Vice Chair Adair suggested the TSSA might experience a population reduction in the winter.

Stuart stated that they saw a 50% population reduction last winter.

King noted that given ownership of City and County land, varying closure timelines between City and County would cause issues.

Stuart added that the legal access off Highway 97 is County property, and there would be access issues if the County and City closed their lands at different times.

Vice Chair Adair supported providing funding to COID to protect their fencing infrastructure.

Stuart provided information on COID's request and stated that COID asked for up to \$30,000 from each entity.

Commissioner Chang expressed support of COID's request, for moving campers out of areas 1 and 2, and expressed interest in building a partnership with COID to work toward collaborative problem solving around homelessness.

Mayor Kebler seconded the contribution of up to \$30,000 from each body to help with COID fencing, and supported reducing camping in areas 1 and 2 areas.

Mayor Pro Tem Perkins asked if there would be enough room in areas 3 and 4 for all campers if no one exits.

Stuart responded that some camps have left the southern area creating available space, and in general, people are spread out. Stuart felt there was enough space, but noted that people would be closer than they're used to, which can cause interpersonal issues. Stuart added that with less area for enforcement to cover, it would be easier for law enforcement response, etc. Stuart also thought that some people would voluntarily leave.

Chair DeBone called for a show of hands regarding COID's funding request. By show of hands, the Board and the Council provided general support for providing \$30,000 from each entity for COID fencing.

Councilor Franzosa encouraged identifying potential locations for long term vehicle areas, safe parking, or managed camps, and to start building cost estimates. Councilor Franzosa expressed that she would be willing to consider an extension if there was a plan in place for transitioning campers.

Mayor Kebler noted that the meeting's goal was to determine if the City and County would consider an extension, and suggested holding another meeting next year to address a plan, potential locations, and costs.

Stuart noted that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding has been spent, and future support would need to be provided by both the City and the County. Stuart confirmed that staff can come back with cost estimates.

Councilor Platt highlighted the high level of engagement and momentum that has been built between clients and providers. Councilor Platt would like any future plan to replicate the current level of engagement and service providing that is currently happening.

Mayor Kebler stated that there was general support from the Council for an extension and asked if the Board was supportive of an extension.

Vice Chair Adair stated she would like to meet in early January and would like more information from service providers, particularly on how their funds are being spent.

Chair DeBone was not supportive of extending the deadline at this time and felt that an established closure date would help push the City and County to find solutions.

Commissioner Chang was comfortable with an extension. Commissioner Chang believed that if the City and County were serious about starting clearing activities in March 2026, a decision would need to be made sooner than January. Commissioner Chang supported committing to an extension now, and coming up with a menu of options by January 2026.

Stuart stated staff could wait for a decision on the closure date until January 2026.

Commissioner Chang requested that an abstract option including cost per camper, case management, and not tied to a specific property be provided in the options analysis.

Kropp provided an update on the Gales' property. Kropp stated that he invited Craig Gales to come to the Board with a request for \$25,000 to support development fees. Staff would write a restrictive covenant so that if Gales accepted the money, it could not be used for commercial activity.

3. Update on County Landfill & Siting Process

Presentation by Tim Brownell, Director of Solid Waste for Deschutes County.

Brownell provided an update on the landfill and siting process. No slides presented. The County is looking for a site between 300-3,000 acres with disposal capacity for over 100 years. The County went through a process to narrow down properties and the Moonpit property was recommended to the Board. The letter of intent with the property owner was not binding and during negotiations, the County was not able to come to agreement with property owners. By direction of the Board, the siting process was reopened and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) was directed to consider sites within Deschutes County.

Brownell noted that since the last recommendation, the certain wildlife habitat areas and wildlife overlays have been redefined, making some previously ruled out sites eligible.

One property, Horse Ridge, is now eligible due to refinement of eagle habitat overlay. Brownell compared Horse Ridge to Moonpit. Both are significantly disturbed properties, but Horse Ridge is on an alluvial deposit bed, which will make excavation easier. SWAC found this to be a promising site and recommended a final site evaluation, which is a 6-month process that investigates the sites' financial, environmental, and cultural aspects.

Another option is the Roth East site, which has already gone through the final site evaluation process. There were concerns over proximity to the core sage grouse habitat and that it is undisturbed Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) property, which could lead to siting issues.

Brownell plans to return to the Board in about six months with a recommendation. Brownell noted that the Board directed having executable agreements with both properties pre-negotiated.

Brownell added that when the siting process started, the County believed Knott Landfill would reach capacity in April 2029. However, solid waste disposal has slowed, and capacity is now projected for June 2031.

Brownell provided an update on the haulers franchise agreement. The County was trying for a voluntary agreement with both the haulers, but were not able to come to agreement.

4. Work Session on Sequential Review for Urban Growth Boundary

Presentation by Growth Management Planning Manager Brian Rankin and Growth Management Senior Planner Damian Syrnyk.

Rankin provided an update on the upcoming growth plan and introduced Sequential Review. Sequential Review, which requires both County and City approval, is a process provided by law that takes the approval process and breaks it into steps. Rankin recommended the City use Sequential

Review for its growth plan and is seeking approval. If the Council and the Board are generally supportive, staff will move forward with individual actions first from the Council followed by the Board.

Rankin provided an overview of the 20-year growth plan vision. Rankin stated that the 2016 Growth Plan was presented in one package. Sequential review is relatively new in Oregon and allows for review and approval along the way. Rankin noted that there are new rules around Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) and Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (OHNA), and there is uncertainty around new rules. Using the Sequential Review process will allow the City to address new rules in early stages of the project before continuing with other work that is dependent on the new rules.

Syrnyk outlined the sequential review work plan packages as part of the growth plan update.

Work Plan Package 1: 2026-2027

- Buildable lands inventory – determines capacity
- Housing Capacity Analysis – Phase 1 – Determines need
- Economic Opportunity Analysis – need for employment land

Work Plan Package 2: 2027-2029

- Housing Capacity Analysis – Phase 2 – How to meet unmet need for housing
- Climate friendly areas and efficiency measures – changes within current UGB
- UGB amendment – potential additional need for housing and employment
 - Must be adopted by both City and County
- Transportation System Plan

Syrnyk outlined the written notice to the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) to use sequential review:

- Written notice to use sequential review
- UGB expansion likely more than 50 acres
- Proposed planning period and work plan
- Brief document signed by City and County

Rankin clarified that doing everything all at once runs more risk, as significant work is dependent on other work or assumptions. Sequential Review allows for issues to be addressed along the way.

The Board expressed support for sequential review process.

5. Adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Bontje, City of Bend City Recorder



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