

Deschutes County

Wildfire Hazard Mitigation: Public Outreach Report



Photo: Lionshead Fire, September 2020



Prepared by:
Deschutes County
Community Development Department
www.deschutes.org/cd

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Deschutes County Board of Commissioners

Anthony DeBone, Chair
Phil Chang, Vice Chair
Patti Adair, Commissioner

Community Development Department

Nick Lelack, AICP, Community Development Director
Peter Gutowsky, AICP, Planning Manager
Tanya Saltzman, AICP, Senior Planner
Peter Russell, Senior Transportation Planner
Kyle Collins, Associate Planner
Tim Berg, Applications/Systems Analyst
Ines Curland, Applications/Systems Analyst
Chris Gracia, Assistant Building Official

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Deschutes County Natural Resources

Ed Keith, County Forester
Boone Zimmerlee, Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator

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PURPOSE

Wildfire is a natural and necessary component of ecosystems across the world. Central Oregon is no exception. Historically, wildfires have shaped the forests and wildlands valued by residents and visitors. However, these landscapes are now significantly altered due to fire prevention efforts, warming climatic trends, and modern suppression activities, resulting in overgrown forests with dense fuels that burn more intensely than in the past. In addition, the recent increase in Central Oregon's population has led to greater levels of residential development in forested landscapes, specifically in the wildland urban interface (WUI). These developments have created an incentive to review local land use and building codes which have a direct effect on wildfire mitigation and risk within Deschutes County.

Since 2018, the Deschutes County Planning Division, with support from state and local partners, has been evaluating possible code changes explicitly dealing with building materials for rural residential development as well as land use requirements for properties located in high wildland fire danger. This report summarizes those proposed code changes, responses to the proposal from public outreach initiatives, and perspectives from fire protection professionals and development interests throughout the region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wildfire is a major threat to communities throughout the Western United States, and Central Oregon is among those areas grappling with how to diminish some of that underlying risk and maintain the values which define our region. Throughout 2020, Deschutes County has gathered public input concerning possible code amendments which can reduce the threat of wildfire in the community. Specifically, the county has gauged public opinion on two possible code provisions dealing with wildfire mitigation:

- 1) An update to the Deschutes County Building Code (in accordance with the 2019 Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) section R327 (Wildfire Hazard Mitigation)) which would require new residential construction in a Wildfire Hazard Zone to incorporate certain types of materials and requirements for roofing, ventilation, exterior wall coverings, overhanging projections, decking surfaces, and glazing in windows/skylights and doors.
- 2) An update to the Deschutes County Code requiring Defensible Space for all rural residential properties.

Evaluating public outreach efforts undertaken by the County, which are detailed in this report, it appears a majority of residents within Deschutes County generally support greater building code and defensible space requirements to mitigate wildland fire impacts. This

trend holds true for both rural and urban residents, despite these provisions being limited to those areas outside of incorporated cities. Even factoring in the additional costs which may be incurred through more stringent building and land use standards, a plurality of residents feel that these changes are necessary to maintain safe, productive communities into the future.

Numerous challenges and details still remain for how these items could be implemented in practice. While generally supportive, the public has expressed some concerns regarding the cost of new requirements for lower income residents, potential impacts to wildlife habitat, and enforcement mechanisms to ensure the amendments have their intended effect. However, the general theme appears to show that Deschutes County residents are acutely aware of the risk posed by wildfire in their communities and would like to see proactive measures put in place to reduce those risks where appropriate.

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

Community Development Department (CDD) staff and the Board began discussing a 2015 University of Oregon Community Service Center (CSC) code audit in the fall of 2018. The timing coincided with the State Building Codes Division's (BCD) consideration of an amendment to the Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) to prescribe fire hardening standards (i.e., building codes to increase resiliency to fire). The Board directed staff to track these standards and revisit options in 2019.

The Board appointed the Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee (WMAC) in September 2019 to undertake the following objectives:

- 1) Recommend an updated Wildfire Hazard Zone (WHZ) based on the Oregon Department of Forestry's (ODF) criteria in Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 629-044-0200 (weather, slope, fuel hazard, fuel distribution);
- 2) Review and recommend whether and how to apply the Oregon Building Codes Division's (BCD) updated Wildfire Hazard Mitigation standards, i.e., ORSC - R327, in areas under Deschutes County's building jurisdiction; and
- 3) Review and recommend whether and where to propose new land use regulations based on the University of Oregon's Community Service Center (CSC) audit of Deschutes County Code and best practices from other jurisdictions.

The WMAC, which consisted of 12 voting members, held meetings from October 2019 to January 2020. A draft WMAC report was provided to the Board and the Planning Commission on February 13, 2020, and a final report on April 17, 2020.¹

The WMAC made two recommendations pertaining to the WHZ and two recommendations in determining where R327 should apply:

- Six (6) members recommended the WHZ continue to apply to the entire County;
- Five (5) members recommended the WHZ be updated based on a landscape approach informed by Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) sub-regions.
- Six (6) members recommended R327 apply to the entire County and all existing and new lots, regardless of zone.
 - Despite the reference to “all existing and new lots,” R327 does have two possible exceptions:
 - An included exception for infill development which states: “Dwellings or accessory structures constructed on a lot in a subdivision, do not need to comply with Section R327.4 when at least 50 percent of the lots in the subdivision have existing dwellings that were not constructed in accordance with Section R327.4.”
 - An included exception for some accessory structures which states: “Nonhabitable detached accessory structures, with an area of not greater than 400 square feet, located at least 50 feet from all other structures on the lot.”
- Five (5) members recommended utilizing the WHZ based on CWPP sub-regions to inform where R327 should be implemented. From there, the group recommended R327 apply to newly created lots and replacement dwellings in the Forest Use (F1 and F2) and Rural Residential (RR-10) zones.

A majority of the WMAC also recommended requiring throughout the County's jurisdiction:

- Defensible space, steep slope setbacks, and access standards for all new development;
- Defensible space for all properties, vacant and developed;

¹ The report was finalized on April 17, 2020. <https://www.deschutes.org/cd/page/wildfire-mitigation-advisory-committee>.

- Establishing a program that shares best practices of wildfire mitigation to the public.

Subsequently, Deschutes County received an 18-month Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) Technical Assistance (TA) grant to incorporate the Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee recommendations into the Comprehensive Plan and development code. This TA Grant provides a basis for the County to evaluate rural growth and development through a multi-faceted lens, taking into consideration its effect on resource lands, wildlife, natural hazards, economic development, housing, transportation, public facilities, and rural communities. Staff structured the grant tasks so that they will give Deschutes County the resources to evaluate land use interrelationships as part of a future Comprehensive Plan update.

The following sections of this report summarize the wildfire hazard risk for Deschutes County, the proposed mitigation code amendments based on the WMAC recommendations, as well as public responses to those proposals from the various outreach events.

WILDFIRE RISK

The following subsections provide an overview of the wildfire risk posed to Deschutes County, the recent population trends for the region, and current wildfire mitigation strategies undertaken by governments, non-governmental agencies, and private citizens in the area.

Wildfire History

Like many regions in the Western U.S., Deschutes County has a long and complicated relationship with fire. Historically, the dry ponderosa pine forests of the eastern Cascade Mountains experienced low-severity fires every 0-35 years, while other forest types such as lodgepole pine would have typically experienced high-severity fire events every 35-100 years.² However, fire management techniques shifted beginning in the early 20th Century, which saw a massive effort to suppress all fires on the landscape as quickly as possible to reduce losses to personal property and timber supply. The previous century of fire suppression has created unprecedented conditions outside of the historic fire regimes which have drastically increased the probability of high-severity fires and the resultant damage caused by these events.³

In addition, long-term climatic trends have established warmer weather, reduced snowpack, and longer lasting drying periods during the summer months which significantly affect both the frequency and scale of wildland fire events.⁴ To illustrate, the table below summarizes

² https://www.fs.usda.gov/nfs/11558/www/nepa/101916_FSPLT3_4291822.pdf

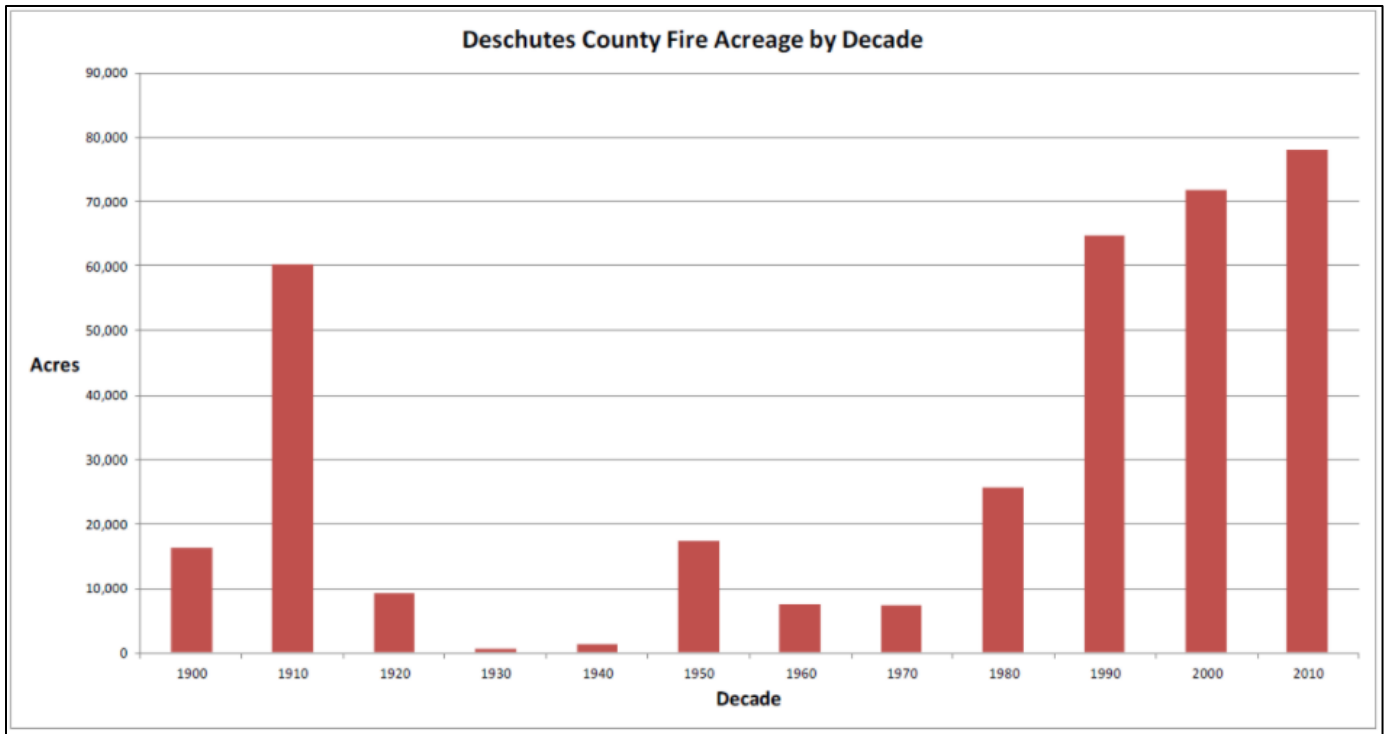
³ <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/deschutes/home/?cid=stelprdb5300193>

⁴ <https://www.fs.usda.gov/pnw/publications/climate-change-vulnerability-and-adaptation-south-central-oregon>

major fire events in Deschutes County from 1990-2020, and the graph below illustrates acreage affected by wildfire events in Deschutes County from 1900-2010:

Table 1, Major Fire Events in Deschutes County, 1990-2020		
Date	Fire Name	Acres Burned
2020	Rosland Road	393
2019	McKay Butte	164
2018	Tepee	2026
2017	Milli	24,042
2017	McKay	1,222
2016	Sheridan	191
2014	Two Bulls	6,908
2013	Burgess Road	168
2012	Pole Creek	26,795
2011	Shadow Lake	10,402
2010	Roster Rock	6,120
2009	Black Butte II	569
2008	Summit Springs Complex	1,973
2007	GW	8,570
2006	Lake George	5,652
2006	Black Crater	9,412
2005	Park	139
2003	Davis	21,123
2003	Link	3,716
2003	18 Road Fire	3,811
2003	B & B Complex	90,769
2002	Eyerly	23,573
2002	Cache Mountain	4,421
2001	Crane Complex	713
2000	Hash Rock	18,500
1998	Elk Lake	252
1998	McKay	1,150
1996	Little Cabin	2,400
1996	Ashwood U Donnybrook	100,000+
1996	Smith Rock	300
1996	Skeleton	17,794
1996	Evans West	4,231
1995	Cinder Butte	11,132
1994	Four Corners	1,524
1992	Sage Flat ODF	1,106
1992	Horse Butte	1,629

1991	Stevens Canyon	1,080
1990	Awbrey Hall	3,500
1990	Delicious	2,042
1990	Finley Butte	1,320
Total		320,832



The significant story here is that Central Oregon has experienced high-intensity wildland fires on 37 percent more acreage in the last 15 years than in the previous 100 years combined. This trend of escalating large wildland fires in Deschutes County is likely to continue and will create greater impact on the citizens, economic and cultural values-at-risk, and infrastructure of the county.

Population Changes

Understanding the future population of Deschutes County informs wildfire risk and related mitigation strategies. Since the enactment of state legislation in 2013 to centralize population forecasts with consistent methodology across Oregon, population forecasts have been conducted by the Population Research Center (PRC) at Portland State University (PSU). Population forecasts are performed on a four-year cycle by region; the most recent forecast for Deschutes County was published in 2018.⁵ It is important to note that these population figures for 2018 and beyond may differ slightly from estimates provided by the United States

⁵ https://ondeck.pdx.edu/population-research/sites/g/files/znlldhr3261/files/2020-07/Deschutes_Report_Final.pdf

Census due to different base year estimates and forecast methodology; for cities' geography, PRC uses Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) rather than city limits, which can differ slightly.

The PRC 2018 Final Forecast Report notes that the total population of Deschutes County will likely grow at a faster pace in the near-term (2018-2043) compared to the long-term (2043-2068). This is largely due to an eventual decrease in birth rates versus death rates—owing to an aging population as well as a smaller population of women in their childbearing years—despite increases from in-migration. As shown in Table 2, Deschutes County's total population (including cities) is forecast to increase by more than 114,000 over the next 25 years (2018-2043) and by more than 245,000 over the entire 50-year forecast period (2018-2068).

Table 2, Deschutes County and Sub-Area Population Forecasts⁶	2018	2043	2068	Average Annual Growth Rate 2018 - 2043	Average Annual Growth Rate 2043 - 2068
Deschutes County	187,621	301,999	432,930	1.9%	1.5%
Bend UGB	91,373	162,362	255,291	2.3%	1.8%
Redmond UGB	29,364	51,625	82,575	2.3%	1.9%
Sisters UGB	2,691	5,169	8,431	2.6%	2.0%
La Pine UGB	1,833	3,594	5,894	2.7%	2.0%
Outside UGB (Unincorporated County)	62,360	79,248	80,739	1.0%	0.1%

The growth rate for unincorporated Deschutes County, however, does not directly mirror that of the county as a whole or its cities. While the growth rates for the county as well as its cities are all projected to slow down between 2043 and 2068, the growth rate slows more dramatically for the unincorporated county as shown in Table 3. As a result, the population of the unincorporated county becomes a smaller proportion of the county as a whole by 2043 and 2068.

Table 3, Deschutes County and Sub-Areas Share of County Forecasts⁷	Share of County 2018	Share of County 2043	Share of County 2068
Deschutes County	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bend UGB	48.7%	53.8%	59.0%
Redmond UGB	15.7%	17.1%	19.1%
Sisters UGB	1.4%	1.7%	1.9%
La Pine UGB	1.0%	1.2%	1.4%
Outside UGB (Unincorporated County)	33.2%	26.2%	18.6%

⁶ https://www.pdx.edu/prc/sites/www.pdx.edu/prc/files/Deschutes_Report_Final.pdf

⁷ Ibid.

Despite the lower share of community members residing in the rural county relative to cities, approximately 20,000 additional people are projected to reside in unincorporated areas over the next 50 years. This is significant, as those areas of the County are likely to be at the greatest risk to wildland fire impacts; and population increases in those regions will have a disproportionate influence on wildfire mitigation strategies as the county continues its rapid growth over the coming decades. Additionally, a significant portion of wildland fire events are caused by human activities, such as individuals recreating on state and federal lands. As such, larger general populations in Deschutes County are likely to increase the numbers of people recreating within wildland areas, with a commensurate increase in ignition risk for human-caused wildfires.

Current Wildfire Mitigation Measures

There are a number of actions currently under way within Deschutes County and the larger region to address wildfire hazards. Some of the measures are being undertaken by county departments, while others are carried out by state and federal agencies, or private citizens. The following is a list of some of the current activities undertaken to reduce wildfire risk in the County:

Wildfire Hazard Zone

- In 2001, Deschutes County adopted a Wildfire Hazard Zone, requiring a minimum of Class C roofing and prohibiting the use of untreated wood roof coverings.

Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan

- Deschutes County's first Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (NHMP), adopted in 2006, was the first pre-disaster plan, approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in Oregon.
- NHMP proposed actions recommend reviewing and upgrading existing building and land use codes to address landscaping, fuel amounts, and structural details that reduce the incidence or spread of wildfire in the Wildland Urban Interactive (WUI).

Project Wildfire

- Project Wildfire is a long-term wildfire mitigation strategy that provides for disaster-resistant communities. Its mission is to prevent deaths, injuries, property loss, and environmental damage resulting from wildfires in Deschutes County.
- Created by Deschutes County Ordinance 8.24.010, Project Wildfire is the community organization that facilitates, educates, disseminates, and maximizes community efforts toward effective fire planning and mitigation. Project Wildfire organizes

community events that help educate the community about wildfire protection strategies and techniques.

Community Wildfire Protection Plans

- Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) are the result of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003⁸ which, as part of a historic bipartisan legislative effort, calls for communities to collaborate with state and local agencies to determine priorities for hazardous fuels projects on federal and private lands in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).
- It also allows communities to develop and list priorities that affect their abilities to survive a wildland fire in their areas. Egress, education, and water availability are some of the other issues that communities may address in their plans. Across Central Oregon, each community has been collaborating with forest and fire management agencies to identify risks and outline strategies to address them.
- Project Wildfire acts as the caregiver to seven unique Community Wildfire Protection Plans within Deschutes County. Each plan is revised on a 5-year cycle to ensure it's relevant to the partners involved in its development.

FireFree

- FireFree is both an event and a program. The FireFree message is a year-round effort to educate community members about how they can be prepared for wildfires. Along with the education, FireFree provides events where residents can recycle yard debris for free or a reduced price.
- Project Wildfire coordinates the FireFree program, which is an educational program that teaches residents how to protect their homes from wildfire. The FireFree program and fuels reduction projects yield over 40,000 cubic yards of woody debris each year.

Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan

- Few counties have wildfire hazard maps in their Comprehensive Plans, but Deschutes County is an outlier. The Deschutes County Fire Hazard map is included in Chapter 3: Rural Growth Management of the Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan and identifies wildfire hazard throughout the county. In total, 96 percent of the land in Deschutes County is identified as being located in a fire hazard area.

⁸ <http://www.projectwildfire.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/hfra.pdf>

- Policy 3.5.11(b) addresses wildfire concerns to and from development, through consideration of site location, building construction and design, landscaping, defensible space, fuel management, access, and water availability.

Defensible Space

- Defensible space is the buffer created between a building and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland areas that surround it. This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and helps protect structures themselves from catching fire.
- Deschutes County utilizes several regulatory programs to address defensible space. The following list summarizes the County's current approach to wildfire mitigation:
 - Consistent with State law, the Forest Use 1 and 2 zones require compliance with defensible space, access, and water supply standards.
 - Destination resorts are required to implement a wildfire management plan to ensure safe evacuations and that hazards are minimized.
 - Defensible space requirements for unprotected lands were adopted in 2011.
 - In October 2016, conditional use permit criteria were applied to Tree Farm, LLC, a cluster development consisting of 50, approximately two-acre residential lots located west of the City of Bend. The conditional use criteria require wildfire mitigation standards including defensible space and residential sprinklers.
 - The Westside Transect Zone (WTZ), consisting of approximately 717 acres and located west of the City of Bend and East of Shevlin Park and Tumalo Creek, was approved in January 2019. The WTZ Zone requires all land divisions to submit a master plan that contains a wildfire mitigation plan.
- **County Forester**
 - The County Forester helps private land owners create defensible space around their homes and helps coordinate fire adapted communities throughout Deschutes County.

SECTION 2: FUTURE MITIGATION PROPOSALS

The County has undertaken a public outreach program to gauge support for additional wildfire hazard mitigation measures relating to residential development. Specifically, the

County approached residents in our region to evaluate their opinions on the following programs:

- 1) An update to the Deschutes County Building Code (in accordance with the 2019 Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) section R327 (Wildfire Hazard Mitigation)) which would require new residential construction in a Wildfire Hazard Zone to incorporate certain types of materials and requirements for roofing, ventilation, exterior wall coverings, overhanging projections, decking surfaces, and glazing in windows/skylights and doors.
- 2) An update to the Deschutes County Code requiring Defensible Space for all rural residential properties.

These proposals were outlined in the context of Deschutes County's wildfire history, locations for where these standards may apply, and cost estimates associated with implementation.

Through the TA Grant process, Deschutes County undertook a multi-pronged outreach approach to address the recommendations provided by the CSC and WMAC. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2020, public outreach opportunities were limited, and the County was unable to host any in-person meetings regarding wildfire mitigation. To ensure the greatest possible opportunity for public involvement, the County considered multiple options for gathering input and ultimately decided on the following options:

- 1) Communications Plan. Press releases, social media, the department's electronic newsletter and the NextDoor web application to announce a project website, ArcGIS StoryMap (interactive web-based maps with text and photos) and an online survey to understand the public's support to adopt building codes and defensible space standards for rural housing.
- 2) Open Houses. Two virtual open houses with the Deschutes County Planning Commission on November 19 and December 3, 2020, to discuss the project's history and specifics regarding the proposed mitigation standards.
- 3) Statistically Valid Survey. A statistically valid survey conducted via telephone by Nelson Research, Inc. of residents across Deschutes County to understand the public's support to adopt building codes and defensible space standards for rural housing.

The following sections outline the results of those public outreach actions and the public's general assessment of additional wildfire mitigation measure in Deschutes County.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Process and Methodology

As described above, the County requested Nelson Research, Inc. to conduct a statistically valid phone survey in addition to the County conducted online survey. This secondary survey was undertaken for the following reasons:

- 1) To provide an independent, scientifically accurate public outreach process to achieve greater confidence in the County's findings.
- 2) To cross reference and validate findings from the County-directed internet survey through an additional outreach method.

To achieve statistically valid results, Nelson Research, Inc. conducted the survey under the following methodological standards:

- A randomized telephone sample of 20,000 Deschutes County residents was chosen for the survey, among which a smaller sample was chosen based on geographic parameters set by the County. A total sample of 383 residents was ultimately chosen to conduct the survey.
 - As the County was primarily interested in responses from those that would be most impacted by the new requirements (rural residents), the chosen sample was weighted towards residents outside of incorporated cities.
 - 75 percent of the sample came from rural areas of the County and 25 percent from Bend, Redmond, Sisters, and La Pine.
 - The total sample size is a +/- 5 percent margin of error at the 95 percent level of confidence.
 - However, due to the oversampling of rural residents, results coming from the Bend/Redmond/Sisters/La Pine geographic area likely have a higher error rate, while results from the rural parts of the County have a lower error rate.
 - Initially, the County discussed breaking out Sisters and La Pine separately, but since these two cities make up only 1 percent each of the County's total residents, a separate sub-sample would have been too small to achieve any meaningful data.

- Due to the large oversampling of rural residents, Nelson Research did not set up any other demographic quotas besides the geographic quota outlined above.
- All surveys were conducted by telephone and all calls were randomized so all parties within the sampling parameters had an equal opportunity of being called.
 - All calls were monitored and recorded to ensure all survey protocols were followed and to ensure the quality of each call.
 - A qualifier question was included that asked each respondent prior to participation if they were 18 years of age or older and currently living in Deschutes County (If respondents answered no to either portion, they were excluded from participating in the survey).
- All information regarding their geographic location was taken from the list provided by the Deschutes County Clerks office Clerk's Office based on voting precinct designated census tracts and was not asked directly of respondents.
- The final demographic samples were as follows:

Sex	Percentage
Males	49.3%
Females	49.9%
Other	0.3%
Refused	0.5%

Age	Percentage
18-29	3.4%
30-44	14.6%
45-59	27.2%
60+	53.8%

Residency	Percentage
0-5 Years	14.9%
6-10 Years	12.5%
Over 10 Years	71%
Refused	1.6%

Geographic Location	Percentage
Bend/Redmond/Sisters/La Pine	25.1%
Other/Rural	74.9%

Limitations

While the County has taken appropriate measures to ensure that the results of the public outreach process accurately reflect the perspectives and opinions of the community, there are a number of limitations to the process which must be summarized.

Specifically, a not insignificant number of respondents to both surveys were uncomfortable noting their support or lack of support without additional information and specifics of how individual proposals might be implemented. Community members have raised numerous concerns, many of which are addressed in this report, regarding how possible mitigation measures would interface with existing development regulations, differing County comprehensive plan priorities, and parcels with pre-existing development patterns which may challenge implementation on a property-by-property basis. While all of these concerns are valid, the purpose of this outreach process is to gather a generalized sense of public opinion on wildfire mitigation measures that the County may have the option of pursuing in the near to medium term. To the extent possible, the County has attempted to provide a clear picture of what these programs might mean for Deschutes County residents writ large, such as projected costs and geographic locations which would be affected. More specific implementation issues would ultimately be addressed and reviewed further at future work sessions and public hearings should the County elect to move forward with these proposals.

Additionally, a number of comments and concerns were raised by community members throughout the outreach process related to items such as public education on safe fire practices and the role of outdoor recreation in wildfire ignition. The County acknowledges the significant role that educational programs can play in reducing human caused wildfire ignition within the Central Oregon region. However, while these issues are important and should be addressed, ultimately that authority and responsibility lies outside of the Community Development Department, which principally deals with physical development of properties throughout Deschutes County. The possible mitigation measures referenced herein are an attempt to reduce wildfire risks associated with new and existing development. Public education on proper fire safety and risk management are distinct issues which can be addressed through a variety of state, federal, and local agencies which are not directly related to physical development of property. Finally, staff points out that many of these agencies, such as local fire protection districts and the United States Forest Service, frequently undertake public education campaigns to reduce human caused fire ignition, particularly during periods of high fire danger.

Communications Plan and County Survey

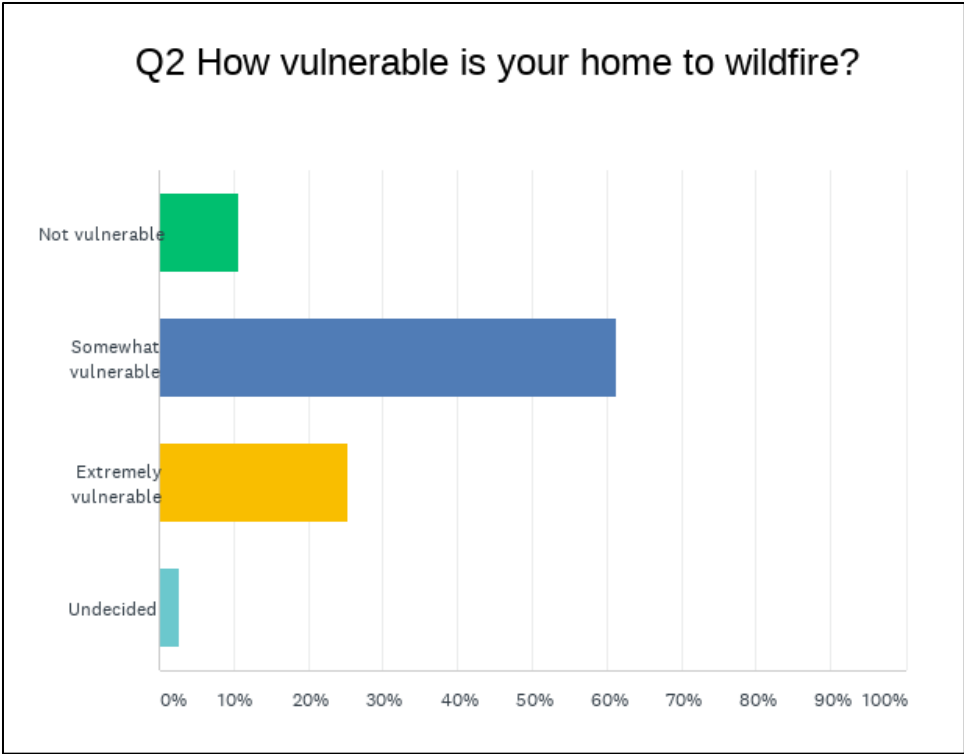
As described previously, the County's communication plan involved a number of online press releases, a public-facing web page specific to the wildfire mitigation project, an ArcGIS StoryMap (interactive web-based maps with text and photos), and an online survey. The primary information gathering tool through this process was the online survey, which

proposed a series of six questions to understand the public's desire to see additional mitigation measures brought forward at a County level. Those six questions were outlined as follows:

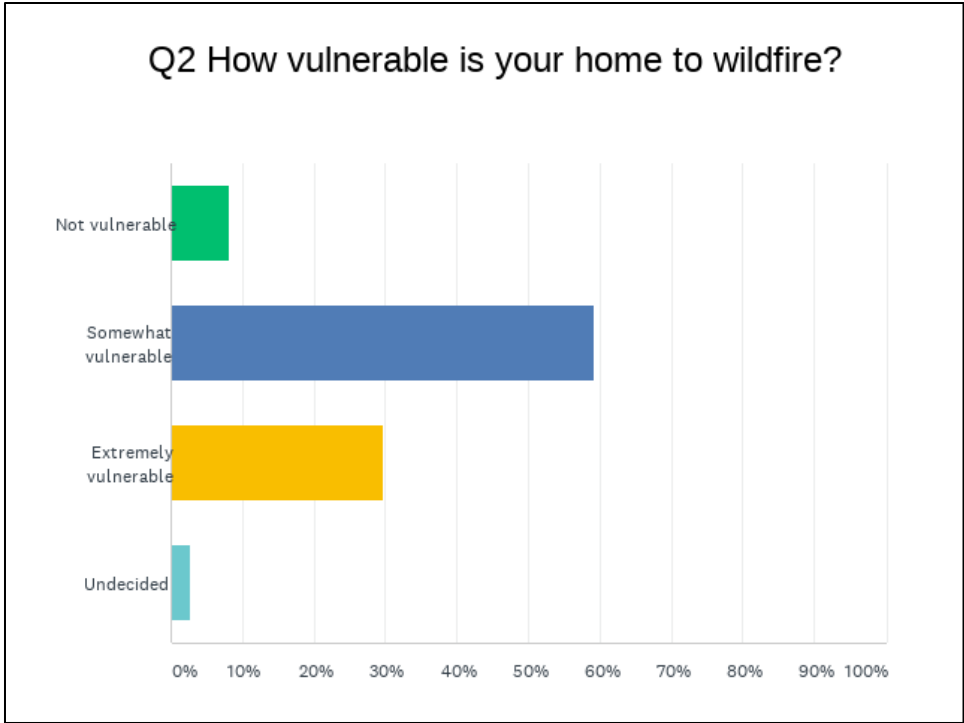
- 1) Are you a resident living within Deschutes County?
- 2) How vulnerable is your home to wildfire?
- 3) The County's current Wildfire Hazard Zone only requires fire-resistant roofing materials. Do you support additional building codes which would require certain fire-resistant materials (siding, decking, ventilation) when constructing a new home in rural Deschutes County?
- 4) If Deschutes County requires additional fire-resistant materials for new homes, where in rural Deschutes County should they apply?
- 5) If building a new home of approximately 2,400 square feet, how much would you be willing to add to the construction cost to incorporate measures that may reduce the risk of wildfire damage to your home?
- 6) Defensible space is required in Forest Use zones. Do you support Deschutes County expanding these requirements to all existing and new development in the rural County?

In total, the County received 801 individual responses to the online survey, with 498 of those responses coming from people living within rural Deschutes County (outside of an incorporated city). Of the total responses, 86.6 percent of community members feel that their homes are somewhat vulnerable or extremely vulnerable to wildfire damage.

From those community members living within rural Deschutes County, 88.9 percent of respondents feel that their homes are somewhat vulnerable or extremely vulnerable to wildfire damage.



All County Residents



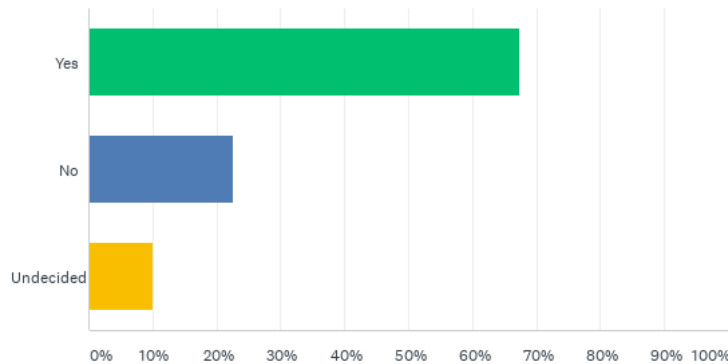
Rural County Residents

Regarding whether residents support additional requirements for fire-resistant building materials when constructing a new home in rural Deschutes County, 67.3 percent were

supportive, 22.7 percent were not supportive, and the remaining 10.0 percent were undecided.

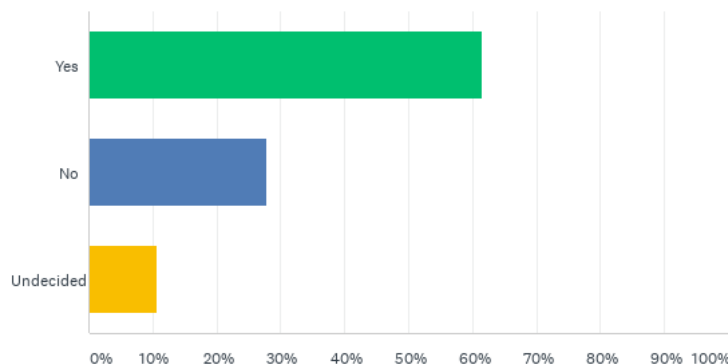
From those community members living within rural Deschutes County, 61.5 percent were supportive, 27.8 percent were not supportive, and the remaining 10.7 percent were undecided.

Q3 The county's current Wildfire Hazard Zone only requires fire-resistant roofing materials. Do you support additional building codes which would require certain fire-resistant materials (siding, decking, ventilation) when constructing a new home in rural Deschutes County?



All County Residents

Q3 The county's current Wildfire Hazard Zone only requires fire-resistant roofing materials. Do you support additional building codes which would require certain fire-resistant materials (siding, decking, ventilation) when constructing a new home in rural Deschutes County?



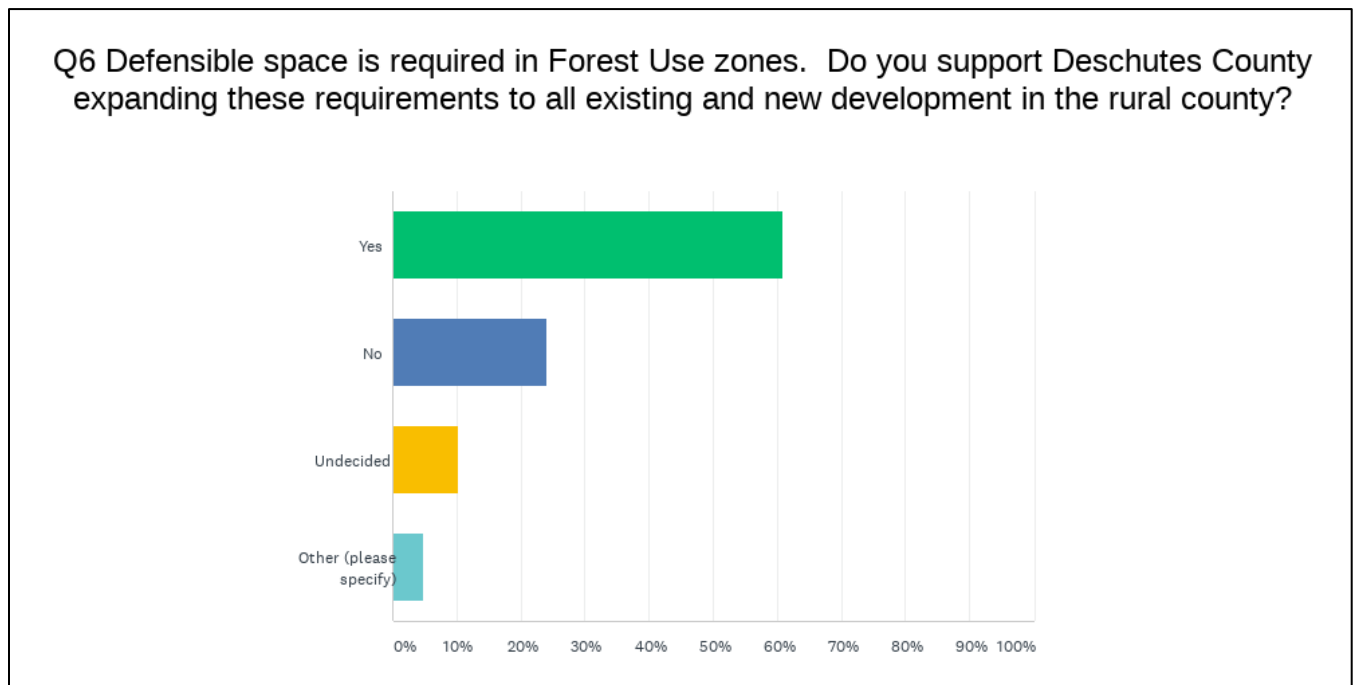
Rural County Residents

Regarding whether residents support expanding defensible space requirements to all existing and new development in rural Deschutes County, 60.9 percent were supportive, 24.1

percent were not supportive, 10.3 percent were undecided, and the remaining 4.8 percent of respondents provided a more detailed or contextual answer.

From those community members living within rural Deschutes County, 55.1 percent were supportive, 29.9 percent were not supportive, 10.3 percent were undecided, and the remaining 4.6 percent of respondents provided a more detailed or contextual answer. The provided supplementary answers covered a wide range of perspectives and concerns; however, certain themes did emerge, including:⁹

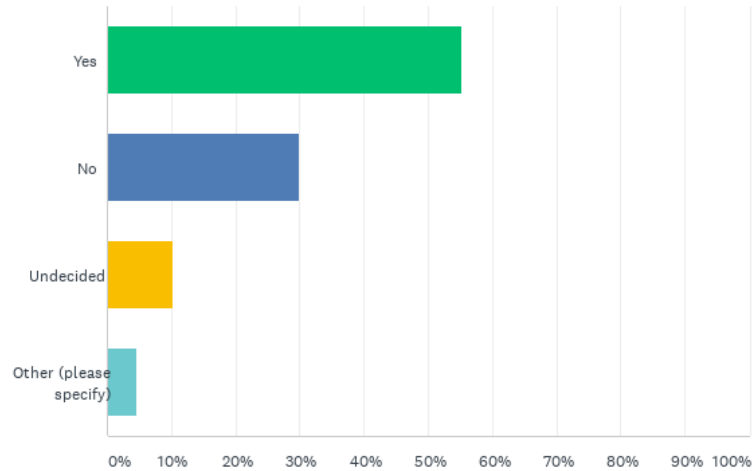
- How to implement defensible space standards for smaller properties
- Cost of maintenance for lower-income residents
- How defensible space measures will impact wildlife habitat
- Visual buffering between neighboring property owners



All County Residents

⁹ The full list of supplementary comments is attached as an appendix to this report for additional information

Q6 Defensible space is required in Forest Use zones. Do you support Deschutes County expanding these requirements to all existing and new development in the rural county?



Rural County Residents

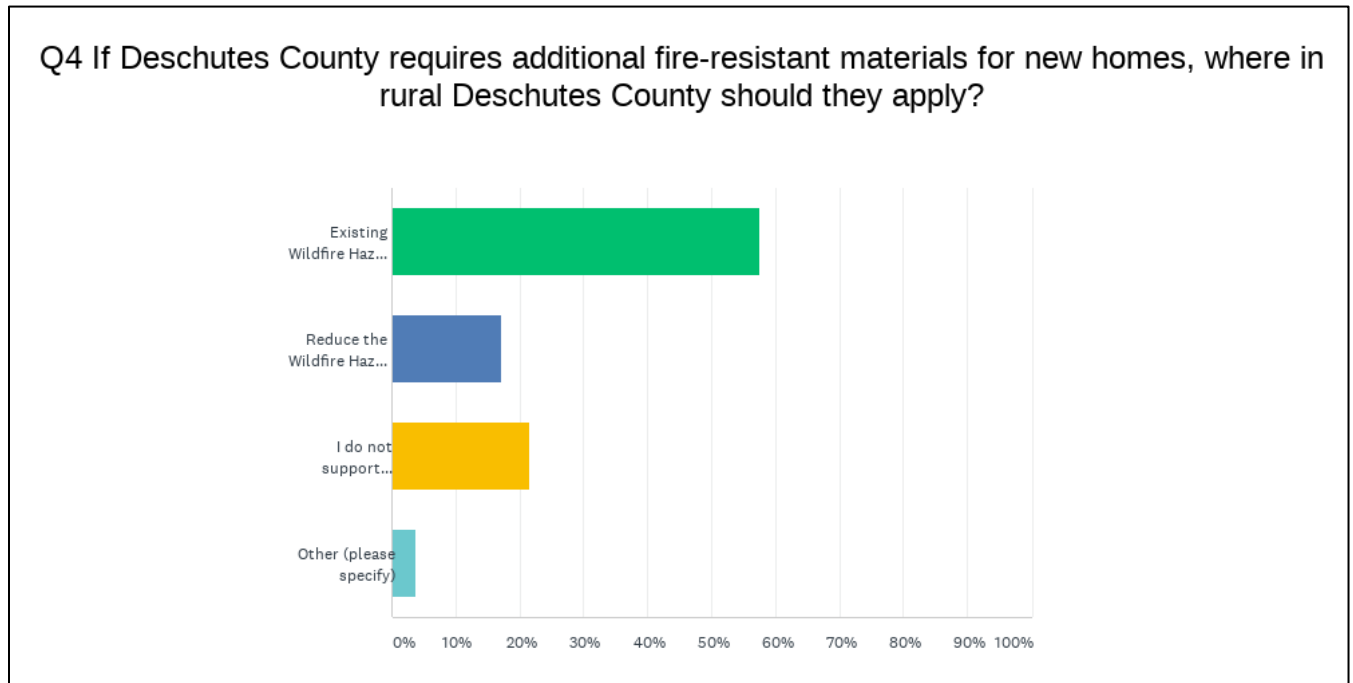
As presently written in State Building Code, any fire-resistant building materials can only be required in designated Wildfire Hazard Zones. Currently, the entirety of rural Deschutes County is designated as a Wildfire Hazard Zone. As discussed previously, during the 2019-2020 WMAC meetings the committee discussed updates to the County's Wildfire Hazard Zone based on more recent information. Ultimately, the committee members were split regarding the need for zone updates, or whether the Wildfire Hazard Zone should continue to apply across the entirety of Deschutes County. The public outreach process was intended to vet these recommendations against public perceptions to help guide any future decisions on how zone changes, if any, are enacted.

When answering where fire-resistant building materials (and hence the Wildfire Hazard Zone) should apply, 57.5 percent believe the existing Wildfire Hazard Zone should remain as is, 17.2 percent believe the Wildfire Hazard Zone should be reduced to only include Forest and Rural Residential Zoned properties, 21.5 percent believed no additional fire-resistant building materials should be required at all, and the remaining 3.8 percent of respondents provided a more detailed or contextual answer.

From those community members living within rural Deschutes County, 53.6 percent believe the existing Wildfire Hazard Zone should remain as is, 17.3 percent believe the Wildfire Hazard Zone should be reduced to only include Forest and Rural Residential Zoned properties, 25.5 percent believed no additional fire-resistant building materials should be required at all, and the remaining 3.7 percent of respondents provided a more detailed or contextual answer.

Those supplementary answers covered a wide range of perspectives and concerns; however, certain themes did emerge, including:¹⁰

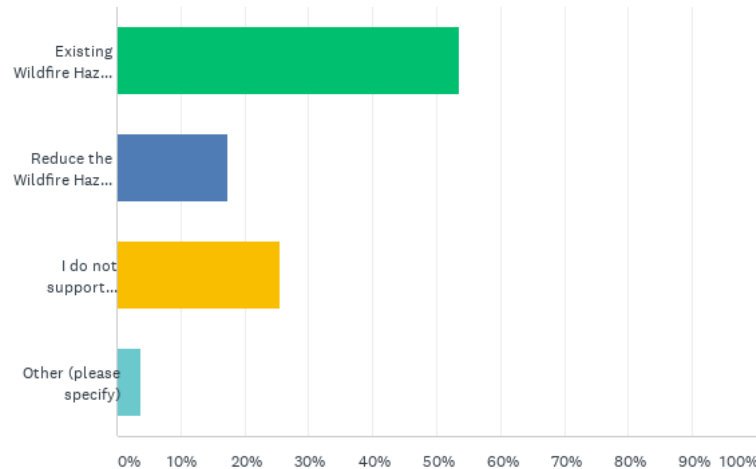
- How wildfire hazard mitigation actions should be implemented inside incorporated city limits
- Cost of implementation for lower-income residents



All County Residents

¹⁰ The full list of supplementary comments is attached as an appendix to this report for additional information

Q4 If Deschutes County requires additional fire-resistant materials for new homes, where in rural Deschutes County should they apply?



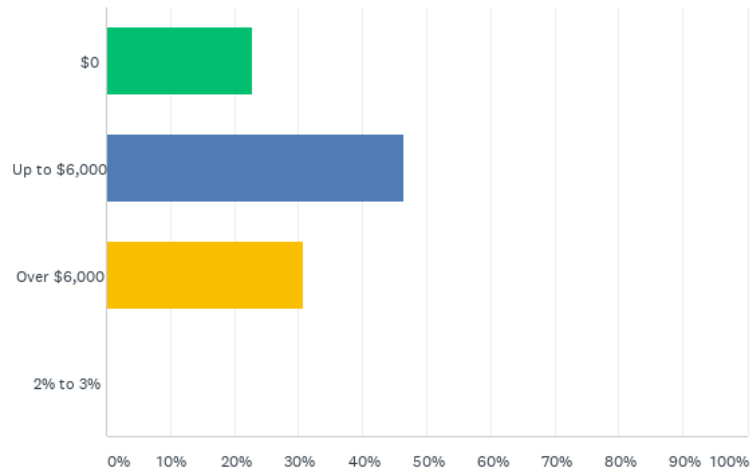
Rural County Residents

To provide relative cost context for the proposed building materials standards, residents were asked how much they would be willing to add to the construction cost of a 2,400-square-foot home to incorporate measures that may reduce the risk of wildfire damage. Residents were given a total range of between \$0 and over \$6,000. The range of proposed estimates was based on a wide variety of resources, including the local building official, the Central Oregon Builders Association (COBA), and various real estate agencies working in the region.

Regarding how much additional expense residents would be willing to incur to implement new wildfire building standards, 22.8 percent stated they would not expend any additional money, 46.4 percent stated they would expend up to \$6,000, and the remaining 30.8 percent of respondents stated they would expend more than \$6,000.

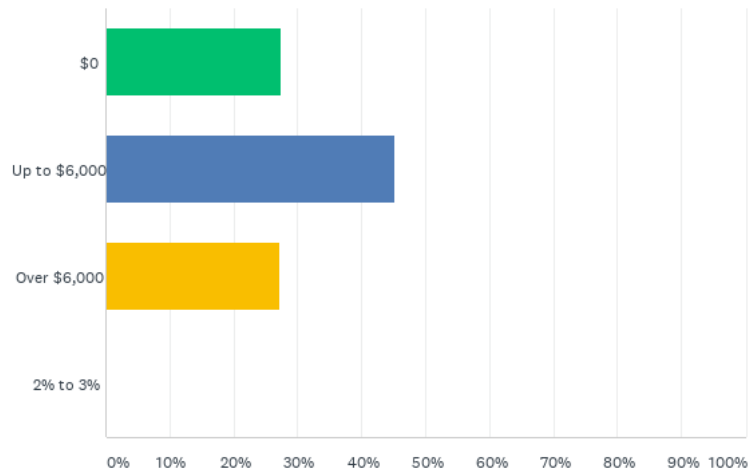
From those community members living within rural Deschutes County, 27.5 percent stated they would not expend any additional money, 45.3 percent stated they would expend up to \$6,000, and the remaining 27.3 percent of respondents stated they would expend more than \$6,000.

Q5 If building a new home of approximately 2,400 square feet, how much would you be willing to add to the construction cost to incorporate measures that may reduce the risk of wildfire damage to your home?



All County Residents

Q5 If building a new home of approximately 2,400 square feet, how much would you be willing to add to the construction cost to incorporate measures that may reduce the risk of wildfire damage to your home?



Rural County Residents

Statistically Valid Survey

Deschutes County employed the services of Nelson Research, Inc. to conduct a statistically valid phone survey to gauge the public's perception of wildfire threat to homes in the County, requiring certain fire-resistant materials (siding, decking, ventilation) when constructing new homes in the Wildfire Hazard Zone, and expanding defensible space for existing and new development in rural Deschutes County.

The survey was carried out between December 1 and December 4, 2020. A total of 383 respondents were interviewed during that time. As stated previously, to account for the primary community who would be effected by these proposals, the sampling for this survey was heavily weighted in the rural areas of the County (75 percent rural, 25 percent urban). Due to the significant weighting, the survey results are not necessarily representative of the community at large, but they are representative of those living in rural Deschutes County.

The questions posed through the survey process were as follows:

- 1) In Deschutes County, wildfires have significantly increased over the last 40 years. Deschutes County is currently considering measures to help reduce the risk of catastrophic damage to homes in high risk areas in the County. These homes are located in what is called the Wildfire Hazard Zone.

On a scale of one to four with "1" representing VERY VULNERABLE and "4" representing "NOT VULNERABLE AT ALL," please tell me how vulnerable you believe your home is to wildfire?

- 2) Deschutes County currently requires fire-resistant roofing materials only. The County is considering a proposal to require certain fire-resistant materials (siding, decking, ventilation) when constructing a new home in the Wildfire Hazard Zone. This requirement would increase the cost of building a new 2,400-square-foot home by approximately \$5,000-\$6,000 including labor costs and materials.

Would you FAVOR or OPPOSE the County enacting these requirements for new construction?

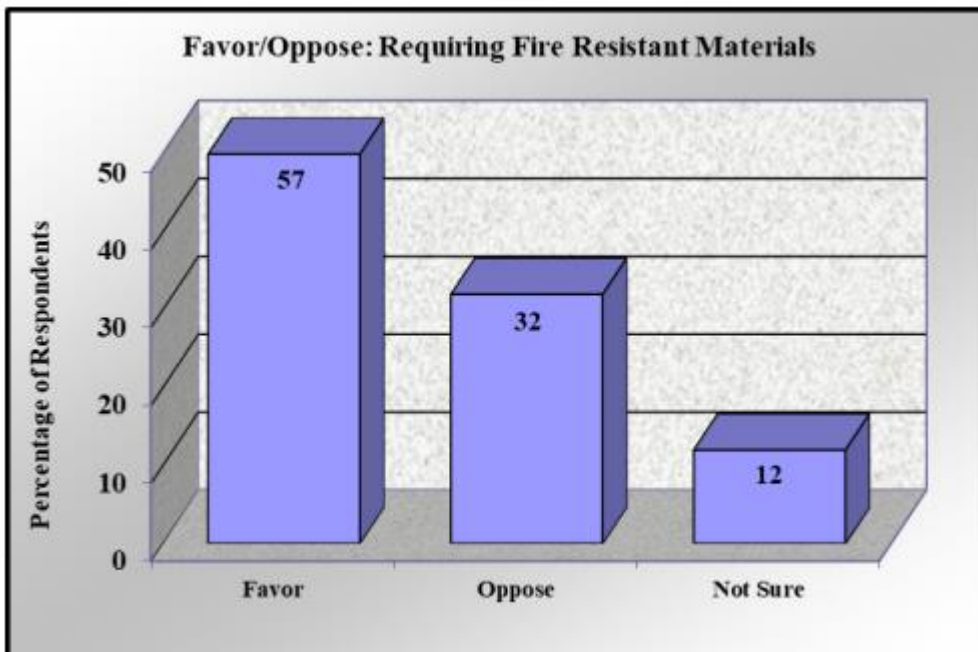
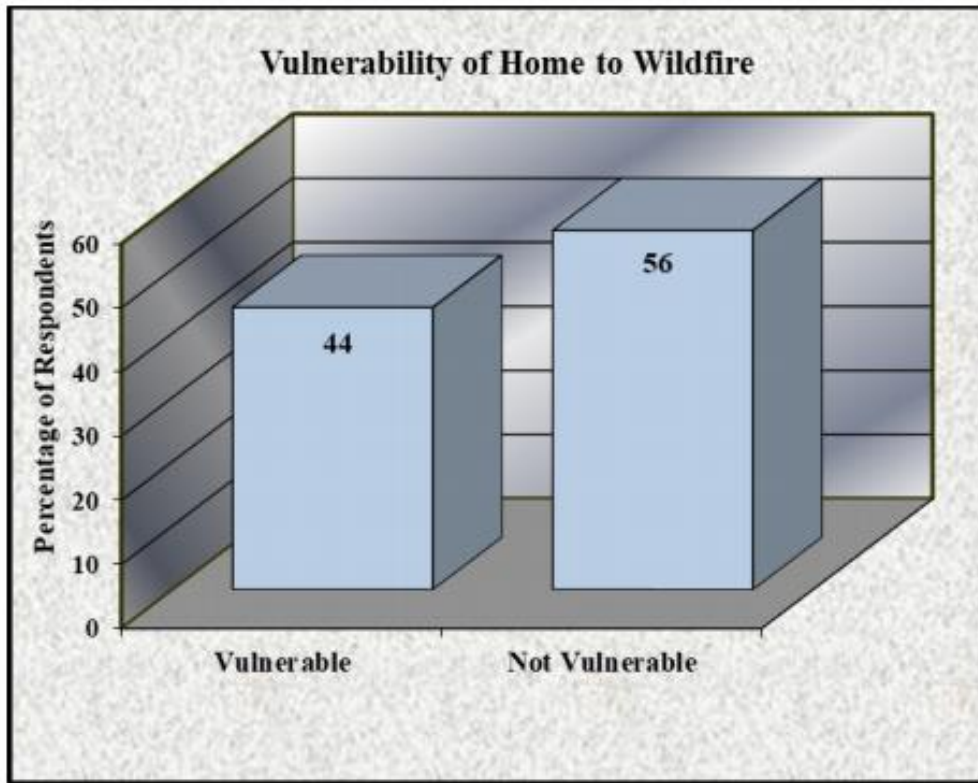
- 3) If you had to choose, where would you prefer the County require additional fire-resistant materials ~ in the EXISTING Wildfire Hazard Zone which includes ALL OF RURAL DESCHUTES COUNTY, or reduce the Wildfire Hazard Zone to include FOREST AND RURAL RESIDENTIAL ZONES ONLY, or do you OPPOSE requiring fire-resistant materials in Wildfire Hazard Zones altogether?
- 4) Currently, Deschutes County requires Defensible Space in Forest Use Zones. Defensible space is an area around a building where vegetation, debris and other

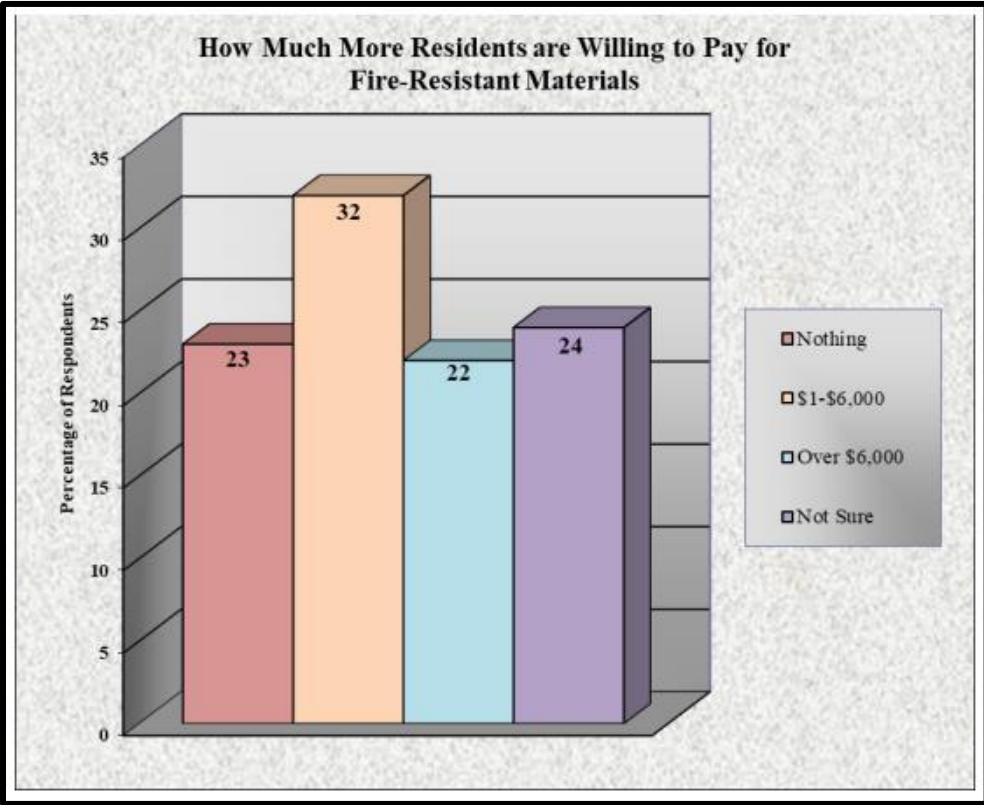
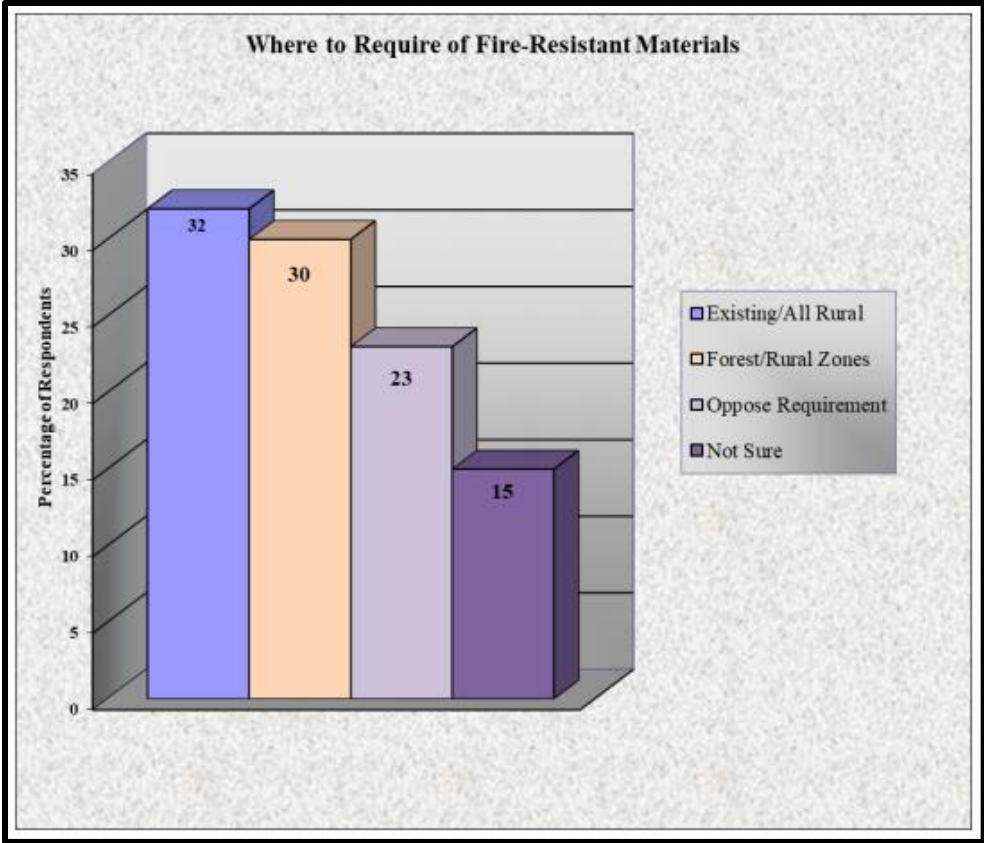
types of combustible materials have been treated or cleared to slow the spread of fire to and from the building. Do you FAVOR or OPPOSE expanding these requirements so residents would need to create defensible spaces around their home for existing and new development in rural Deschutes County?

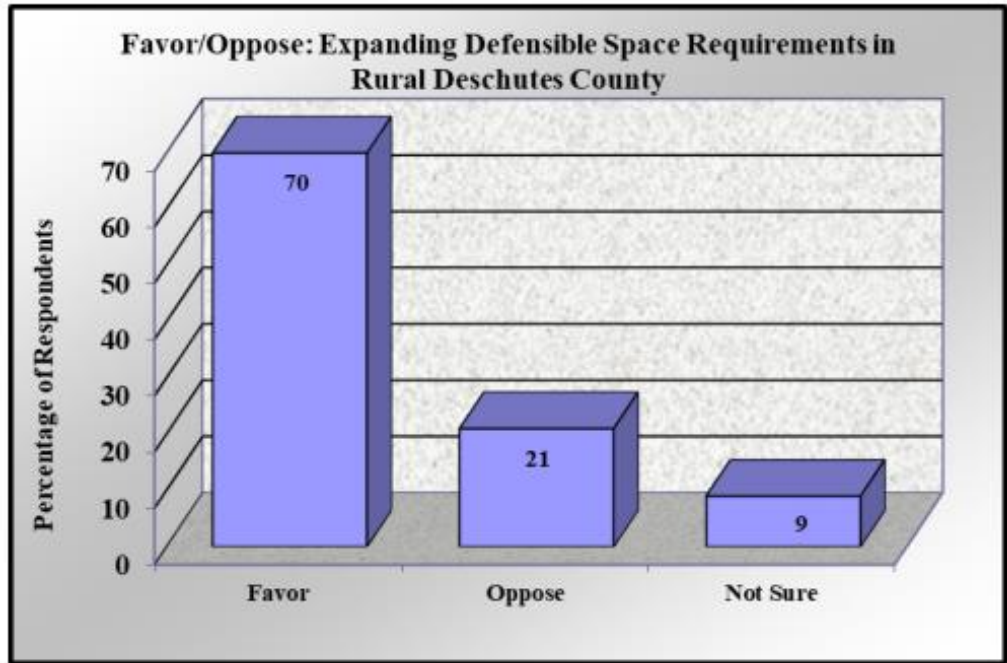
The following trends and conclusions were provided in the executive summary prepared by Nelson Research:

- 1) **Vulnerability:** Well over half of respondents do not believe their home is vulnerable to wildfire; however, nearly half of rural residents (47 percent) believe their homes are vulnerable. A large majority of older residents 45-59 years old (61 percent) and 60+ years old (57 percent) do not believe their homes are vulnerable to wildfire.
- 2) **Fire-resistant building materials:** Well over half of respondents favor a proposal that would require certain fire-resistant materials (siding, decking, ventilation) when constructing a new home in the Wildfire Hazard Zone. It is important to note that a majority of respondents in nearly every demographic group (including rural areas) favor this proposal.
- 3) **Wildfire Hazard Zone:** Respondents are nearly split with slightly less than one-third that prefer fire-resistant materials be required in the existing Wildfire Hazard Zone which includes all of rural Deschutes County, and slightly fewer that prefer to reduce the Wildfire Hazard Zone to include forest and rural residential zones only. It appears that slightly more rural residents prefer enacting these requirements on all of rural Deschutes County (32 percent), over reducing the Wildfire Hazard Zone (30 percent). Additional education and communication about why this is a necessary option (enacting the requirement in the existing Wildfire Hazard Zone) could significantly increase support, should the County choose to move forward with implementation.
- 4) **Cost:** Slightly less than one-third of respondents would be willing to pay between \$1 and \$6,000 more to build a new home with fire-resistant materials in Wildfire Hazard Zones. However, it is important to note that when accounting for those who would be willing to expend more than \$6,000, a majority of respondents say they would be willing to pay more for these fire-resistant materials, including those currently living in rural areas of the County. These numbers are consistent with the number of respondents that favor requiring fire-resistant materials.
- 5) **Defensible Space:** A very large number of respondents favor expanding Defensible Space requirements so new and existing residents living in rural Deschutes County would need to create an area around their homes where vegetation, debris and other types of combustible materials have been treated or cleared to slow the spread of wildfire. It is significant that a large majority of respondents in every demographic group support this proposal.

The following pages illustrate the range of responses across the various questions from the statistically valid survey:







Based on the summary above, both proposals appear to have widespread community support in nearly every demographic group. There are some discrepancies between the online survey and the phone survey administered by Nelson Research. The primary differences related to where additional building standards should be applied (the Wildfire Hazard Zone) and how much additional money residents would be willing to spend to implement new standards. There was slightly less support among phone survey respondents for preserving the existing Wildfire Hazard Zone and for expending any additional resources to implement new standards. However, even when accounting for those divergences, a majority of residents across both surveys were supportive of including additional building requirements in at least some areas of the County and a majority of residents were willing to expend at least some additional resources to implement the additional standards.

Additionally, despite the similarity of the questions, it is interesting to note the difference in perception of wildfire risk between the Nelson Research survey and the County produced survey. It is not entirely clear what accounts for this specific discrepancy. However, it may be that the StoryMap and associated wildfire history information leading into the County survey provided a more grounded education concerning wildfire risk in Deschutes County, rather than simply relying on personal anecdotes and observations. If this is the case, it would seem to support Nelson Research’s conclusion that additional communication and education may have a significant effect on community support for either of these proposals.

Virtual Open Houses

Due to the public gathering restrictions in place from the COVID-19 pandemic, the County was unable to host any in-person meetings regarding wildfire mitigation. To account for these challenges, County planning staff facilitated a series of virtual open houses in conjunction with the Deschutes County Planning Commission, staff members from the Deschutes County Building Department, the Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator Boone Zimmerlee, and the Deschutes County Forester Ed Keith. The open house events occurred on November 19¹¹ and December 20¹², 2020.

The purpose of the open houses was to give the public and the Deschutes County Planning Commission an opportunity to ask County staff and fire protection experts additional questions concerning the proposed wildfire mitigation measures. These sessions were intended to introduce community members to the StoryMap feature and associated survey, while also allowing for more clarification and inquiry into details which may not have been captured by the other outreach features.

The open house sessions were conducted via Zoom web-meeting platform and each was simultaneously streamed and recorded via Facebook Live through the County's social media account. Participants were encouraged to submit questions through either of these channels, with corresponding answers provided in real time by facilitators and presenters. As of January 12, 2020, the recorded November 19 event has been viewed a total of 626 times and the recorded December 3 event has been viewed a total of 445 times.

These open house events covered a wide range of topics, including the following major themes that appeared during both open house sessions:

- How defensible space standards will be monitored and enforced if implemented
- How the new building code requirements would apply to additions or replacements of existing development
- How defensible space standards would be balanced against various other land use goals such as wildlife habitat preservation
- How the new building code requirements differ from the standards that are in place presently
- Whether similar code provisions have been adopted in other Oregon jurisdictions

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/Deschutes.County/videos/wildfire-mitigation-open-house/380763246530718/>

¹² <https://www.facebook.com/Deschutes.County/videos/wildfire-mitigation-open-house/387548885807657/>

- Whether the new building code requirements can be modified beyond what was adopted by the State Building Codes Division
- Whether the County will provide additional resources for property owners to establish the defensible space standards should they be adopted
- How the County intends to navigate challenges such as absentee landlords and second-home owners in implementing the proposed code changes
- How the defensible space standards will be implemented on properties with limited space/development area

The full list of community member questions and answers during the open house meetings has been included as an appendix to this report.

General Public Comments

In addition to the data gathered through survey outreach and both virtual open houses, the County has received over 30 public comments from private citizens, professional organizations, and advocacy groups concerning the proposed wildfire mitigation code amendments.

In particular, the County has received comments from numerous fire protection agencies throughout the region including the Alfalfa Fire Protection District, the La Pine Rural Fire Protection District, the Sunriver Fire Protection District, Bend Fire and Rescue, the Sisters-Camp Sherman Rural Fire Protection District, and the Cloverdale Rural Fire Protection District. The agencies were unanimous in their support for the proposed wildfire mitigation code amendments and strongly pressed the County to adopt them into the current land use and building safety programs.

A full copy of the public comments has been included as an appendix to this report.

SECTION 3: CONCLUSION

Based on the outreach undertaken by the County and described above, it appears that a majority of residents within Deschutes County are generally supportive of greater building code and defensible space requirements to mitigate wildland fire impacts to the community. Of course, there are numerous technical and pragmatic questions regarding how these standards would be implemented on a case-by-case basis and these items would need to be addressed in greater detail when considering next steps. However, the common theme appears to be that Deschutes County residents are acutely aware of the risk posed by wildfire

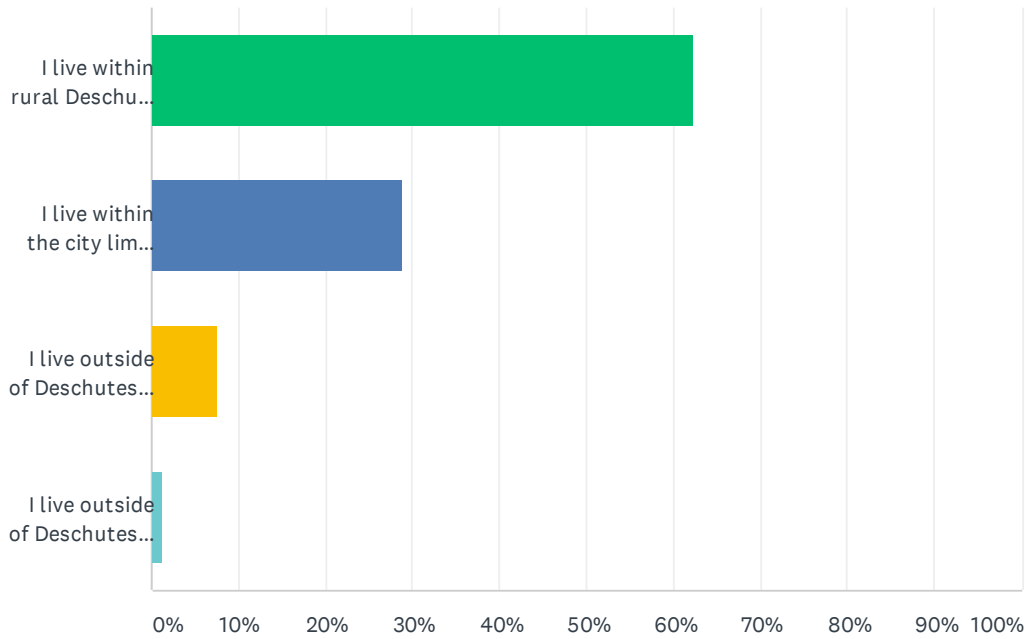
to their communities and would like to see proactive measures be put in place to reduce those risks.

Appendix

Deschutes County Survey Summary

Q1 Are you a resident living within Deschutes County?

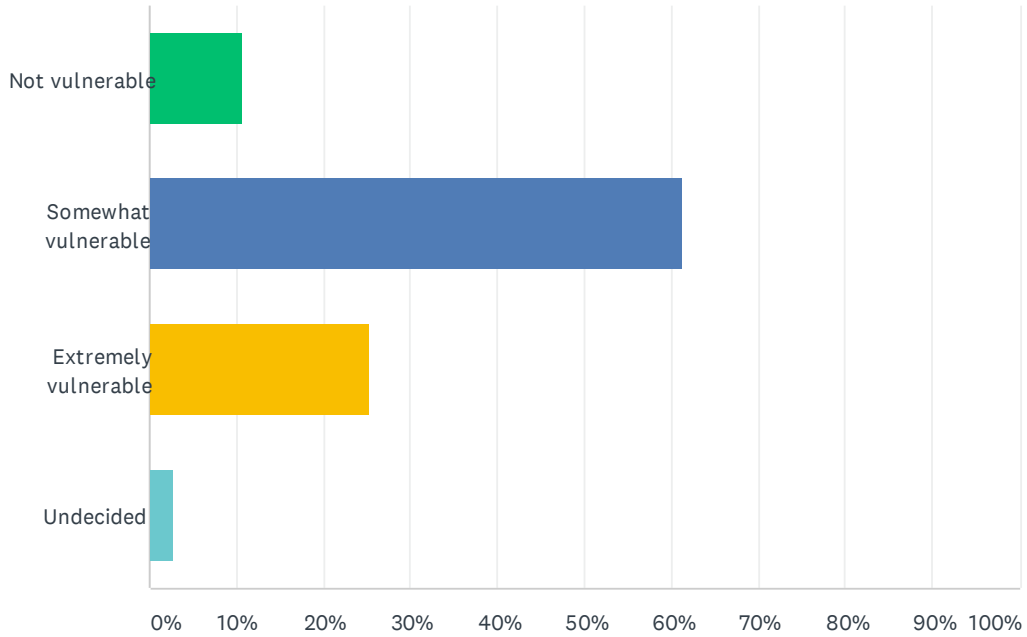
Answered: 799 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I live within rural Deschutes County, outside of a city.	62.33%	498
I live within the city limits of Bend, Redmond, Sisters or La Pine.	28.79%	230
I live outside of Deschutes County but own property within Deschutes County.	7.63%	61
I live outside of Deschutes County and do not own property in the area.	1.25%	10
TOTAL		799

Q2 How vulnerable is your home to wildfire?

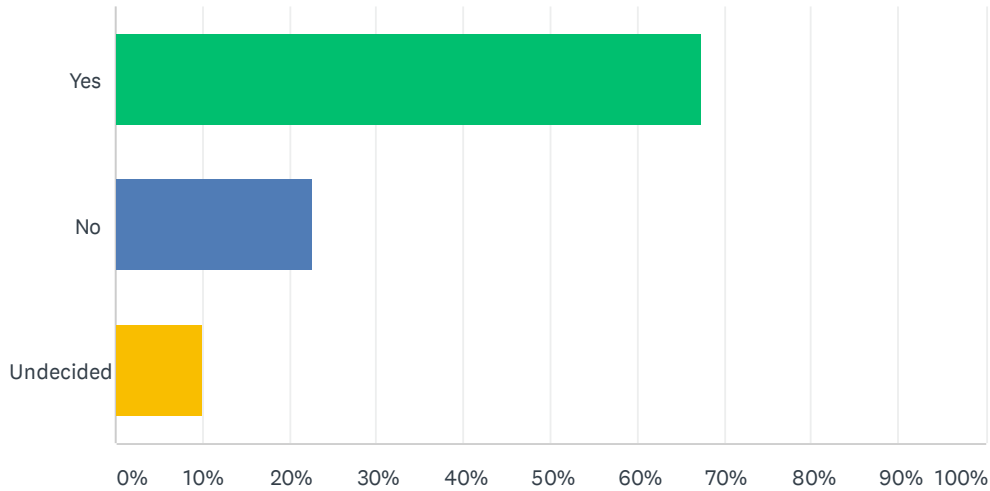
Answered: 801 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not vulnerable	10.61%	85
Somewhat vulnerable	61.30%	491
Extremely vulnerable	25.34%	203
Undecided	2.75%	22
TOTAL		801

Q3 The county's current Wildfire Hazard Zone only requires fire-resistant roofing materials. Do you support additional building codes which would require certain fire-resistant materials (siding, decking, ventilation) when constructing a new home in rural Deschutes County?

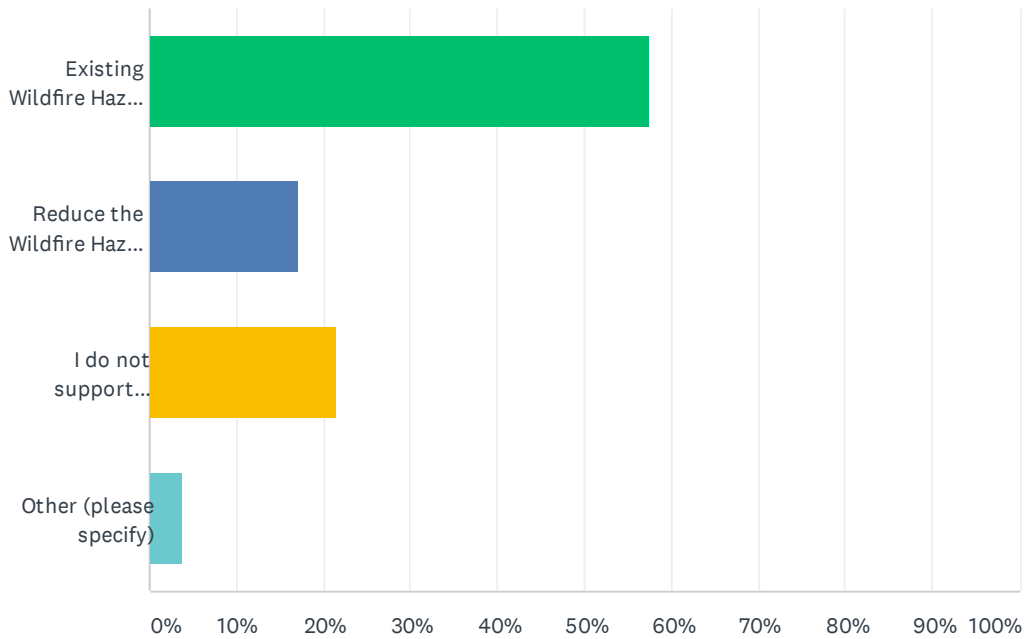
Answered: 798 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	67.29%	537
No	22.68%	181
Undecided	10.03%	80
TOTAL		798

Q4 If Deschutes County requires additional fire-resistant materials for new homes, where in rural Deschutes County should they apply?

Answered: 790 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Existing Wildfire Hazard Zone (entire rural county)	57.47%	454
Reduce the Wildfire Hazard Zone to include only Forest (F1 & F2) and Rural Residential (RR10) zoning	17.22%	136
I do not support requiring additional fire-resistant materials	21.52%	170
Other (please specify)	3.80%	30
TOTAL		790

Deschutes County Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Survey

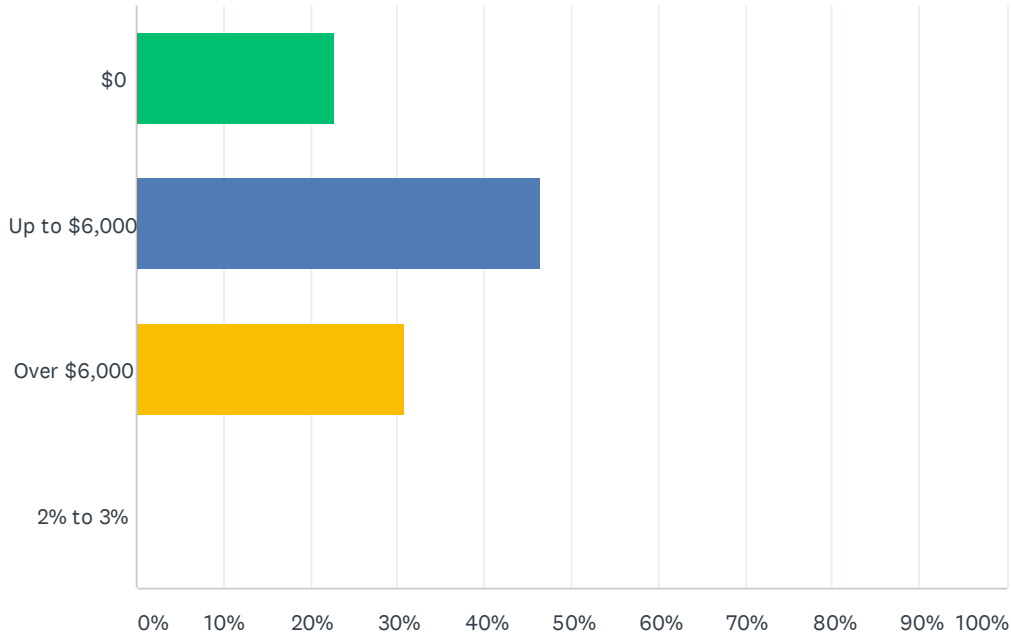
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Require in F1 and F2, strongly recommend in the whole county	12/13/2020 5:15 PM
2	All new construction -- both rural and city limits -- within Deschutes County	12/7/2020 5:11 PM
3	???	12/7/2020 4:35 PM
4	The entire county is at risk (including inside city limits.) If anyone thinks the city is not at risk, they should probably talk to residents of Talent and Phoenix to get their take on wildfire.	12/6/2020 11:12 PM
5	unfair to target rural areas. All homes in the county should be effected.	12/5/2020 7:16 PM
6	The entire County. Sadly, Deschutes Cnty has grown and continues to grow too rapidly. Why band aid this issue? Plan for the future, and do it right; make this applicable in the ENTIRE County.	12/5/2020 8:47 AM
7	I would leave existing requirements as is, but add new requirements to F1, F2, RR10.	12/3/2020 5:14 PM
8	Utilize higher resolution modelling to determine risk. Consider ember travel beyond fuel beds	11/27/2020 3:23 PM
9	Anywhere that has many pine trees	11/26/2020 9:25 AM
10	Use F1 & F2 and RR10 as a starting point, but modify based on a landscape wildfire risk assessment.	11/23/2020 10:08 AM
11	would not want this to apply to replacements on existing homes anywhere	11/18/2020 11:26 AM
12	I support requiring large housing developments to use all fire resistant materials, but not individuals who want to build a home outside of a development.	11/16/2020 2:43 PM
13	Everywhere in the County not just unincorporated. All Cities.	11/14/2020 6:43 AM
14	I would prefer an expert to do the math on cost of upgrades vs saving/rebuilding and projected risk per home in each zone.	11/12/2020 12:47 AM
15	Only require it where it is truly needed. I don't know if any of the above options meet that. May require a new map.	11/9/2020 7:54 AM
16	Extreme High Risk WUI - but the answer is not building code but development code/pattern	11/8/2020 3:17 PM
17	All new construction within the county - INCLUDING cities.	11/6/2020 10:37 AM
18	Please explain (again?) F1, F2 and RR10 zoning	11/5/2020 2:28 PM
19	I don't believe the new codes and requirements should apply only to Uralic new construction. Where we have wildfires the homes are typically areas out in Uralic areas. I believe especially with all the fires in past and this last year has shown, wildfires can happen both in Uralic and urban areas where the density of homes and buildings. With wind driven wildfire like we had a few months ago everyone is susceptible. With that said, I don't believe it is fair that the new codes and requirements be applied to just rural new homes or or remodels so the the City of Bend is exempt making the rural communities only pay these new construction fees. The City of Bend is building more and more homes and this new proposal would exclude home owners and contractors to pay. I believe if these code and restrictions should apply to all of Deschutes County be it living in Urban or Rural. Share the cost across the board.	11/3/2020 8:57 AM
20	there may be areas in the RR10 zones that should not be included, F1 and F2 seem appropriate.	11/2/2020 10:46 AM
21	F1, F2, RR10 and resort zones such as Sunriver and Black Butte Ranch. And any limited portions other zones that are within a stipulated distance from a F1 & F2 zone. For example the south end of Sisters is zoned R but borders national forest	10/30/2020 11:01 AM
22	I am undecided on this. There are already a lot of homes in the Three Rivers area and I think the concern is to enforce a defensible space for existing homes. The Three Rivers area has a lot of people living in trailers and leaving the lot with trash and clutter. I say start at where the issue lies now. Even, if you require new homes to have a fire-resistant material. This doesn't really make us any safer, with other homes out of compliance.	10/29/2020 4:21 PM
23	Let the homeowner decide if they want additional fire-resistant material, and future owners can decide if they want to choose to purchase only homes with additional fire resistant materials	10/28/2020 9:27 AM

Deschutes County Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Survey

24	Entire county not just outside city but city as well	10/27/2020 7:29 PM
25	Both in the existing wildfire hazard zone and I'd like to see a collaborative effort for the City Governments to adopt a similar code/policy	10/27/2020 2:09 PM
26	All houses in the county. Embers can travel miles and don't care about UGBs.	10/27/2020 12:18 PM
27	There should be no new development allowed in the Wildfire Hazard Zone (yes I realize that is the entire rural county)	10/27/2020 11:01 AM
28	Local and county government should offer significant property tax credits to property owners who voluntarily create defensible space. Additionally, metropolitan Bend should encourage low density development bordered by agricultural fields and pastures, golf courses, sports fields, and pasture parks developed voluntarily by citizens.	10/26/2020 10:30 PM
29	All areas. Fire is random with what was shown in talent/Phoenix Oregon. Commercial structures where lost due to extreme weather and available fuels. Preparations on all structure construction as well as fire resistant barriers.	10/26/2020 9:02 PM
30	Everywhere - wildfire can be unpredictable, it'd be great to have as many protection measures in place as possible.	10/23/2020 8:53 AM

Q5 If building a new home of approximately 2,400 square feet, how much would you be willing to add to the construction cost to incorporate measures that may reduce the risk of wildfire damage to your home?

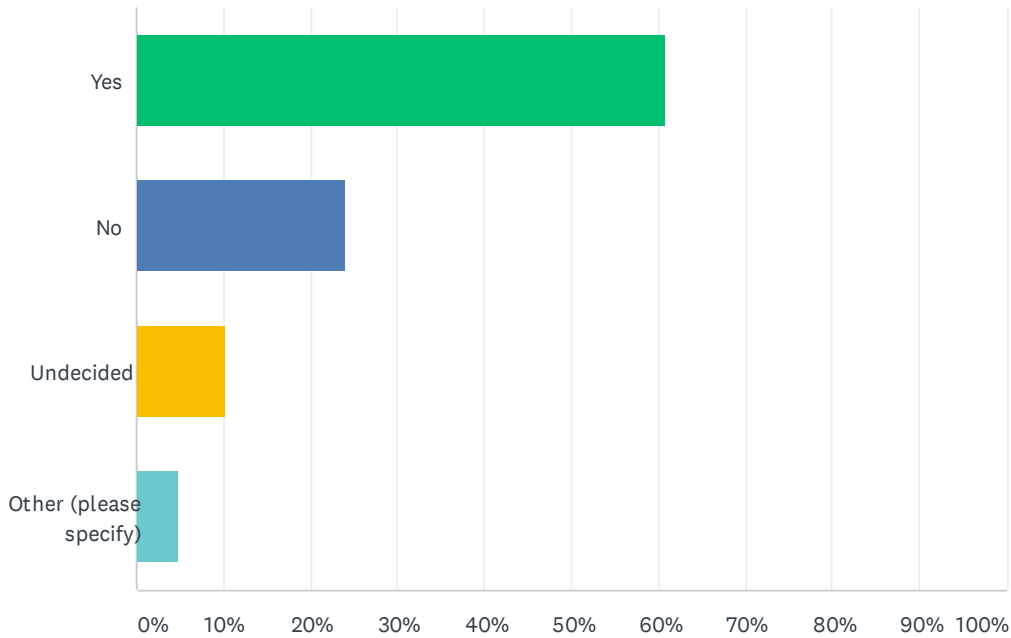
Answered: 797 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
\$0	22.84% 182
Up to \$6,000	46.42% 370
Over \$6,000	30.74% 245
2% to 3%	0.00% 0
TOTAL	797

Q6 Defensible space is required in Forest Use zones. Do you support Deschutes County expanding these requirements to all existing and new development in the rural county?

Answered: 800 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	60.88%	487
No	24.13%	193
Undecided	10.25%	82
Other (please specify)	4.75%	38
TOTAL		800

Deschutes County Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Survey

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	only new	12/21/2020 5:59 PM
2	This should apply to areas within the City that are also vulnerable and not just rural areas. It should also apply to remodeling.	12/7/2020 2:24 PM
3	Yes defensible space is absolutely needed but a 200 ft requirement should be considered. As the urban area pushes out further into the wildland this would be provide a better defensive area for firefighting operations. As a retired firefighter from a urban wildland area this required space truly allowed us the chance to save more homes during firefighting.	12/7/2020 12:31 PM
4	Expand to new development, consider requirements for undeveloped areas and their boundaries against developments	12/7/2020 9:32 AM
5	Yes. But not 100 foot of space. That'd basically leave me with zero trees between my property and the neighbors.	12/6/2020 11:12 PM
6	Redmond has more BLM land around us. Fire breaks and people keeping their yards fire safe is important.	12/5/2020 8:20 AM
7	We need more wildlife friendly 'defensible space' rules that better consider long term impacts on habitat rather than just clearing areas.	12/5/2020 6:13 AM
8	The fire retardants often use chemicals detrimental to water quality, human health and wildlife - and alternatives are often regrettable (think pfas/pfoa), so please analyze from multiple perspectives. I live in Sundance subdivision near Horse Butte. We have one way in and one way out...I would urge the County to consider retrofits to ensure multiple ways to leave an area in case of wildfire. The CCRs in terms of number of buildings are not being held to either so there are more livestock and people that would need to leave quickly out the one road. Outreach to federal agencies for a second way out by means of a fire road have not been successful despite easements. Also there are not hydrants out here. As a county, I would focus on ensuring multiple routes of escape, hydrants and adequate water supplies; and because a lot fo fires start with sparks in the gutters/under eaves per your fire free experts improved options there. Then continue education on fire free products etc. but the analysis should include all the environmental and health risks/impacts.	12/4/2020 12:36 PM
9	Firewood storage exempted. Where will we keep the firewood? Almost everyone in our neighborhood has a pile near the house. Lots are not big enough to move firewood away 100' older subdivision with 1/2 acre lots.	12/4/2020 9:16 AM
10	My opinions are based upon repeated trips through the infamous Carr wildfire on the edge of Redding, CA. The devastation is unimaginable, but those risk are on our doorsteps today.	12/4/2020 7:37 AM
11	New developments need buffer zones between the development and the forest. The Tree Farm has a park area on the east side of the development and it should be on the west side next to Shevlin Park. We need better development planning for fires. Brooks Resources should be doing this for their new development along Skyliner Road as well!	12/4/2020 2:14 AM
12	In Sisters, many in-city homes border on NFS. Of the 100' defensible space, perhaps only 20 feet of backyard is private property within city limits. NFS refuses to let homeowners modify their property. What good is 20' of defensible space when NFS won't deal with their 80'? Your regulations must take this into account.	12/3/2020 4:30 PM
13	For existing property, it should be up to the property owner to assume increased fire risk if not implemented. Many may not be able to afford upgrades which is also a reason many live outside the cities.	12/3/2020 10:53 AM
14	I endorse all these measures on the condition that fire insurance premium reductions are commensurate with the calculated efficacy of these measures.	12/3/2020 10:18 AM
15	Yes ... but some flexibility is needed based on an on-site review. For example, if trees are spaced and limbs pruned appropriately they might be OK within the 100' zone. And stacked firewood could be allowed conveniently close to homes during winter/non-fire season but not allowed during fire season. If wildfire risk reduction measures are implemented there should be some flexibility in the guidelines .	11/23/2020 10:08 AM
16	Should be required in high-risk areas only. For example, areas east of Hamby Road are much lower risk than areas south of Knott Road.	11/18/2020 3:12 PM

Deschutes County Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Survey

17	Yes, with assistance (\$ or otherwise) for existing development	11/14/2020 7:00 PM
18	Who would enforce? There appears to be no active enforcement of other zoning codes.	11/13/2020 5:12 PM
19	The requirements should include only areas of actual forest, they should not be "peanut-buttered" across the county without consideration for actual fire risk.	11/13/2020 1:45 PM
20	all depends on what would need to be done. I would not want to be required to cut down the trees adjoining my house	11/13/2020 1:38 PM
21	This seems like a question for experts. Does a rural home surrounded by dirt fields or lava fields have the same risk from fires and need to get rid of the tree and garden beds next to their house?	11/12/2020 12:47 AM
22	Expand it to where it makes sense, which is not necessarily all of the rural county.	11/9/2020 7:54 AM
23	The fire boundaries are vital for human safety but creating larger altered space in rural residential areas increases the human footprint in places that are vital for wildlife. Cutting bitterbrush and mowing sage is not the simple answer.	11/9/2020 5:19 AM
24	The proposal to require 100' of diminished vegetation vs the staged 50 and 100' criteria seems excessive	11/8/2020 3:17 PM
25	I do say Yes on above and also much less development needs to be allowed near all these forest areas!	11/7/2020 8:39 AM
26	I am not sure "required" for existing development but I agree with "highly recommended" for existing development. Is there some kind of incentive to give existing development if they comply with the new requirement?	11/5/2020 2:28 PM
27	Need more specific requirement from the County before I can answer this question.	11/3/2020 12:11 PM
28	I support defensible space but am concerned about requirements to remove excessive number of trees. Mature trees are not the same fire danger as other materials and I would not have to remove them if they were within 30 feet of my home as this would mean losing a significant number of healthy trees and make any remodel cost prohibitive.	11/2/2020 3:54 PM
29	Yes but have a waiver process for unforeseen circumstances	10/29/2020 11:18 PM
30	It depends on definition and extent of space. I.e., would I have to turn my yard into a desert or concrete slab?	10/29/2020 12:37 PM
31	Stop trying to legislate common sense	10/28/2020 8:12 AM
32	As long as it doesn't require clear cutting the trees, all for cutting under brush and low limbs	10/27/2020 11:03 AM
33	Better & more sensible forest management	10/27/2020 8:50 AM
34	Again, citizens who voluntarily create defensible space around their homes and other structures should be given a worthy property tax credit. Too much fuel is Oregon's problem! Citizens need to be rewarded for significantly eliminating volatile plant fuel on their private property. After all, for decades we have been encouraged to plant more trees and shrubs. Now it is time for us happily, voluntarily to create low density towns and cities with defensible space both inside and around the perimeters. And we will ! No wise person wants to see life and property unnecessarily lost in a preventable wildfire!	10/26/2020 10:30 PM
35	Any new construction would need a site evaluation. This would include site adjacent fuels available (vegetation/structures) to make a decision on needed for fire resistance materials/sprinkler systems.	10/26/2020 9:02 PM
36	I would like to know more about situations where existing lot size does not allow these dimensions	10/26/2020 4:32 PM
37	The cost of creating defensible space could impact some families significantly. I would support expanding and searching for grants to help offset costs for low/medium income families.	10/26/2020 3:10 PM
38	Yes, but thought must be given to providing help to those not able to do this on their own (i.e., elderly, physically impaired, etc).	10/26/2020 2:25 PM

Nelson Research, Inc. Survey Executive Summary

**DESCHUTES COUNTY WILDFIRE
SURVEY RESEARCH REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
DECEMBER 6, 2020**

The following survey research report provides some valuable information regarding the public's perception of wildfire threat to homes in the county, as well as two proposals: 1) require certain fire-resistant materials (siding, decking, ventilation) when constructing new homes in the Wildfire Hazard Zone, and 2) expand Defensible Space for existing and new development in rural Deschutes County. This report should assist Deschutes County in its decision-making process regarding these proposals.

Throughout this executive summary, The Nelson Report identifies "key" demographics for many of the questions. Key demographics are those subgroups that respond at a higher percentage rate than the total sample for any given response. The key demographic groups for any given opinion are not necessarily the only subgroups in the survey who share that opinion; however, they are the ones that hold that opinion most strongly.

A total of 383 respondents were interviewed between December 1 and December 4, 2020. While the total number of respondents participating in this research reflects a +/-5.0% at the 95% level of confidence, the sampling has been heavily weighted in the rural areas of the county (75% rural, 25% urban). The reader must understand that due to the significant weighting, these results are not necessarily representative the community at large, but they **are** representative of those living in **rural** Deschutes County. In addition, it should be noted that a very small percentage of respondents participating in the survey, (3%), were in the 18-29 age group. This is likely due to the 75/25 split between rural and urban residents.

Furthermore, not all responses total 100%. This is not due any error, but because fractions of percentages have been rounded up or down. All responses not totaling 100% total 99% or 101%.

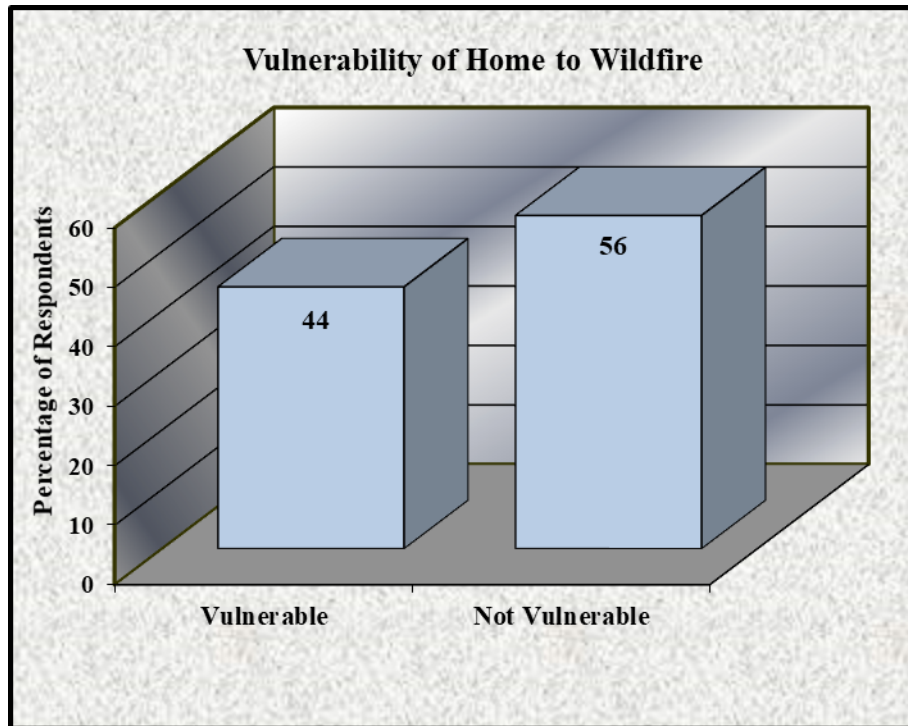
PERCEPTION OF WILDFIRE THREAT TO HOMES

Respondents were given the following information and question:

“In Deschutes County, wildfires have significantly increased over the last 40 years. Deschutes County is currently considering measures to help reduce the risk of catastrophic damage to homes in high risk areas in the county. These homes are located in what is called the Wildfire Hazard Zone.

On a scale of one to four with “1” representing VERY VULNERABLE and “4” representing “NOT VULNERABLE AT ALL,” please tell me how vulnerable you believe your home is to wildfire?”

Well over half of respondents, 56%, did **not** believe their home was vulnerable to wildfire (3-26%, 4-not vulnerable at all 30%), while 44% believed their home **was** vulnerable to wildfire (1-very vulnerable 17%, 2%-27%).



Key groups that did **not** believe their homes were vulnerable to wildfires were males (60%), other genders (100%), 45-59 years old (61%), 60+ years old (57%), 6-10 year residents (58%), over 10 year residents (57%), and urban (66%).

Key demographics that believed their homes **were** vulnerable to wildfires were females (48%), 18-29 years old (77%), 30-44 years old (50%), 0-5 year residents (55%), and rural (47%).

In a key cross tab, 54% of respondents that later **strongly favored** a proposal to require certain fire-resistant materials for new construction in the Wildfire Hazard Zone (21% of all respondents), **believed their homes were vulnerable** to wildfire.

In another special cross tab, 70% of respondents that **strongly opposed** a proposal to require certain fire-resistant materials for new construction in the Wildfire Hazard Zone (16% of all respondents) **did not believe** their homes were vulnerable to wildfire.

In yet another important cross tab, 46% of respondents that later **strongly favored** expanding Defensible Space requirements in rural Deschutes County (24% of all respondents) **believed their homes were vulnerable** to wildfire.

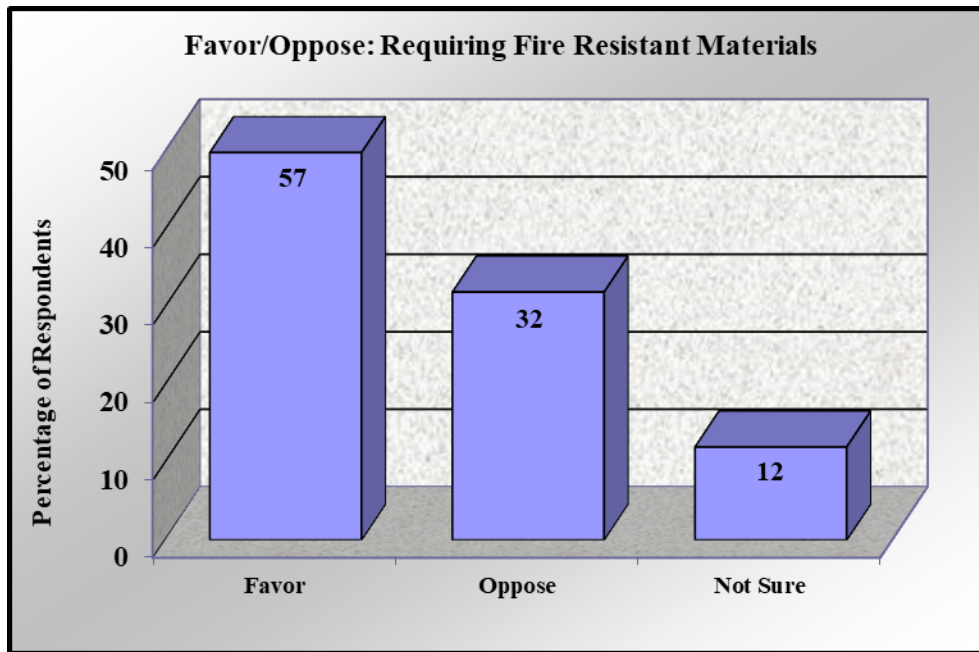
FAVOR/OPPOSE: REQUIRING CERTAIN FIRE-RESISTANT MATERIALS WHEN CONSTRUCTING A NEW HOME IN THE WILDFIRE HAZARD ZONE

Next, respondents were read the following information and question:

“Deschutes County currently requires fire-resistant roofing materials only. The county is considering a proposal to require certain fire-resistant materials (siding, decking, ventilation) when constructing a new home in the Wildfire Hazard Zone. This requirement would increase the cost of building a new 2,400 square foot home by approximately \$5,000-\$6,000 including labor costs and materials.

Would you FAVOR or OPPOSE the county enacting these requirements for new construction?”

Well over half of respondents, 57%, favored requiring certain fire-resistant materials when constructing a new home in the Wildfire Hazard Zone (strongly favor-39%, somewhat favor-18%), while 32% opposed the proposal (somewhat oppose-9%, strongly oppose-23%). Another 12% were not sure, as reflected in the following chart.



Key demographics that favored requiring certain fire-resistant materials when constructing a new home in Wildfire Hazard Zones were females (61%), 18-29 years old (77%), 60+ years old (61%), 0-5 year residents (68%), and rural (58%).

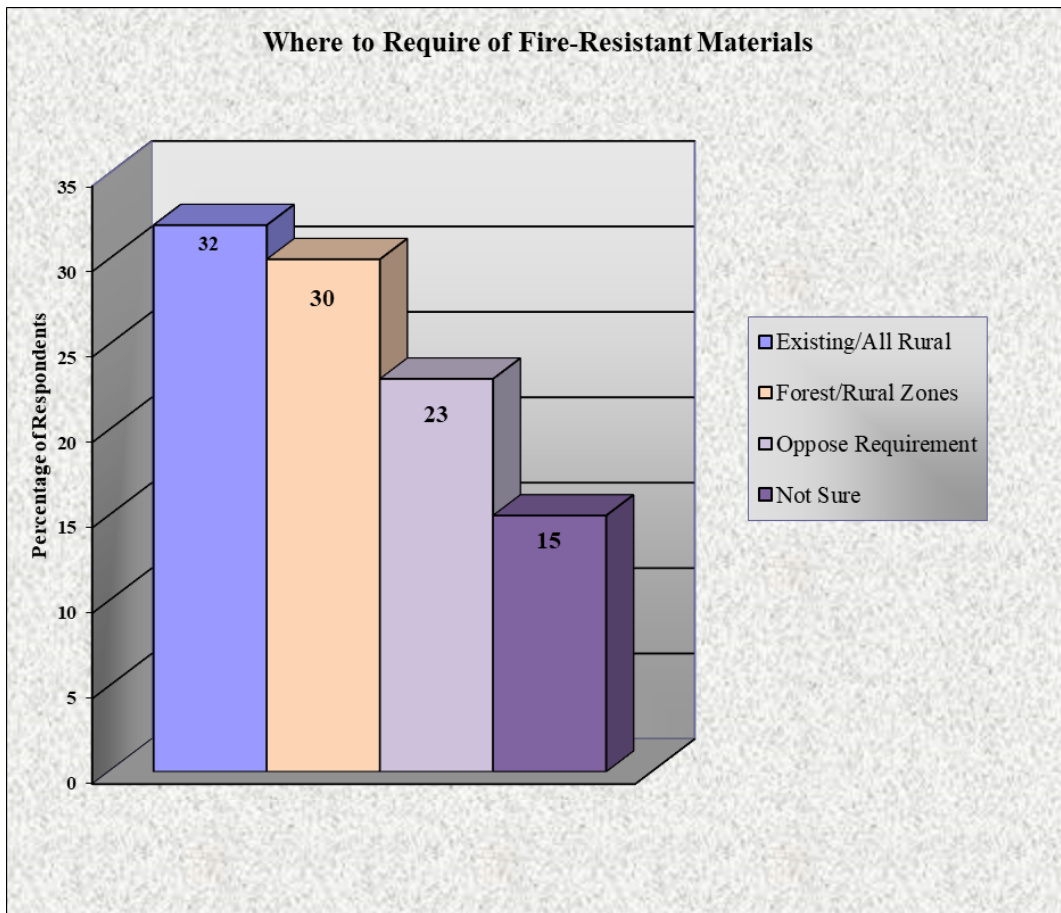
Key groups that opposed requiring certain fire-resistant materials when constructing a new home in Wildfire Hazard Zones were other genders (100%), males (34%), 45-59 years old (41%), over 10 year residents (34%), and urban (33%).

In a special cross tab, 72% of respondents that later **strongly favored** expanding Defensible Space requirements in rural Deschutes County (37% of all respondents) also **favored** certain fire-resistant materials for new construction in the Wildfire Hazard Zone.

Next, respondents were asked the following question:

If you had to choose, where would you prefer the county require additional fire-resistant materials ~ in the EXISTING Wildfire Hazard Zone which includes ALL OF RURAL DESCHUTES COUNTY, or reduce the Wildfire Hazard Zone to include FOREST AND RURAL RESIDENTIAL ZONES ONLY, or do you OPPOSE requiring fire-resistant materials in Wildfire Hazard Zones altogether?

Respondents were nearly split, with 32% that preferred requiring fire-resistant materials in the existing Wildfire Hazard Zone which includes all of rural Deschutes County, and 30% that preferred to reduce the Wildfire Hazard Zone to include forest and rural residential zones only. Another 23% opposed requiring fire-resistant materials altogether and 15% were not sure.



Key demographics that preferred a requirement for fire-resistant materials in the existing Wildfire Hazard Zone were females (34%), 18-29 years old (62%), residents of 6-10 years (35%), and residents of 0-5 years (33%).

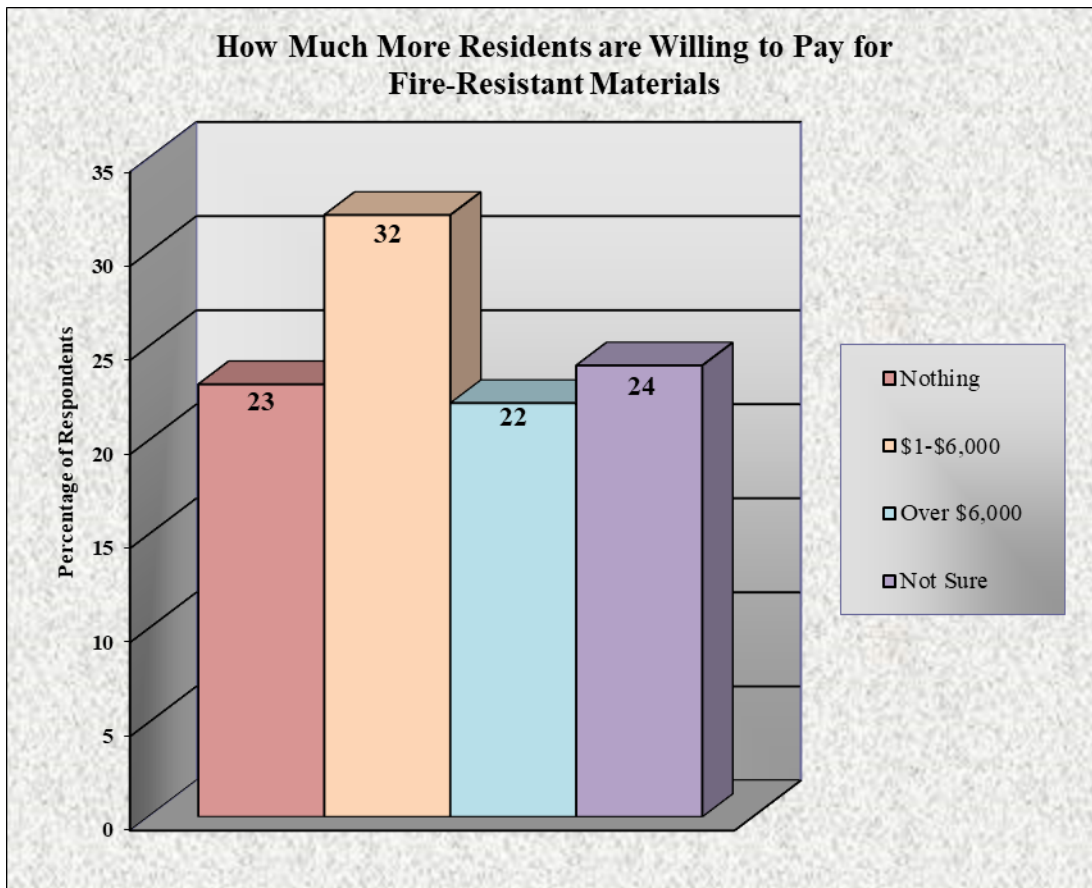
Key groups that preferred to reduce the Wildfire Hazard Zone to include forest and rural residential zone only were other genders (100%), males (33%), 60+ years old (34%), and residents of 0-5 years (33%).

Key demographics that opposed requiring fire-resistant materials in Wildfire Hazard Zones altogether were males (25%), 30-44 and 45-59 years old (30%), residents of over 10 years (26%), and urban (25%).

Next, respondents were asked how much more they were willing to pay to build a new home in Deschutes County to reduce the risk of wildfire damage to their home.

A slight plurality of respondents, 32%, were willing to pay \$1,000-\$6,000 more for a new home with fire-resistant materials, while 23% were **not** willing to pay anything more. Another 22% were willing to pay over \$6,000 and a relatively high 24% were not sure.

It is interesting to note that 54% of all respondents were willing to pay more for a new home using certain fire-resistant materials (\$1-\$6,000+). These numbers are consistent with the percentage of respondents that favor this requirement.



Key demographics willing to pay \$1-\$6,000 more were females (33%), 18-29 years old (46%), 0-5 year residents (40%), and rural (33%).

Key groups that were not willing to pay anything more were males (24%), 45-59 years old (33%), 30-44 years old (25%), over 10 year residents (26%), and rural (24%).

Key groups willing to pay over \$6,000 more were males (23%), 30-44 years old (27%), 0-5 year residents (26%), and urban (27%).

Key demographics that were not sure how much they would be willing to pay for fire-resistant materials were other genders (100%), 18-29 years old (39%), 60+ years old (27%), and 6-10 year residents (31%).

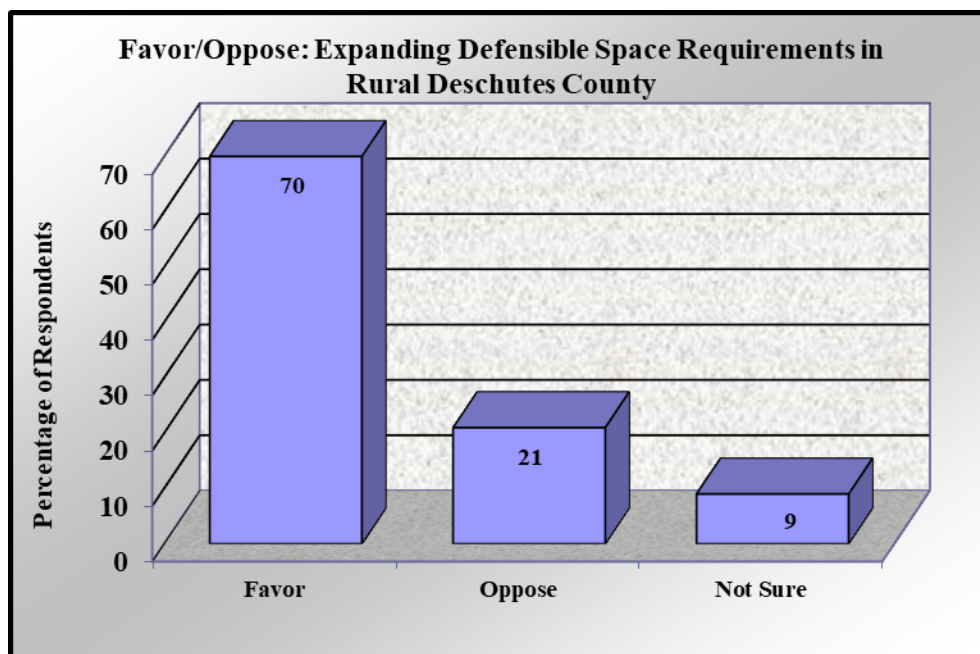
FAVOR/OPOSE: EXPANDING DEFENSIBLE SPACE REQUIREMENTS IN RURAL DESCHUTES COUNTY

Next, respondents were given the following information and question:

“Currently, Deschutes County requires Defensible Space in Forest Use Zones. Defensible space is an area around a building where vegetation, debris and other types of combustible materials have been treated or cleared to slow the spread of fire to and from the building.

Do you FAVOR or OPOSE expanding these requirements so residents would need to create defensible spaces around their home for existing and new development in rural Deschutes County?”

A very large percentage of respondents, 70%, favored expanding Defensible Space requirements so residents would have to create defensible spaces around their home for existing and new development in rural Deschutes County (strongly favor-52%, somewhat favor-18%), while 21% opposed the proposal (somewhat oppose-6%, strongly oppose-15%). A relatively high 9% were not sure.



Key demographics that favored expanding Defensible Space Requirements were females (74%), 18-29 years old (77%), 60+ years old (73%), residents of 6-10 years (73%), and urban (76%).

Key groups that opposed expanding Defensible Space Requirements were males (25%), other genders (100%), 30-44 and 45-59 years old (27%), over 10 year residents (23%), and rural (22%).

CONCLUSIONS

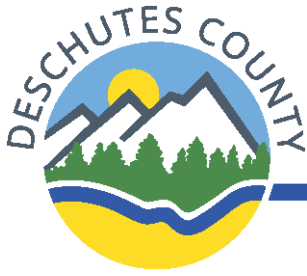
1. Well over half of respondents do not believe their home is vulnerable to wildfire; however, nearly half of rural residents, (47%), believe their homes *are* vulnerable. A large majority, of older residents 45-59 years old (61%) and 60+ years old (57%), do **not** believe their homes are vulnerable to wildfire.
2. Well over half of respondents favor a proposal that would require certain fire-resistant materials (siding, decking, ventilation) when constructing a new home in the Wildfire Hazard Zone. It is important to note that a majority of respondents in *nearly every* demographic group (including rural areas) favor this proposal.
3. Respondents are nearly split with slightly less than one-third that prefer fire-resistant materials be required in the **existing** Wildfire Hazard Zone which includes all of rural Deschutes County, and slightly fewer numbers that prefer to reduce the Wildfire Hazard Zone to include forest and rural residential zones only. It appears that slightly more rural residents prefer enacting these requirements on all of rural Deschutes County (32%), over reducing the Wildfire Hazard Zone (30%). Additional education and communication about why this is a necessary option (enacting the requirement in the existing Wildfire Hazard Zone) could significantly increase support, should the County choose to move forward with.
4. Slightly less than one-third of respondents would be willing to pay between \$1-\$6,000 more to build a new home with fire resistant materials in Wildfire Hazard Zones. It is important to note that a majority of respondents say they would be willing to pay more for these fire-resistant materials (\$1-\$6,000+), including those currently living in rural areas of the County. These numbers are consistent with the number of respondents that favor requiring fire-resistant materials.
5. A very large number of respondents favor expanding Defensible Space Requirements so new and existing residents living in rural Deschutes County would need to create an area around their homes where vegetation, debris and other types of combustible materials have been treated or cleared to slow the spread of wildfire. It is significant that a large majority of respondents in *every* demographic group support this proposal.

6. While most Deschutes County residents do not currently believe their homes are vulnerable to wildfire, a majority of respondents in nearly every demographic group favor a proposal to require certain fire-resistant materials on new construction. A slight plurality favor this requirement be enacted in **all** of rural Deschutes County. If the County chooses to enact this requirement in the existing Wildfire Hazard Zone, additional communication and education would likely increase community support for this option. In addition, a majority of respondents say they would be willing to pay more to build a home with fire-resistant materials (\$1-\$6,000+), including those currently living in rural areas of the County.

A strong majority of respondents in every demographic group favor a second proposal that would require new and existing residents living in rural Deschutes County to create an area around their homes where vegetation, debris and other types of combustible materials have been treated or cleared to slow the spread of fire.

Both proposals appear to have wide-spread community support in nearly every demographic group.

Virtual Open House Q&A Summaries



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deschutes County Planning Commission

FROM: Nick Lelack, AICP, Director
Peter Gutowsky, AICP, Planning Manager

DATE: November 12, 2020

SUBJECT: Wildfire Mitigation Open House

I. Wildfire Mitigation Open House

On November 19, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. the Community Development Department (CDD) is inviting residents and stakeholders to hear experts discuss wildfire mitigation measures and to share their own opinions and questions regarding the issue.¹ This is the first virtual open house hosted by the Planning Commission that will rely exclusively on Zoom, Facebook Live, and by phone. The second open house will be held on December 3, 2020.

Deschutes County is considering new building codes and land use regulations to protect communities from wildfire. Proposed changes could help make homes more fire resistant and require homeowners to create defensible space around their homes. Updating local building codes to make homes more fire resistant could increase the cost of new construction and some remodels due to new requirements for decks, siding, vents and other materials. The proposed rules would only apply to homes outside of city limits in unincorporated areas of Deschutes County.

III. Background

Deschutes County received an 18-month Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) grant to—among other tasks—incorporate Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee (WMAC) recommendations into the Comprehensive Plan and development code.

Last year, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) discussed approaches to updating the Wildfire Hazard Zone (WHZ) / Map and potential building and land use standards to mitigate wildfire hazards and improve wildfire safety. Ultimately, the Board established a WMAC to provide

¹ The Planning Commission will convene a second open house on December 3 at 6:00 p.m. More information is available at: <https://www.deschutes.org/cd/page/wildfire-mitigation>.

recommendations.² The WMAC, which consisted of 12 voting members, held meetings from October 2019 to January 2020. A draft WMAC report was provided to the Board and the Planning Commission on February 13, 2020 and a final report on April 17, 2020.³

III. Online Survey

In addition to the discussions with staff at the open houses, CDD invites residents to provide their feedback through an online survey: www.deschutes.org/wildfiremitigationsurvey. The deadline to respond is December 22, 2020. Staff will share the results of the community's feedback to the Board in early 2021 and discuss how to proceed.

² The WMAC was charged to undertake the following objectives:

1. Recommend an updated Wildfire Hazard Zone based on the Oregon Department of Forestry's criteria in Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 629-044-0200 (weather, slope, fuel hazard, fuel distribution);
2. Review and recommend whether and how to apply the Oregon Building Codes Division's updated Wildfire Hazard Mitigation standards, i.e., ORSC - R327, in areas under Deschutes County's building jurisdiction; and
3. Review and recommend whether and where to propose new land use regulations based on the University of Oregon's Community Service Center audit of Deschutes County Code and best practices from other jurisdictions.

³ <https://www.deschutes.org/cd/page/wildfire-mitigation-advisory-committee>.



**DESCHUTES COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
WILDFIRE MITIGATION OPEN HOUSE**

NOVEMBER 19, 2020, 6:00 PM

Questions and Answers

1. Is the town Redmond rural area or not?

The City of Redmond and its Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) are not included in this proposal. This proposal only applies to rural Deschutes County, which is lands outside of the cities of Bend, La Pine, Sisters, and Redmond and their respective UGBs.

2. Are there resources that I can find more information on what defensible space should look like?

Deschutes County Wildfire Mitigation Project Website is a good place to start:

- <https://www.deschutes.org/cd/page/wildfire-mitigation>

The Project Wildfire website is another useful resource:

- <https://www.projectwildfire.org/>

Contact your local fire department.

One can also reach out to Boone Zimmerlee, Fire Adaptive Communities Coordinator. His email is Boone.Zimmerlee@deschutes.org.

3. How did the \$2000 grant program go over the summer?

This grant was associated with Firewise Communities funded by Deschutes County. It went well. Many communities requested funding. Prioritization of grant applications has been completed. All communities that applied for a grant have been notified as to whether or not they have been awarded a grant. For more information, contact Boone Zimmerlee.

4. Does defensible space mean I have to remove all trees within 100' around my home?

No. The key is understanding what is going to contribute to ember production. For trees within the defensible space of a structure, the emphasis is on removing ladder fuels. Alternatively, trees or vegetation that are up against the home or under the eaves should be significantly trimmed and if necessary, removed.

5. Can you choose to adopt only some of the new regulations, but not others (e.g. roofing and siding only)?

No. If R327.4 (fire-resistant building codes) is adopted, all building codes pertaining to ventilation, siding, decking, etc. will apply. There are exceptions related to where geographically the building codes can apply. These issues will be discussed at a later date if the Board of County Commissioners supports updating the County building codes.

6. I've seen an option between having this apply to the current wildfire risk area or having it encompass the entire rural Deschutes County. Is this still optional, or has the decision to expand coverage already been made?

This decision has not been made. In 2001, Deschutes County adopted a wildfire hazard zone that prohibited untreated wooden shake roofs in the rural county. Under this new building code provision, R327.4, Deschutes County can revisit its wildfire hazard zone based on four factors (weather, topography, vegetative fuel type, and vegetative fuel distribution). There are two options based on the work of a Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee to consider. The first is to keep as it is today and apply the wildfire hazard zone to the rural county. The second is to focus on sub-areas based on Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) and the four factors. Some areas were eliminated through that analysis. The law allows a jurisdiction to focus on a region, but it doesn't define what a region means. Staff will have a conversation with the Board of County Commissioners to discuss this option in early 2021.

7. Does that include wood stoves?

No.

8. How much fuel reduction has been done on State and Federal lands in the county?

It varies from year to year depending on funding. Approximately 800-1,000 acres are treated annually for fuels reduction by the state. USFS generally has a target of approximately 38,000 acres annually, in 2020 the Deschutes National Forest completed 26,752 acres that received treatments such as thinning, mowing, pile burning, broadcast burning or other treatment. CWPPs track fuel treatments across the county on a five year basis.

9. I understand that the majority of fires that burn homes come from embers landing on roofs. Do some roof types offer better protection and why not require them on new construction or reconstruction?

Wooden shakes and wooden shingles are the most susceptible to embers. Deschutes County's existing wildfire hazard zone already prohibits those types of materials. Any new construction is required to meet existing roofing standards. Asphalt shingles and metal roofing are effective materials.

- 10. Many of our neighboring overgrown properties are owned by absentee landlords whose attitudes apparently are "out of sight-out of mind." How are we going to address these issues?**

There isn't an enforcement mechanism today to compel absentee landlords to implement defensible space. It's important to continue to try to maintain relationships with those individuals. One approach is offering incentives like grant funding that assist in fuels reduction and improving defensible space. As an additional incentive, as woody debris is removed, evidence shows property values generally increase. It is important to emphasize that maintaining 100' of defensible space can greatly improve structure survivability.

- 11. If I add a room to my house, will I need to modify my existing deck to be covered underneath?**

No. R327.4 (fire-resistant building codes) would only apply to new rural residential construction and potentially to new accessory structures.

- 12. Do these regulations apply to commercial structures as well?**

No.

- 13. Extending some of the county forestry recommendations for 100' from structures will change the landscape considerably in the rural 2.5 acre subdivisions - even if the space is graded. What is the flexibility for those who have met SB 760 (360) standards - out to 50' - it is a little less rigorous?**

Senate Bill (SB) 360 (not 760) does have requirements for defensible space. Based on the latest science, 50' is not always enough and a property owner that decides to rely on that separation distance needs to recognize the risk they are accepting by not working out to 100'. Ember fallout occurs in the 100' area.

- 14. Are these new code requirements unique to Oregon or have other states adopted similar requirements?**

California has adopted similar regulations. In Oregon, the City of Medford applied R327.4 to a portion of their jurisdiction.

- 15. What did they restrict the venting size to?**

Current regulation allows a maximum opening of a 1/4 of an inch, R327.4 would allow a maximum opening of a 1/8 of an inch.

- 16. Can you briefly describe what makes a vent opening "ember resistant"?**

Certain types of vents are manufactured and tested by a third party to prevent ember intrusion. They rely on a heat activated material similar to those firework snakes. They char over and seal the opening.

17. Is there a rural map?

The map that applies today was adopted in 2001. Adopted in 2001, it prohibits wooden shake roofs.

18. What triggers the building code portion for remodels: anything requiring a permit (inside or outside)? Any improvement to the exterior - requiring permit or not?

Normally all work that is not considered exempt from building permits would be required to comply with the adopted code requirements. These issues will be discussed at a later date if the Board of County Commissioners supports adopting the increased construction standards (R327.4). General building code questions can be referred to Chris Gracia, Assistant Building Official, Chris.Gracia@deschutes.org.

19. If one has questions about building materials and grant funds, who are appropriate contacts?

Deschutes County Wildfire Mitigation Project Website is a good place to start:

- <https://www.deschutes.org/cd/page/wildfire-mitigation>

The Project Wildfire website is another useful resource:

- <https://www.projectwildfire.org/>

Contact your local fire department.

One can also reach out to Boone Zimmerlee, Fire Adaptive Communities Coordinator. His email is Boone.Zimmerlee@deschutes.org.

A fairly comprehensive list of approved building materials can be found at:

<http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/fire-engineering-and-investigations/building-materials-listing/bml-search-building-materials-listing/>

20. How does one select fire resistant plants in the defensible space area, especially near a house? Any thoughts about water conservation and xeriscaping?

There are plants that don't use a lot of water but are still flammable. There is a guide to fire-resistant plants available. The guide can be found on FireFree.org, contact Boone Zimmerlee for more information.

21. I want to clear up a misunderstanding. Does SB 360 require 100' of defensible space onto a neighboring property as well as theirs?

Under SB360 the fuel break distance depends on type of roof material. The required fuel break distance under SB360 will only extend to the property line and does not extend beyond the property line.

22. Are there certain trees that apply a reasonable fire break around a property?

Yes. Some trees like aspen are more resistant to wildfires. Many deciduous trees are fire-resistant as well since they hold a lot of moisture, their leaves are green and they don't have a lot of lower limbs creating ladder fuels.

23. If I have a fire hydrant on the street in front of my house, outside a UGB, will this still apply to my house?

This has not been determined yet. However, the presence of fire hydrant should not exclude a homeowner from their responsibility of doing defensible space. This would be a transfer of risk to firefighters under the homeowner's assumed safety of a having a hydrant, which likely would not be working during a wildfire event as power is often shut off especially in areas outside of Urban boundaries and larger municipalities. There are a couple of communities around Sisters that have hydrants, but wildland firefighting agencies recognize and plan for these to likely not be working during a wildland event.

24. Will absentee landlords with property but no dwelling be responsible to provide defensible space on their side of the property line?

This has not been determined yet. The Board of County Commissioners, if they direct staff to develop defensible space regulations will need to determine if absentee property owners with no structure are still required to undertake vegetation management.

25. How many people participating/watching tonight?

571 people. 24 people participated through Zoom. 547 were reached through Facebook Live.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deschutes County Planning Commission

FROM: Nick Lelack, AICP, Director
Peter Gutowsky, AICP, Planning Manager

DATE: November 25, 2020

SUBJECT: Wildfire Mitigation Open House

I. Wildfire Mitigation Open House

On December 3, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. the Community Development Department (CDD) is inviting residents and stakeholders to hear experts discuss wildfire mitigation measures and to share their own opinions and questions regarding the issue. This is the second virtual open house hosted by the Planning Commission.¹ It will rely exclusively on Zoom and by phone. Questions received and answered during the first open house are attached as a reference.

Deschutes County is considering new building codes and land use regulations to protect communities from wildfire. Proposed changes could help make homes more fire resistant and require homeowners to create defensible space around their homes. Updating local building codes to make homes more fire resistant could increase the cost of new construction and some remodels due to new requirements for decks, siding, vents and other materials. The proposed rules would only apply to homes outside of city limits in unincorporated areas of Deschutes County.

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recommendations.² The WMAC, which consisted of 12 voting members, held meetings from October 2019 to January 2020. A draft WMAC report was provided to the Board and the Planning Commission on February 13, 2020 and a final report on April 17, 2020.³

III. Online Survey

In addition to the discussions with staff at the open houses, CDD invites residents to provide their feedback through an online survey: www.deschutes.org/wildfiremitigationsurvey. The deadline to respond is December 22, 2020. Staff will share the results of the community's feedback to the Board in early 2021 and discuss how to proceed.

Attachment:

November 19, 2020 Open House Questions & Answers

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1. Recommend an updated Wildfire Hazard Zone based on the Oregon Department of Forestry's criteria in Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 629-044-0200 (weather, slope, fuel hazard, fuel distribution);
2. Review and recommend whether and how to apply the Oregon Building Codes Division's updated Wildfire Hazard Mitigation standards, i.e., ORSC - R327, in areas under Deschutes County's building jurisdiction; and
3. Review and recommend whether and where to propose new land use regulations based on the University of Oregon's Community Service Center audit of Deschutes County Code and best practices from other jurisdictions.

³ <https://www.deschutes.org/cd/page/wildfire-mitigation-advisory-committee>.



DESCHUTES COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
WILDFIRE MITIGATION OPEN HOUSE

December 3rd, 2020, 6:00 PM

Questions and Answers

1) Does defensible space mean that I have to remove all trees on my property around my home?

No, tall trees can act as a natural shield to block embers from landing on the house. They also can provide some sheltering from the fire, as well as shading on the house which can keep the house and other surrounding fuels cooler, lowering the probability of ignition.

2) To what extent will the impact of the decisions made here have on land use as per other purposes such as the quality of ecology for wildlife and on water resources, as well as other natural resources and Goal 5 protected values?

The County has received a grant from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) to pursue this fire mitigation project as well as a concurrent project to initiate updates to Goal 5 – Wildlife Resources, all in an effort to address wildlife comprehensively.

3) In the case of a wildfire, is there sufficient back-up utilities and power systems to ensure that the water and electricity will be available even if the major utilities happen to fail during the need to fight those wildfires?

This process is not addressing the public utilities and facilities, however, the State of Oregon and other State level legislatures are working with public utility companies on different strategies to be better prepared for these possibilities.

4) How are prescribed burns managed and is that process truly beneficial to fire mitigation?

Deschutes County does not conduct prescribed burns, Burns are executed either federally on public lands or by private land owners on private lands and regulated through the Forest Practices Act or a planning process through the National Environmental Policy Act to consider wildlife habitat conservation.

5) What impact will creating defensible space have on the various bird species who depend on shrubs as a natural habitat and source for food?

The wildlife project involving experts and biologists is currently underway, collecting data on the wildlife inventory and delving into what causes are having a negative impact on wildlife and wildlife habitat.

6) How do the proposed fire resistant codes differ from the codes that are in place today?

Old code allows factory treated wood shake and shingle roofing, this new R327.4 code would prohibit any types of wood shakes or shingles. It will require that materials used for walking surfaces such as decks, balconies, porches etc., be fire resistant. Exterior wall coverings will be required to be fire resistant and the underside of eave overhangs to be protected. Glazing requirements for windows, doors and skylights are to remain the same. Any elevated deck would require that the underside be fully enclosed either from the deck down to grade or it would require any framing under the deck to be protected by fire resistant materials. Rain gutters must be noncombustible and covered to prevent leaves and debris from landing inside of them. Size requirements for all screening for foundation and attic ventilation openings will be reduced from ¼ inch to a maximum of 1/8 inch opening. Ventilation holes will no longer be allowed to be located under the eaves unless the eave is more than 12' above the ground or is protected by an ember resistant vent.

7) In dense areas in RR-10 and MUA-10 zones, where narrow lots are present, how will clearing vegetation up to 100 feet from a house affect wildlife and their environment?

Defensible space is not uniform. Implementing defensible space works transitionally and gradually from wildland areas to the location of the house. There are three boundaries;

30' to 100' Extended boundary - Eliminate brush and/or highly flammable vegetation.

5' to 30' Intermediate boundary - eliminate all vegetation but select fire resistant or hard to burn vegetation.

0 to 5' Immediate boundary - final disconnect from wildland, no vegetation.

8) Has the Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee been invited to tour a property where defensible space is present and understand the full functionality of it?

No home owners have opened up their homes to tour, however through community walk-throughs they have discovered properties where defensible space is being utilized.

9) What is Deschutes County's largest fire in its history?

There is an unclear answer to this question. Fires that have occurred over the years have always been quite large, however, size has not been uncommon – it is the intensity of the fire that is getting stronger as there is more fuel accumulation.

10) Will the Wildlife team evaluate the environmental impacts of some of the proposals in R327.4 which refer to fire resistant materials?

There are multiple options to consider other than fire retardant treated wood, the code lists various non-combustible materials that can be used for alternative deck materials.

11) Where else has R327.4 been applied in Oregon?

This code was recently adopted in January 2019, since that time only a portion of the City of Medford has adopted and applied these R327.4 standards.

12) If Deschutes County decides to adopt the provisions into code, how does the Planning Commission get involved and what is the adoption process?

R327.4 building codes have already been adopted, however defensible space will take more time assessing how to implement it into code. This adoption process will begin with a rough draft outlining the best practices which are incurred by coordination with experts and holding work session with the Planning Commission. Throughout the drafting, assessing and reassessing process, there are multiple opportunities through various hearings to get involved to help shape the outcome before it goes in front of the State for adoption.

13) Is only fire resistance being considered regarding the proposed building materials not recyclability or landfill impacts?

This meeting is only in regard to implementing the already adopted R327.4 building standards. The State of Oregon Building Codes Division has full authority over what gets adopted into the building codes.

14) What chemicals are used in the fire resistant materials?

15) How are these fire starting?

16) How many people participating/watching tonight?

471. 27 people participating through Zoom. 444 were reached through Facebook Live.

General Public Comments

Tanya Saltzman

From: Peter Gutowsky
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 11:56 AM
To: Tanya Saltzman; Kyle Collins; Peter Russell
Subject: FW: My two cents and more

FYI.



Peter Gutowsky, AICP | Planning Manager
DESCHUTES COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

117 NW Lafayette Avenue | Bend, Oregon 97703

Tel: (541) 385-1709



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From: Nick Lelack <Nick.Lelack@deschutes.org>
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 11:55 AM
To: Patti Adair <Patti.Adair@deschutes.org>
Cc: Ed Keith <Ed.Keith@deschutes.org>; Peter Gutowsky <Peter.Gutowsky@deschutes.org>
Subject: RE: My two cents and more

Commissioner,

Thank you for sharing the message with us. Peter will include it in our record of public comments and survey results for this project.



Nick Lelack, AICP | Director
Deschutes County Community Development

117 NW Lafayette Ave | Bend, Oregon 97703

Tel: (541) 385-1708 | Cell: (541) 639-5585



Let us know how we're doing: [Customer Feedback Survey](#)

From: Patti Adair <Patti.Adair@deschutes.org>
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 11:23 AM
To: Nick Lelack <Nick.Lelack@deschutes.org>
Cc: Ed Keith <Ed.Keith@deschutes.org>
Subject: FW: My two cents and more

Good morning Nick,

This is feedback from our community regarding raising the costs of building...

Catherine was thinking we need to do a better job cleaning around home sights...

Most sincerely,

Patti



Patti Adair | Commissioner
DESCHUTES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
1300 NW Wall St., Suite 206 | Bend, Oregon 97703
Tel: (541) 388-6567 | Cell: (541) 904-5378



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From: catherine Caudle <caudlecatherine@yahoo.com>

Sent: Monday, October 26, 2020 7:04 PM

To: Patti Adair <Patti.Adair@deschutes.org>

Subject: My two cents and more

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

The proposed building code changes for Deschutes County is not necessary. What is necessary is Dechutes County enforcing fire debris removal and clean up.

The proposed building code changes will cost lower income families, a great amount live in the rural areas of Deschutes County, from improving their homes. Many purchase mobile homes and place those on land, most or some are used, and this new rule would prohibit this cheap form of living from occurring.

I oppose the buidling changes being proposed and wish to have this item removed from further discussion. Deschutes county residents pay for homeowners coverage some at a higher rate simply because the fire hydrants are not available and they are too far away from the closest fire department. Perhaps the county could look at reducing fire by placing fire hydrants in the neighborhoods or requiring internal extinguishers in future home builds rather than prohibiting cheaper forms of living and further injuring those living cheaply in rural Deschutes County.

Catherine Caudle
2187 NW Quince Place
Redmond, Oregon 97756
5418487121

Tanya Saltzman

From: Matt Martin
Sent: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 12:29 PM
To: Peter Gutowsky; Tanya Saltzman
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Land Use Planning

Peter and Tanya-

I assume this is related to the proposed wildfire regulations. Please let me know if there is any action necessary on my part as planner on duty.

-Matt

From: Do Not Reply <donotreply@deschutes.org>
Sent: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 11:51 AM
To: CDD Planning <planning@deschutes.org>
Subject: Form submission from: Land Use Planning

****AUTOMATED EMAIL - PLEASE DO NOT REPLY**** Incoming Land Use Planning Submission from Website Submitted on Wednesday, October 28, 2020

- 11:50am Submitted values are:

Name cheryl

Phone Number 541-225-7185

Email Address cheryljerryhoskins@gmail.com

Subject Property Address 7015 NW River Springs Rd, Redmond OR

Subject Property Taxlot Number

Relationship to the Property

Details of your Inquiry

When is the deadline for public comment on the proposed TAX on new construction in rural Deschutes County to require fire retardant materials to be used in any new construction? Please send email with pertinent information.

Phone calls to get information isn't working & we aren't on facebook. Thank you!

From: [Peter Gutowsky](#)
To: "James Lewis"
Subject: RE: Re Wildfire Mitigation Project / Community Input
Date: Thursday, October 29, 2020 11:48:32 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

James,

Thanks for the email. Everything right now is conceptual. We'll convey the results of the survey to the Board in the New Year. If the Board supports R327 and/or defensible space, we'll draft language and share with it you and others as we prepare for inevitable public hearings.

Of course, Tuesday's election could also impact whether there's Board support for additional wildfire mitigation measures.

I haven't heard from any other community association.



Peter Gutowsky, AICP | Planning Manager
DESCHUTES COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
117 NW Lafayette Avenue | Bend, Oregon 97703
Tel: (541) 385-1709



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From: James Lewis
Sent: Thursday, October 29, 2020 11:30 AM
To: Peter Gutowsky
Subject: RE: Re Wildfire Mitigation Project / Community Input

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Peter:

Thanks for thinking of me and sending this. I did see this – I am going to discuss this with our Community Development department staff. Our primary concerns will be if this is adopted by the County, what provisions included therein will conflict with our design manual regulations – and to determine if we will request changes to the County document or need to change our design manual (or a combination of both). Curious – have you heard from the managers of any other community associations (Black Butte, Eagle Crest, etc...)?

Overall, it is hard to argue against any construction provisions for fire safety – especially in Sunriver. Overall, in the past, SROA has changed it's requirements for fire prevention (i.e. no shake roofs, defensible space, etc.).

We have to review the drafts first – haven't had an opportunity to do that yet. In your estimation, is there something in particular that we should be looking? Ultimately, I would like to support the changes formally, but we need to get a pulse on what this would mean for construction in Sunriver and how it affects our owners (ahhh, the politics of it all.....LOL).

Thanks, James

From: Peter Gutowsky <Peter.Gutowsky@deschutes.org>
Sent: Thursday, October 29, 2020 8:24 AM
To: James Lewis <jamesl@srowners.org>
Subject: Re Wildfire Mitigation Project / Community Input

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of SROA! Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe! If you are unsure, verify with the sender by phone.

James,

If you haven't seen the press release, FYI.

~~~~~

Deschutes County is considering new building codes and land use regulations to protect communities from wildfire. Proposed changes could help make homes more fire resistant and require homeowners to create defensible space around their homes.

Updating local building codes to make homes more fire resistant could make new construction and some remodels more expensive because of new requirements for decks, siding, vents and other materials.

The proposed rules would only apply to homes outside of city limits in unincorporated areas of Deschutes County.

Deschutes County Community Development Department invites residents to learn more about the proposed changes and provide their feedback through an online survey:

[www.deschutes.org/wildfiremitigationsurvey](http://www.deschutes.org/wildfiremitigationsurvey)

The Deschutes County Planning Commission will host two virtual meetings to provide residents a chance to learn more about the proposed changes and ask questions. Meetings will be held on:

- Thursday, November 19, at 6 p.m.
- Thursday, December 3, at 6 p.m.

Staff will share the results of the community's feedback to the Board of County Commissioners in early 2021 and discuss how to proceed.

For more information on how to participate in the virtual community meetings, please visit [www.deschutes.org/wildfiremitigation](http://www.deschutes.org/wildfiremitigation). For questions, or more information, please contact Peter Gutowsky, Planning Manager, 541-385-1709, [peter.gutowsky@deschutes.org](mailto:peter.gutowsky@deschutes.org); or Tanya Saltzman, Associate Planner, 541-388-6528, [Tanya.Saltzman@deschutes.org](mailto:Tanya.Saltzman@deschutes.org).

Please visit [www.deschutes.org/wildfiremitigation](http://www.deschutes.org/wildfiremitigation) for current project information, and to sign up for project updates.



**Peter Gutowsky, AICP | Planning Manager**

**DESCHUTES COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

117 NW Lafayette Avenue | Bend, Oregon 97703

Tel: (541) 385-1709



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## Tanya Saltzman


---

**From:** Peter Gutowsky  
**Sent:** Friday, October 30, 2020 4:46 PM  
**To:** 'Bill Inman'; Tanya Saltzman  
**Cc:** Ed Keith  
**Subject:** RE: Fire risk reduction

Bill,

Your question is a good one. Should defensible space apply to vacant lots? It's one we can discuss with the Board in the New Year.



**Peter Gutowsky, AICP | Planning Manager**  
**DESCHUTES COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
117 NW Lafayette Avenue | Bend, Oregon 97703  
Tel: (541) 385-1709  
  

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**From:** Bill Inman <inmanoutdoor@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 30, 2020 3:52 PM  
**To:** Peter Gutowsky <Peter.Gutowsky@deschutes.org>; Tanya Saltzman <Tanya.Saltzman@deschutes.org>  
**Cc:** Ed Keith <Ed.Keith@deschutes.org>  
**Subject:** Fire risk reduction

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Hi Peter & Tanya,

Thanks for the presentation and survey. My question is regarding vacant lots, especially in south county where it doesn't take long for the lodgepoles to take over and create a tinderbox. As you may have heard, there was a fire on Hermosa on Labor Day that came within minutes of crowning, in which case the whole DRRH neighborhood would likely have gone up. In addition to the changes for homeowners, is it possible for the county to consider requiring landowners to do fuel mitigation on vacant lots? It is required when a lot is purchased at the county auction, but that does nothing for the 100s of privately owned lots that will explode with the slightest spark or ember. I'm happy to share pictures of some of the lots adjacent to my property that are overgrown and crisscrossed with downed trees. I know Ed is well aware of the issue as we have discussed it in the past.

While this is not part of the purview of the the road district, it has come up in our meetings as well as in numerous conversations with neighbors.

Thanks,

Bill Inman  
Special Road District #1 Commissioner  
cell: 503.709.1492



## Tanya Saltzman

---

**From:** Oregon: Living with Fire <coordinator@oregonlivingwithfire.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 2, 2020 3:08 PM  
**To:** Peter Gutowsky; Tanya Saltzman  
**Cc:** Ed Keith; Boone Zimmerlee  
**Subject:** Fwd: New Blog -- Deschutes County is seeking resident input

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Hi There Peter & Tanya,

Please see the feedback I received from our blog post we sent out this morning. I did respond back to Craig to invite him to put his feedback in the survey. I will make sure to pass along any other feedback I receive to you all.

Thanks!

Take care,

Alison Green  
Coordinator  
Oregon: Living with Fire  
541-419-1116  
[coordinator@oregonlivingwithfire.org](mailto:coordinator@oregonlivingwithfire.org)  
[www.oregonlivingwithfire.org](http://www.oregonlivingwithfire.org)  
Facebook: @OregonLivingwithFire

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Craig Renkert <[hike4fun77@gmail.com](mailto:hike4fun77@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: New Blog -- Deschutes County is seeking resident input  
**Date:** November 2, 2020 at 12:10:50 PST  
**To:** Alison <[coordinator@oregonlivingwithfire.org](mailto:coordinator@oregonlivingwithfire.org)>

Allison

With the recent fire damage it is great that the county is taking action to reduce future risks.

My new home is less than a mile east of the August Juniper Ridge fire with nothing between us and the fire except juniper trees.

We were very concerned that we could lose our home less than 6 months after completing it. In building the home we include many fire mitigation construction techniques, with some resistance from the builder and sub-contractors.

More education of the construction trades on fire mitigation is needed to get their buy-in on the best practices and so they can develop procedures that will minimize any additional costs of construction.

As a rural county resident that has recently built a new home I would be willing to assist the county develop an update set of codes and procedures to reduce wildfire risk.

We will all benefit from reducing fire risk and we will all pay for it if we don't. The short term additional cost during construction of fire mitigation will pay long term benefits for the owner as well as others.

Thanks

Craig Renkert  
[hike4fun77@gmail.com](mailto:hike4fun77@gmail.com)  
(541) 797-3598

On Nov 2, 2020, at 8:26 AM, Alison <[coordinator@oregonlivingwithfire.org](mailto:coordinator@oregonlivingwithfire.org)> wrote:

# OREGON LIVING *with* FIRE



Deschutes County seeking input on proposed defensible space, fire rules. The county acknowledged that updating local building codes to make homes more fire-resistant could make new construction and some remodels more expensive because of new requirements decks, siding, vents and other materials.

The proposed rules would only apply to homes outside of city limits in unincorporated areas of the county.

Deschutes County Community Development Department invites residents to learn more about the proposed changes and provide their feedback through an online

survey: [www.deschutes.org/wildfiremitigationsurvey](http://www.deschutes.org/wildfiremitigationsurvey). The deadline for residents to provide their input is December 21st...[Read More](#)

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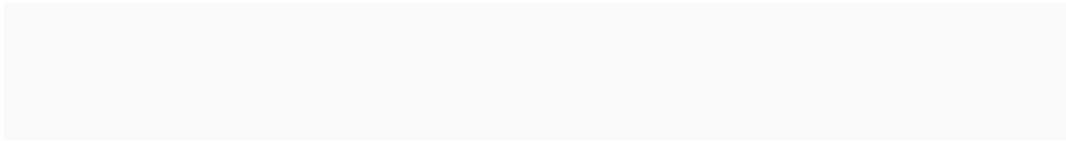
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**Our email address is:**

[coordinator@oregonlivingwithfire.org](mailto:coordinator@oregonlivingwithfire.org)

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---

This email was sent to [hike4fun77@gmail.com](mailto:hike4fun77@gmail.com)  
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Oregon: Living with Fire · 61150 SE 27th St · Bend, Oregon 97702 · USA



## Tanya Saltzman


---

**From:** Peter Gutowsky  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 4, 2020 8:19 AM  
**To:** 'Jeff Scheetz'  
**Cc:** Harry Ward; Sean Hartley; carl.harbour@crookedriverranch.com; garyw@crrfire.org; Nick Lelack; Ed Keith; Tanya Saltzman; Boone Zimmerlee  
**Subject:** RE: Residential WUI Building Code

Thanks Jeff for your comments. If you haven't done so already, please complete Deschutes County's survey:

- [www.deschutes.org/wildfiremitigationsurvey](http://www.deschutes.org/wildfiremitigationsurvey)



**Peter Gutowsky, AICP | Planning Manager**  
DESCHUTES COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
117 NW Lafayette Avenue | Bend, Oregon 97703  
Tel: (541) 385-1709  
  

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**From:** Jeff Scheetz <jscheetz@ix.netcom.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 3, 2020 5:58 PM  
**To:** Peter Gutowsky <Peter.Gutowsky@deschutes.org>  
**Cc:** Harry Ward <harry.ward@crrfire.org>; Sean Hartley <seanh@crrfire.org>; carl.harbour@crookedriverranch.com; garyw@crrfire.org  
**Subject:** Residential WUI Building Code

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Hi Peter,

As a firefighter having performed many lot inspections for wildfire safety at Crooked River Ranch, I can say that a very common recommendation is to improve the foundation (crawl space) vent screening found on almost all residential structures. Typical construction uses 1/4 inch spacing wire screen, presumably designed to prevent animal intrusion. Tested with artificially-driven embers (Institute for Business & Home Safety, 2013 Demonstration) has shown that 1/4 inch screen is too coarse for ember protection, and 1/8 to 1/16 inch spacing performs better in blocking embers.

Also, field reports from the Camp Fire in California several years ago reached the same conclusion after surveying residences for survivability.

Accordingly I recommend the county adoption of mandatory building code requirements (R327) for new residences in the wildfire-urban interface. I believe the additional cost in such implementation will produce a large return in public safety.

Respectfully,

Jeff Scheetz  
Crooked River Ranch

## Tanya Saltzman

---

**From:** Peter Gutowsky  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 10, 2020 5:45 PM  
**To:** Tanya Saltzman  
**Subject:** FW: Yes on fire resistant homes

FYI

Peter Gutowsky, AICP | Planning Manager DESCHUTES COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
117 NW Lafayette Avenue | Bend, Oregon 97703  
Tel: (541) 385-1709

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-----Original Message-----

**From:** Tom Anderson <Tom.Anderson@deschutes.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 10, 2020 5:20 PM  
**To:** Ed Keith <Ed.Keith@deschutes.org>; Boone Zimmerlee <Boone.Zimmerlee@deschutes.org>; Nick Lelack <Nick.Lelack@deschutes.org>; Peter Gutowsky <Peter.Gutowsky@deschutes.org>  
**Subject:** FW: Yes on fire resistant homes

FYI

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Debra DeWeese <deweese3@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 10, 2020 10:27 AM  
**To:** Board <board@deschutes.org>  
**Subject:** Yes on fire resistant homes

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

I urge you to vote to require homes in Deschutes County to be built to be fire resistant - and do not allow the City of Bend to opt out of this. In addition, I encourage you to do an educational campaign on how current homeowners can retrofit their homes to be fire resistant. Do not let this area burn like Paradise, California! Thank you.

Deby DeWeese

Sent from my iPad Air 2



## Tanya Saltzman

---

**From:** Peter Gutowsky  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 10, 2020 8:32 AM  
**To:** Kyle Collins; Tanya Saltzman; Peter Russell  
**Subject:** FW: Wildfire Mitigation

Just a fyi for us to collectively remember to include these of types observations in the summary report.



**Peter Gutowsky, AICP | Planning Manager**  
**DESCHUTES COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
117 NW Lafayette Avenue | Bend, Oregon 97703  
Tel: (541) 385-1709  
  

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**From:** Peter Gutowsky  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 10, 2020 8:31 AM  
**To:** 'TA Humphrey' <[tbkodie@gmail.com](mailto:tbkodie@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: Wildfire Mitigation

Mr. Humphrey,

Thanks for your email. We'll share your comments about outdoor burning with the Board of County Commissioners in 2021.



**Peter Gutowsky, AICP | Planning Manager**  
**DESCHUTES COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
117 NW Lafayette Avenue | Bend, Oregon 97703  
Tel: (541) 385-1709  
  

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**From:** TA Humphrey <[tbkodie@gmail.com](mailto:tbkodie@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 10, 2020 8:27 AM  
**To:** Peter Gutowsky <[Peter.Gutowsky@deschutes.org](mailto:Peter.Gutowsky@deschutes.org)>  
**Subject:** Wildfire Mitigation

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Hi Peter - It looks like the upcoming virtual meetings will focus on defensible space and construction requirements. Thank you for pursuing these important actions. Please also consider: 1) mirroring city requirements for open burning. We frequently see neighbors burning toxic trash to avoid paying for garbage



service; 2) enhancing the no-cost fire free cleanup frequency. Burning yard debris greatly impacts our air quality throughout Central Oregon.

Thank you. - - Terry Humphrey

**From:** [jennifer](#)  
**To:** [Peter Gutowsky](#)  
**Subject:** fire mitigation  
**Date:** Monday, November 16, 2020 9:54:26 AM

---

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Peter

While I know we all live in a fire danger area surrounded by trees and brush in high desert, I think it is prudent to avoid the natural tendency to overreact based on unfounded fear.

It is true that most Oregon forest fires are human caused. We now have more and more humans coming to Bend engaging in reckless behavior with no restrictions in camping, length of stay and fire (mostly non adherence) with no one to enforce this. This would seem to be a necessary issue to address.

High density housing which has been a priority of Bend, on the city limits is also fraught with lack of foresight.

The truth is, because of the lack of planning and city management, we now have a sprawling city that will engender much more fire danger. Rather than deferring to the same poor planning that gave birth to this trend, it should be up to the individual home owners to make this decision since they are the ones taking on this risk. Our city leaders have shown very poor judgement on the sustainable to controlled growth of this city, I certainly don't want them making any additional choices that changes the lives of all of us who live here without firm data and support from the community.

Jennifer Gunnell

**From:** [Laura Skundrick](#)  
**To:** [Peter Gutowsky](#)  
**Subject:** Wildfire mitigation - social media comments  
**Date:** Monday, November 16, 2020 10:23:32 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)

---

Hi Peter,

Over the weekend, we shared Facebook and Twitter posts about the proposed building codes and land use regulations for protecting communities from wildfire, and the upcoming virtual open house. The posts received several comments that I wanted to forward to you just for your visibility, below. Thanks!



A screenshot of a Facebook post showing four comments. Each comment includes a profile picture, the user's name, the text of the comment, and interaction options like 'Like', 'Reply', and 'Message'. The comments are from Toby Rey, Adam Azril, Beverly Michaelis, and Megan Noblitt.

**Toby Rey**  
Fountaingrove II in Santa Rosa CA was a Firewise neighborhood destroyed by the Tubbs Fire in 2017. All the latest urban-wildland interface fire and building codes were used, hundreds of thousands of dollars spent and thousands of tons of fuel were removed creating fire breaks and defensible spaces. The new fire station was even lost to the fire.  
Like · Reply · Message · 1d 🙄 2

**Adam Azril**  
Ahhh... government regulations that increase costs to builders and homeowners. Nothing better than the government requiring you to spend time/money for something that "may" work. Not as if prices of houses aren't already sky rocketing.  
Like · Reply · Message · 1d 👍 1

**Beverly Michaelis**  
Time to follow the example of Paradise, California. Many changes to landscaping specifications post-fire.  
Like · Reply · Message · 1d 👍 2

**Megan Noblitt**  
How about we manage the forest around us! What a fantastic idea!  
Like · Reply · Message · 13h · Edited 👍 2

Write a comment...



**Z. Thompson** @realzthompson  
Mentioned @DeschutesCounty

20 hours ago

[@DeschutesCounty](#) Maybe a better strategy is to repair old power lines to make fireworks illegal.

[View Thread](#)



**From:** [Robin Vora](#)  
**To:** [Peter Gutowsky](#); [Tanya Saltzman](#); [Deschutes County Commissioners](#); [Planning Commission](#); [Nick Lelack](#)  
**Subject:** Building codes and wildfire  
**Date:** Monday, November 30, 2020 11:31:40 AM

---

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

The Deschutes County Wildlife Survey is well done. I would have added an opportunity in the survey to make other specific suggestions.

I think the county needs to adopt all the additional defensive measures listed to increase public and firefighter safety, and reduce losses due to wildfire. Catastrophic wildfire will happen in Deschutes County; it is just a matter of when. It is best to be better prepared. Most people constructing new homes outside of cities are spending hundreds of thousands on them; they can afford a few thousand extra and it will be to their benefit in the long-run. At some point they will likely have lower insurance rates and higher resale value if their houses are constructed or upgraded to these proposed standards. It will also save the taxpayer money on wildfire response and generally increase public and firefighter safety. These building codes should also apply to homes being upgraded (e.g., new roof or siding).

I suggest starting out with the Forest Use and Rural Residential Zones. I am not convinced some of the more open parts of eastern Deschutes County have the same wildfire risk, especially if the property has irrigated land around the house.

I also suggest requiring Class A roofs (concrete or clay tiles, fiberglass asphalt composition shingles, metal roofs). Class B (pressure treated shakes and shingles) are more flammable. My understanding is that most houses that catch on fire do so because of embers igniting the roof. Proper roof vents with metal mesh and openings less than 1/8" will help in the event of wildfire.

I encourage the County to adopt the proposed construction code in relation to wildfire. We don't need a repeat in Deschutes County of the Camp Fire, or this year's fires in the Ashland-Medford corridor or Detroit Lakes.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Robin Vora  
1679 NE Daphne Ct  
Bend, OR 97701

## Tanya Saltzman

---

**From:** Susan T. Springer <susan@susantspringer.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 1:45 PM  
**To:** Tanya Saltzman; Peter Gutowsky; Nick Lelack  
**Subject:** Wildfire Mitigation misses a main fire risk

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Hello Nick, Tanya and Peter,

Thank you for working to keep our county safer by considering additional fire prevention measures.

It seems obvious that any discussion of fire mitigation would include stopping yard debris burning. Afterall, escaped debris burning is the leading cause of human-caused fires in our state. Given the increased risks your county report describes, this needs to be considered. Is this outside the scope of your department? Do you know other officials who are considering this? And do you have any say in it?

In our 18 years in our neighborhood (outside Sisters), I've lost count of the number of times I've called the fire department because of yard debris fires unattended by the homeowner or fires still burning after dark. Having safer roofing materials is a great step - but we need to stop one of the main causes of fire in the first place.

Please let me know if this is an issue you can address or if you know others who can.

Thank you, Susan  
541-549-1928

**From:** [Mike Benefield](#)  
**To:** [Peter Gutowsky](#)  
**Subject:** Wildfire Mitigation  
**Date:** Friday, December 4, 2020 12:39:26 AM

---

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Mr. Gutowsky,

My name is Mike Benefield, I am a retired Bureau of Land Management Fire Management Officer. I spent over 35 years serving in wildland fire management, including a decade within Deschutes County (Central Oregon Fire Mtg Service).

I sat in on your Zoom Meeting on 12.03 and listened intently to all present. I applaud your efforts in this important initiative, however I was somewhat dismayed at how one respondent could steer the whole conversation off track. I will simply refer to this particular individual as the bird woman. While I have a great deal of respect for wildlife biologists and I love birds, I believe that it is important to stay focused upon the issues that will impact all life in Central Oregon. Wildfires.

Wildfires have been an important agent of change in Central Oregon for thousands of years. Climate change will result in more frequent and larger wildfires. Until we manage it, all life will be negatively impacted by wildfire.

What we saw at Paradise, CA and in Western Oregon will be Deschutes County's fate, if we don't get out ahead of it. What you are now engaged in with planning is the best way to fight wildfires, that is before they start. The Bird Woman spoke of toxic chemicals in fire resistant building products, while ignoring the tons of toxic materials that are found in the average home itself. Stuff burns. Limit the wildfires strategically and wildlife will benefit.

One other point that I would like to make concerns the fire danger that exists within Bend itself. I understand your focus on the rural areas of the county, however there are areas within the city that are extremely hazardous from a wildfire stand point as well. Don't ignore it.

Think of a dry day with extreme winds and an ignition in the worst place possible within the urban growth boundary. How will you evacuate a lot of people quickly? What constitutes defensible space and the proper type of vegetation in those circumstances?

That's my two cents worth. Please don't let political expediency, or special interests deflect your attention from this important issue.

It could end up being the most consequential issue in Bend's history.

Thank You

Sincerely,  
Mike Benefield

3560 Ice Ave.  
Terrebonne, OR.  
541.419.7418

PS Let me know if I can be of further service to my county.  
Say hello to Ed Keith for me.

**From:** [brett huet](#)  
**To:** [Peter Gutowsky](#)  
**Subject:** WUI codes  
**Date:** Friday, December 4, 2020 5:20:18 AM

---

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Mr. Gutowsky,

I read the article on KTVZ regarding updating the wildfire protection codes and wanted to reach out and say I think it is a great idea to proactively take this on. My background is in wildland fire and arboriculture, I mention that only to set a tone- I do not think I know it all. I would like to be clear on that.

Since 2015, I have been involved with the fires in California on large scale vegetation management projects and the overwhelming takeaway from these catastrophic wildfires is that there needs to be a significant focus on home hardening measures in addition to fuel reduction in the home ignition zone. From my experience, home hardening is often overlooked. On many of these fires that I have been on recently, there are only foundations and chimneys left adjacent to vegetation that has only been minimally scorched. Our homes are often the fuel source during wind driven fires.

As you are likely aware the NFPA has lots of resources available. In the link below is something I am currently working on and feel it is likely going to be a common certification in the future for all vegetation management professionals. <https://nfpa.org/Training-and-Events/Certification/Certification/Certified-Wildfire-Mitigation-Specialist>

If there is anything I might be able to assist with or provide a perspective on, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Regards,

**Brett Huet**  
**Certified Treecare Safety Professional #02477**  
**ISA Board Certified Master Arborist # RM-7448-BUM**  
**ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualified**  
**OSHA Outreach Instructor**  
**NCCER Crane Operator 2272801**



**From:** [Susan T. Springer](#)  
**To:** [Ed Keith](#)  
**Cc:** [Peter Gutowsky](#); [Tanya Saltzman](#); [Nick Lelack](#); [Boone Zimmerlee](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Wildfire Mitigation misses a main fire risk  
**Date:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 9:48:07 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

---

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Hi Ed and all,

Yes, thanks, I do know whose jurisdiction it is and I am communicating with the fire districts. However, when the county is attempting to address fire mitigation, it seems such a missed opportunity to solve only part of the problem. Fire resistant building materials are helpful - yet so much more effective when paired with reducing one of the main causes of fire in our state. So communication from you to those in charge of yard debris burning would offer a more complete solution to reducing fire risk.

Also, several years ago, the City of Sisters banned yard debris burning.  
Thanks, Susan

On Thu, Dec 3, 2020 at 2:25 PM Ed Keith <[Ed.Keith@deschutes.org](mailto:Ed.Keith@deschutes.org)> wrote:

Hi Susan,

Deschutes County does not have jurisdiction over debris burning, that is under the jurisdiction of the 9 individual fire districts located throughout the County. We do offer FireFree each year as an alternative way for people to get rid of their debris for free instead of burning, but that is of course voluntary. To date the only area within the County that does not allow burning is the area within the City of Bend.

Ed Keith | **County Forester**

**DESCHUTES COUNTY**

61150 SE 27<sup>th</sup> Street | Bend, Oregon 97702  
Tel: (541) 322-7117 | Cell: (541) 408-8862

[Ed.Keith@deschutes.org](mailto:Ed.Keith@deschutes.org)

[www.deschutes.org](http://www.deschutes.org)

---

**From:** Peter Gutowsky <[Peter.Gutowsky@deschutes.org](mailto:Peter.Gutowsky@deschutes.org)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 1:59 PM  
**To:** 'Susan T. Springer' <[susan@susantspringer.com](mailto:susan@susantspringer.com)>; Tanya Saltzman <[Tanya.Saltzman@deschutes.org](mailto:Tanya.Saltzman@deschutes.org)>; Nick Lelack <[Nick.Lelack@deschutes.org](mailto:Nick.Lelack@deschutes.org)>  
**Cc:** Boone Zimmerlee <[Boone.Zimmerlee@deschutes.org](mailto:Boone.Zimmerlee@deschutes.org)>; Ed Keith <[Ed.Keith@deschutes.org](mailto:Ed.Keith@deschutes.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Wildfire Mitigation misses a main fire risk

Susan,

Thanks for email. I'm cc'ing Boone Zimmerlee, Fire Adaptive Communities Coordinator and Ed Keith, County Forester. They may have additional thoughts. Your comments will be shared in our summary report to the Board of County Commissioners early in the New Year.



Peter Gutowsky, AICP | Planning Manager  
DESCHUTES COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
117 NW Lafayette Avenue | Bend, Oregon 97703  
Tel: (541) 385-1709



*Enhancing the lives of citizens by delivering quality services in a cost-effective manner.*

---

**From:** Susan T. Springer <[susan@susantspringer.com](mailto:susan@susantspringer.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 1:45 PM  
**To:** Tanya Saltzman <[Tanya.Saltzman@deschutes.org](mailto:Tanya.Saltzman@deschutes.org)>; Peter Gutowsky <[Peter.Gutowsky@deschutes.org](mailto:Peter.Gutowsky@deschutes.org)>; Nick Lelack <[Nick.Lelack@deschutes.org](mailto:Nick.Lelack@deschutes.org)>  
**Subject:** Wildfire Mitigation misses a main fire risk

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Hello Nick, Tanya and Peter,

Thank you for working to keep our county safer by considering additional fire prevention measures.

It seems obvious that any discussion of fire mitigation would include stopping yard debris burning. Afterall, escaped debris burning is the leading cause of human-caused fires in our state. Given the increased risks your county report describes, this needs to be considered. Is this outside the scope of your department? Do you know other officials who are considering this? And do you have any say in it?

In our 18 years in our neighborhood (outside Sisters), I've lost count of the number of times I've called the fire department because of yard debris fires unattended by the homeowner or fires still burning after dark. Having safer roofing materials is a great step - but we need to stop one of the main causes of fire in the first place.

Please let me know if this is an issue you can address or if you know others who can.

Thank you, Susan

541-549-1928

**From:** [Rimrock West](#)  
**To:** [Peter Gutowsky](#)  
**Subject:** Please add codes for landscaping  
**Date:** Monday, December 7, 2020 2:14:18 PM

---

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Hello,

We have had several landscaping companies plant utterly ridiculous shrubs and trees in terms of wildfire prevention. All landscapers should be required to take a wildfire mitigation course and be required to use non or less flammable shrubs and trees.

Thank you,

Martita Marx  
Rimrock West, A Firewise Community

From: [Jim Poyel](#)  
To: [Peter Gufnowsky](#)  
Subject: Fwd: Wildfire Event and Reminder  
Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 9:14:29 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Thanks for the wildfire "open house" discussing the proposed regs. Sorry about SB 760 instead of 360. It has been a long time.

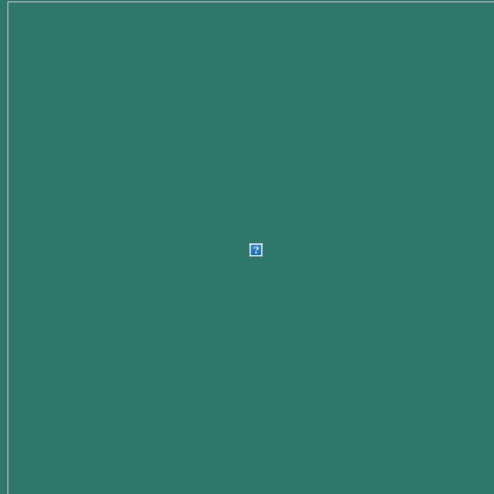
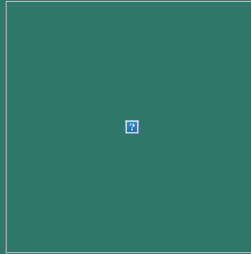
Attached is an event that I watched on Oregon's 2020 wildfires. I have been unable to find any link to a recorded version of the meeting. I have not checked with Ben Gordon at COLW. Both Ralph and Tim pointed out that the spread of these fires and the destruction they did in towns was similar to what was seen in Paradise< CA - ember ignition or contact from adjacent home conflagrations, not a continued vegetation derived or crown fires. Defensible space relative to vegetation proximity helped only if there was not a nearby building burning. So I know you know this - and I am assuming that the new proposals are patterned to be coupled with some development design criteria in WUIs to space buildings, provide multiple access/egress routes and adequate water supplies to handle more than one structure fire simultaneously. I also remember some of the outbuildings we looked at for the marijuana EFU ordinance - a number of those were constructed - or being constructed - at the minimal setback distance from a lot line to an adjacent parcel with an existing residence already in place. Lots of opportunities if your planning goes far enough.

I have not seen any data related to building size - I found it ironically typical for this area that the first application for one of the transect zone parcels was for a 15,000 sq ft residence (maybe my memory is bad here also).

At any rate, what you are trying to accomplish is laudable. The devil will be in the details.

Hope you have a peaceful holidays

[View this email in your browser](#)



## LANDWATCH NEWS

NOVEMBER 13, 2020

Next Wednesday, the Great Old Broads for Wilderness will host a Broadchat that you won't want to miss. ***Making Sense of the 2020 Wildfires*** will focus on the most recent wildfires and what we can do to protect our communities, our forests, and our climate in the face of unprecedented change.

### ***Making Sense of the 2020 Wildfires***

Wednesday, November 18th | 4pm - 5:30pm

[Virtual meeting via Zoom](#)

This multimedia conversation moderated by Courtney Johnson, Executive Director of [Crag Law Center](#), builds on years of work in the courtroom and in the forests, and information from top wildfire and climate scientists. Panelists include:

- Dr. Tim Ingalsbee, Executive Director of Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology
- Ralph Bloemers, Senior Staff Attorney at Crag Law Center

LandWatch's Executive Director, Ben Gordon, will join at the beginning of the presentation to discuss our work to prevent development in fire-prone areas and how we use land use planning to keep Central Oregon safe.

## REMINDER

Deschutes County recently initiated [a project to consider changes to its land use and building codes to help reduce the risk of wildfire](#). This project is our chance to protect our communities against the increasing risk of extreme fire.

The first step in Deschutes County's public outreach efforts is [an online survey](#). The survey presents information in a series of maps and then asks a few questions about potential land use and building code changes. Read over talking points below, and [find out more on our blog!](#)

#### FIRE SURVEY TALKING POINTS

Based on our decades of experience working to protect people from wildfire, LandWatch believes that any new land use and building code changes should reflect the following:

- Wildfire protection for existing development, including fire-resistant retrofits and landscaping, should be prioritized. Climate change and drought have increased the risks of wildfire and existing homes without fire-resistant retrofits are most at risk.
- Thinning of brush and dense stands of young trees that are within one-half mile of a proposed or existing development should be required on a routine basis.
- No further urban development expansion should be allowed in forests currently bordering urban growth boundaries.
- Development within urban growth boundaries that border high fire-risk brushlands and forests should use fire-resistant materials and landscaping.
- All new or replacement home construction should use fire-resistant materials and landscaping.

In addition to these principles, it is also crucial for the County to enforce existing rules limiting development in fire prone areas when it would create a significant increase in fire risk, a significant increase in the cost of fighting fire, and a significant risk to firefighters.

#### [TAKE THE SURVEY](#)

### DONATE NOW TO TRIPLE YOUR IMPACT

Right now, your year-end donation is being matched TWO to ONE. That means every dollar you give will be TRIPLED to protect Central Oregon.

[DONATE TO TRIPLE YOUR IMPACT](#)



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**CITY OF SISTERS**

PO Box 39 - Sisters, Or 97759 | ph: 541-549-6022 | [www.ci.sisters.or.us](http://www.ci.sisters.or.us)

EST. 1946

December 09, 2020

Peter Gutowsky  
Planning Manager  
Community Development Dept.  
Deschutes County

RE: Wildfire Mitigation – Building Codes and Land Use Proposed Measures

Peter,

The City of Sisters would like to strongly support and encourage the consideration of updates to the County building codes and land use regulations to the most current national wildfire standards and best practices.

Following several recent wildfire events in close proximity to the City of Sisters, we are grossly aware of the increase in frequency, intensity, and size of wildfire events and accompanying hazardous smoke. These events have significant impact on our residents and business community and can often have long term impacts on health and our local economy. In consultation with the Sisters Camp Sherman Fire District, we have learned that there are two initiatives that will greatly increase our community's ability to mitigate risk due to wildfire and also increase resilience following an event if it were to occur in or adjacent to city limits.

The first County initiative, the addition of wildfire resistant building codes is key to ensuring that new homes or substantial remodels are being built to reduce spread of wildfire and the loss of homes for our residents. As the County oversees the City's building permitting division, we are supportive of these additional building codes being adopted to ensure long term affordability of quality homes in a wildfire prone environment. The second initiative, to increase defensible space through land use requirements is also key to reduce the spread of wildfire through a relatively simple and inexpensive measure. The City of Sisters is also considering the addition of defensible space requirements and landscaping requirements to our development code. Having both the City and Codes align on this measure will help to reduce the size, spread, and intensity of wildfire for our urban and rural residents.

We appreciate your consideration of these measures.

Sincerely,

Chuck Ryan  
Mayor

**To:** [Peter Gutowsky](#)  
**Subject:** County wildfire mitigation  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 11:00:11 AM

---

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Hi Peter,

I just took the Deschutes County Wildfire Survey, it's a wonderful storymap, kudos to whoever put it together!

One thing I wanted to note about some of the measures being considered related to fire retardant treated materials & requirements, there is a lot of research about the hazards of fire/flame retardant chemicals (they are major endocrine disruptors) and actually can cause more smoke when burning therefore making it harder and [more toxic for firefighters](#).

See [Green Science PolicyInstitute](#) for more information about hazards of flame/fire retardants.

While I am in support of most of the mitigations proposed, I would recommend not including any requirements that involve the required use of flame retardants.

Thanks,

--  
Allison Platt  
[alliekatplatt@gmail.com](mailto:alliekatplatt@gmail.com)

"Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished." -Lao Tzu



**From:** [Frank Spiecker](#)  
**To:** [Peter Gutowsky](#)  
**Subject:** 100 ft. defensible space mandate  
**Date:** Monday, December 21, 2020 3:17:50 PM

---

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

---

Today's wildfires can burn right through defensible space, prescribed burns, thinning, tree farms, clearcuts, prior burns, everything in their path. Climate change is the critical issue with wildfire, creating dryer fuels and hotter fires. Mandated defensible space of 30ft., 100ft. or more will not prevent a wildfire from raging through our land. There are 76 Junipers within 100ft. of our house. Most are ancient, the oldest around 800yrs. They shade & cool the house in summer, temper it in winter, provide nesting, shelter, food for a myriad of wildlife and screen us off from our neighbors. They are also efficient windbreaks as are all the Junipers on our 27 acres. We consider ourselves very fortunate to be able to live in one of the oldest desert woodlands in existence, among some of the oldest living things on earth. 80 to 90% of fires are human caused. We feel a major effort toward halting all human caused sources of ignition needs to take place immediately. There is no time to waste. We can't afford to make any mistakes. So lets make a list: burn barrels, target shooting, OHV's, burning of debris, burning ditches, field burning, campfires, cigarettes, etc. All these activities have and can start fires. They also pollute, contributing to climate change. Trees work hard to sequester pollution that we create. Stringent restrictions and regulations are now necessary, including closures of public lands during extreme fire danger as fire season extends at both ends. Many old timers, like ourselves, who built their houses in rural Deschutes county back in the 80's, built here because we love the land. The defensible space mandate does not address the causes of wildfire. It seems almost a diversion away from what could actually work..... prevention. Cutting dozens of ancient trees from around our house will not prevent one wildfire. They don't start fires, people do. Trees aren't the problem. They're the answer. Civility has rapidly declined in this country. No longer can agencies rely on the public to be careful on red flag days. Many are simply not listening. Hell, many won't even wear masks in a deadly pandemic! As for all the ancient Junipers on the land we manage as wilderness, they will remain, respected, loved and untouched. We love our house. We built it with our own hands. And we love the land. Together, they make a home. Hundreds of trees will come down with this mandate. Please focus your efforts on ways the county can mitigate climate change and on preventing human caused fires. Thank you for listening.

Spiecker,

Mimler

Sincerely,  
Frank

Gabriele



December 22, 2020

*sent via email: [PlanningCommission@deschutes.org](mailto:PlanningCommission@deschutes.org), [Peter.Gutowsky@deschutes.org](mailto:Peter.Gutowsky@deschutes.org)*

Deschutes County Planning Commission  
Attn: Peter Gutowsky, Planning Manager  
1300 NW Wall Street  
Bend, Oregon 97701

**Re: Wildfire Mitigation Project**

Dear Chair Hudson and Planning Commissioners:

Thank you for hosting the two recent open house sessions on wildfire mitigation. Central Oregon LandWatch is pleased that the County is taking proactive steps to protect its residents from the ongoing threat of wildfire in our region. We understand that after this current public input gathering stage, the County will explore specific changes to its building and land use codes. We provide the following high-level input to inform those changes.

Oregon is blessed with what is likely the most important tool a local government can wield to mitigate the threat of wildfire: strong land use planning. Oregon land use law directs development into urban areas while limiting development in the rural areas and the wildland-urban interface that are most at risk of wildfire. In Deschutes County's high fire frequency environment, this has prevented putting thousands of homes and families in danger.

Deschutes County can strengthen this existing land use planning framework by adopting additional protections against wildfire for development and redevelopment. Those protections should reflect the following:

- Wildfire protection for existing development, including fire-resistant retrofits and landscaping, should be prioritized. Climate change and drought have increased the risks of wildfire and existing homes without fire-resistant retrofits are most at risk.
- Thinning of brush and dense stands of young trees that are within one-half mile of a proposed or existing development should be required on a routine basis.
- All new or replacement home construction should use fire-resistant materials and landscaping.
- No further urban development expansion should be allowed in forests currently bordering urban growth boundaries.

In addition to these principles, it is also crucial for the County to enforce existing rules at DCC 18.36.040(B) that limit development in fire prone areas when it would create a significant increase in fire risk, a significant increase in the cost of fighting fire, and a significant risk to



firefighters. Through this code section, the County already has a strong tool to protect new development from wildfire and protect first responders from unnecessary hazards. It is simply a matter of proper interpretation and enforcement.

Wildfire risk is present throughout Deschutes County. The public health and safety of the entire county depends on enforcing existing rules limiting development in the most high-risk areas, and fireproofing all existing and future development elsewhere.

Thank you for your attention to these considerations. We look forward to participating in the next stages of the County's efforts to mitigate the threat of wildfire.

Regards,



Rory Isbell  
Staff Attorney  
Central Oregon LandWatch  
2843 NW Lolo Drive, Suite 200  
Bend, Oregon 97703  
[rory@colw.org](mailto:rory@colw.org)  
(541) 647-2930



# **Fire Protection District Comments**



Deschutes County Rural  
Fire Protection District #2

(541) 318-0459 | 1212 SW Simpson Ave. | Bend, OR 97702 | Fax (541) 322-6320

December 7, 2020

Peter Gutowsky

Planning Manager

117 NW Lafayette Avenue

Bend, OR 97703

Subject: ORSC R-327

Peter,

The Deschutes County Rural Fire District #2 serving the area surrounding Bend is very concerned about the growing wildfire problem in Deschutes County.

The fuels within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) both vegetation and homes are of great concern. The wildfire season is now 30-60 days longer than it was decades ago. The cost of fighting these wildfires are a burden to fire department budgets.

Within our Fire District we have had several wildland fires that have been devastating to our communities, particularly the 1990 Awbrey Hall fire that destroyed 21 homes and 3,500 acres, in addition to the 1996 Skeleton Fire that consumed 19 homes and 17,000 acres.

Since the 1990's the Fire District has created new ordinances, fire prevention programs and has continued to partner with other agencies to minimize the loss from wildland fires. Some of those programs being used today are: FireFree; 1997 Senate Bill 360; Wildfire Fuel Reduction Grants; Oregon Fire Code; Fireworks Sales Prohibition Ordinance; Fire Resistive Wood Shake Ordinance; and Project Wildfire to name a few.

While the Deschutes County Natural Hazards Plan has identified wildfire as the greatest risk to our constituent's way of life, we know there is more that can be done prior to the wildfire incident to save homes. Science has demonstrated if structures are built and maintained with fire resistive construction materials coupled with fire resistive vegetation within the adjacent surroundings, the risk can be reduced by more than 80% from

ember and flame ignitions. Eliminating ignitions to structures will reduce exposure to residents and firefighters enhancing evacuation and firefighting strategies.

The Fire District's Standards for Response Plan is designed for routine fires, once there are more than two to three homes burning we don't have enough resources to protect the rest of the neighborhood without mutual aid support. Therefore it will take more than fire suppression agencies to reduce the number of homes burning.

The District believes to enhance our firefighter's chances to save life and property within the WUI it is necessary to introduce additional fire resistant construction features to homes such as Oregon Residential Specialty Code R-327. The District also recognizes that additional building code requirements may be not as successful to eliminate ignitions without reducing the amount of flammable vegetation within the immediate area around the home.

Respectfully Submitted:

***Deschutes County Rural Fire District #2 Board of Directors***



# La Pine Rural Fire Protection District

51590 Huntington Rd.  
Post Office Box 10  
La Pine, OR 97739  
Phone 541.536.2935  
Fax 541.536.2627  
[www.lapinefire.org](http://www.lapinefire.org)

December 8, 2020

Peter Gutowsky  
Deschutes County Community Development Director  
P.O. Box 6005  
Bend, OR 97708-6005

REF: Wildfire Mitigation - Building Codes and Land Use Proposed Updates

Mr. Gutowsky:

The La Pine Rural Fire Protection District would like strongly support and encourage the Deschutes County consideration of the proposed updating county building codes and land use regulations to the most current national wildfire standards and best practices.

This county is in the wildfire bullseye. The La Pine Rural Fire Protection District has lost two homes and multiple structures to wildfire in just the last three years despite the fire district's quick responses and best efforts. This community was extremely fortunate the late afternoon of September 7<sup>th</sup> of this year that a fast-moving wildfire in the DRRH neighborhood did not become the 11<sup>th</sup> major wildfire disaster in the state of Oregon that day. As we are seeing these fires are not only affecting individual families and the lives of the most vulnerable, they destructively affect the whole community - for years. Populations exit, most businesses close permanently, hospitals and schools close, and local agencies - once there to help the community - themselves are decimated. Wildfire in our communities affects everyone.

As major wildfires are increasing in frequency, intensity and size, there is some good news. We are now learning what can make these events survivable and those solutions are rather simple:

1. Hardened homes; and
2. Fire resilient landscapes.


We currently have codes and regulations to protect our homes from wind, rain, and snow, and to keep our drinking water, electrical, and heating systems safe. These codes did not come out of thin air - they became national standards through common sense experiences on what is working to protect our communities. We have now learned if we provide fire resilient landscape in the close proximity of our homes - that lowers the fire intensity and the direct transfer of flames to the home. We have also learned if we harden our homes from the snowstorm of sparks a wildfire produces - that will prevent

ignition. Last, we have learned that suitable building materials can prevent the spread of fire from home to home when they are built in close proximity.

The La Pine Rural Fire Protection knows the County is on the right path in upgrading the county building codes and land use regulations to match the most current adopted standards for in the wildfire hazard zone and strongly supports that effort. Not to do so would be irresponsible to the citizens we all serve.

Sincerely,

LA PINE RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Supkis", written over a horizontal line.

Mike Supkis  
Fire Chief



1212 SW  
Simpson Ave  
Bend, Oregon 97702  
(541) 322-6300  
FAX 322-6321



Todd Riley  
Fire Chief

December 15, 2020

Peter Gutowsky  
Deschutes County  
PO Box 6005  
Attn: Community Development  
Bend, OR 97708-6005

Subject: County Wildfire Standards

Mr. Gutowsky,

We have seen firsthand the devastating effects of wildfire when it impacts a community. Even though Deschutes County made it out of the historic 2020 wildfire season without a major fire, Bend Fire & Rescue sent crews across the state to help fight the fires that surrounded our county. The last major Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) fire in our area was in 1996 when the Skeleton Fire burned 17,000 acres as well as 19 homes. Prior to that, the 1990 Aubrey Hall Fire burned 3,500 acres and destroyed 21 homes.

Several effective steps were taken after these two fires to increase our community's resilience to wildland fire. The efforts to encourage defensible space around homes resulted in the FireFree initiative, which is still successful today. Communities that meet specific fuels reduction and defensible space can be recognized through the Firewise USA program as a nod to their collective efforts to protect their neighborhood. It is recognized that a homeowner's fuels reduction efforts can directly affect adjoining properties if a fire enters the community.

Fire season is getting longer and the destructive nature of these events is increasing. Additionally, much of our community is built in the WUI, which increases our desire to be proactive with preventative measures. Preventing house-to-house ignition is an important component of being able to contain a fire once it enters a community. With enhanced building codes and required defensible space, firefighters have a much better chance to safely evacuate residents, operate on the fire more effectively, and prevent catastrophic fire spread. There is an opportunity to adopt a stricter landscape ordinance that requires defensible space and prohibits the placement of materials that will carry fire next to a home. These improvements can be made more effective with enhancing the building code to address the use of fire resistive materials as siding and soffit finishes. We currently have an ordinance in place that addresses roofing

materials, as this was identified as a major contributor to home ignitions. It is acknowledged that an enhanced building code has the potential to increase building costs, but many builders in the area are already using fire resistive materials in construction today.

Bend Fire & Rescue provides fire protection to both the city limits of Bend and the surrounding fire district. The City of Bend and Deschutes County are both actively engaged in the wildfire resiliency conversation. Even though the two entities are at different phases of this work, it is an issue that is equally important to both.

With a community that is resilient to wildfire, we stand a better chance of keeping residents in their homes after a fire. Vulnerable populations are disproportionately impacted by natural disasters, and wildfires are no exception. There are several examples of communities that never recover from a devastating WUI fire. Without sufficient economic resources to rebuild, many residents never return.

By reducing flammable vegetation around homes, increasing the defensible space next to a structure, and using fire resistive materials on a home, our community stands a better chance to minimize the devastation of a WUI fire.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Riley". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Todd Riley, Fire Chief  
Bend Fire & Rescue



**Sisters-Camp Sherman Rural Fire Protection District**  
*“Protecting Life and Property through Quality Service”*

December 8, 2020

Peter Gutowsky  
Deschutes County Community Development, Planning Manager  
P.O. Box 6005  
Bend, Or. 97708-6005

Mr. Gutowsky,

The Sisters-Camp Sherman Rural Fire Protection District (District) supports the adoption of enhanced wildfire resistant building codes and defensible space requirements throughout Deschutes County.

The District provides fire suppression services to 55 square miles of area in Western Deschutes county, including the City of Sisters. Wildfires are a common occurrence in the District, and we work closely with the US Forest Service, Oregon Department of Forestry and other local fire districts to minimize the impacts of wildland fire on our community. Even with this level of coordination and response, wildfires create a significant risk to our community. The fire district’s request to adopt enhanced wildfire resistant building codes and defensible space requirements are in alignment with the tenets of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy).

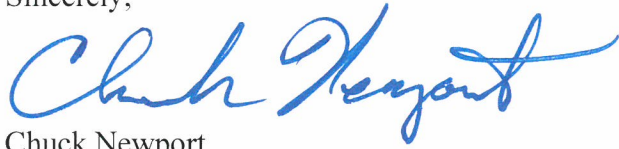
The Cohesive Strategy is a national approach to work collaboratively among stakeholders and across all landscapes, using best science, to make meaningful progress towards three goals:

1. Resilient Landscapes
2. Fire Adapted Communities
3. Safe and effective wildfire response.

While there is great work being done in Deschutes County related to resilient landscapes and effective wildfire response, the building code element of fire adapted communities hasn’t been addressed. Addressing only two of the three strategies will result in increased risk for Deschutes County residents. Communities that have implemented the tenets of the Cohesive Strategy have seen reductions in the loss of life and property as a result.

Lastly, I would like to address the significant wildfire season our state endured this summer. A perfect alignment of extremely dry fuels, fires on the landscape and high winds resulted in catastrophic losses of life and property in Oregon. These losses have demonstrated that there is more work to be done, and we must take action to prevent a similar event from impacting our communities. Adopting defensible space standards and enhanced wildfire resistant building codes is a logical, measured approach, supported by national standards and industry best practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Newport". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chuck" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Newport".

Chuck Newport  
President, Board of Directors  
Sisters-Camp Sherman Rural Fire Protection District.



## **Black Butte Ranch R.F.P.D.**

PMB 8190, POB 8000

13511 Hawks Beard, Black Butte Ranch, OR 97759

(541) 595-2288 Bus **9-1-1 Emergency**

(541) 595-6867 Fax

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December 16, 2020

Peter Gutowsky  
Deschutes County Community Development, Planning Manager  
P.O. Box 6005  
Bend, Or. 97708-6005

Mr. Gutowsky,

Black Butte Ranch Rural Fire Protection District (District) supports the adoption of enhanced wildfire resistant building codes and defensible space requirements throughout Deschutes County.

Our District provides fire suppression services to the 3+ square miles of Black Butte Ranch. As you are likely aware, wildfires threatening our community have been a common occurrence for many years causing multiple evacuations as well as the destruction of two homes in 2002 from the Cache Mountain Fire.

We work very closely with the US Forest Service, Oregon Department of Forestry, and other local fire districts to minimize the impacts of wildland fire on our community. Even with this level of coordination and response, wildfires continue to create a significant risk to our community.

As others have mentioned, the support to adopt enhanced wildfire resistant building codes and defensible space requirements are in alignment with the tenets of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy).

The Cohesive Strategy is a national approach to work collaboratively among stakeholders and across all landscapes, using the best science, to make meaningful progress towards three goals:

1. Resilient Landscapes
2. Fire Adapted Communities
3. Safe and effective wildfire response.

This District agrees with other districts in that while there is and has been great work being done in Deschutes County related to resilient landscapes and effective wildfire response, the building code element of fire-adapted communities hasn't been addressed. We also agree that addressing only two of these three strategies would

result in increased risk for Deschutes County residents. We also add that this increased risk is inherently transferred to the many first responders called upon to protect those communities and the citizens within.

The losses demonstrated from the recent fires throughout Oregon shows us that there is more work that can and needs to be done to prevent similar events from impacting our communities. Adopting defensible space standards and enhanced wildfire resistant building codes is a logical, measured approach supported by national standards and industry best practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Tucker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dan Tucker

Fire Chief

Black Butte Ranch Rural Fire Protection District.



# SUNRIVER SERVICE DISTRICT

PO Box 2108, Sunriver, Oregon 97707-2108



December 17, 2020

Peter Gutowsky  
Peter.gutowsky@deschutes.org  
Planning Manager  
117 NW Lafayette Avenue  
Bend, OR 97703

RE: Defensible Space and Enhanced Building Codes

Mr. Gutowsky,

The Sunriver Service District, which includes both the Police and Fire Departments, is supportive of the proposed new ordinances on defensible space and enhanced building codes (R327.4).

The Sunriver Owners Association is very proactive in the prevention of wildfire. The rules and programs in place in Sunriver are reflective of what R-327 could provide for all of Deschutes County.

**Sunriver Owner Association program/rules examples include:**

- Spark arrestors shall be installed on all chimneys
- Roofs are required to be Class "A" fire rated
- Individual properties and common ground have ladder fuel reduction requirements

It is time to eliminate the threat of wildfire to our communities and provide safety to our citizens and firefighters by supporting the proposed defensible space and enhanced building codes in Deschutes County.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Hepburn".

Bill Hepburn, Chair  
Sunriver Service District, Board of Directors



# Alfalfa Fire District

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541-382-2333 25889 Alfalfa Market Rd Bend, Or 97701

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Dec 21, 2020

Peter Gutowsky

Subject: ORSC R-327

Peter,

The Alfalfa Fire District would like to discuss the growing concerns of past, as well as future wildfire concerns in our district. As a relatively new district we have seen our fair share of close calls with fires in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). As a district that is surrounded by BLM land we have an extreme amount of fuels that could cause catastrophic loss to our district.

As someone who has spent over 30 years in the construction industry I have seen what building codes can do for homes. Codes that can allow for homes to be built with more fire resistive material as well as creating a defensible space around the home, this can lead to less fire spread in the event of a wildland fire. Up to 70-80 percent reduction can be maintained according to recent studies. This allows for a more substantial initial attack from a suppression standpoint, and the possibility of reduced resources if managed early.

While our response plans are geared for a smaller scale response, if we cannot manage the fire in its initial stage, it will require a large scale response in the form of mutual aid from surrounding agencies. This mutual aid response then draws down resources for those agencies to respond to incidents within their respective districts.

Oregon Residential Specialty Code R-237 would allow for new structures being built within our districts to maintain standards for fire resistive construction reducing the



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potential for fire spread. This code, coupled with a distinct plan for defensible space will allow our fire district to reduce resource needs in the event of a wildfire.

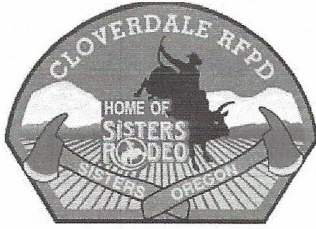
As a rural department, we have our work cut out for us as the codes for building during the majority of construction for our two major subdivisions did not allow for defensible space, or the construction using fire resistive material.

It is with great concern that as a small agency with limited resources we ask that this residential code get passed and with careful consideration to the resources it takes to mitigate wildfire in the WUI in its current state.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chad LaVallee- Fire Chief

Alfalfa Fire District



## **Cloverdale Rural Fire Protection District**

67433 Cloverdale Rd., Sisters, OR 97759

PH: (541) 389-2345 Burn Info: (541) 548-4815

[www.cloverdalefire.com](http://www.cloverdalefire.com)

December 21, 2020

Peter Gutowsky  
Deschutes County Community Development, Planning Manager  
P.O. Box 6005  
Bend, Or. 97708-6005

Mr. Gutowsky,

The last few years have proven to be particularly catastrophic for properties in Cloverdale Rural Fire Protection District. Due to our rural geography (the 50 square mile triangle between Bend, Redmond and Sisters), ingress to properties can at times make it difficult to access fire related incidents. As a result of this and the fact that many of our constituent's homes are surrounded by large amounts of fire fuels, the Board of Directors strongly supports the adoption of enhanced wildfire resistant building codes and defensible space requirements throughout Deschutes County.

While Cloverdale RFPD works closely with our partnering agencies, wildfires continue to be a significant risk to our community. We recognize and appreciate the great work being done in Deschutes County related to resilient landscapes and effective wildfire response. However, the building code element of fire adapted communities would further enhance our community's ability to survive a conflagration.

It is with utmost urgency that Cloverdale Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors requests that Deschutes County adopt defensible space requirements and wildfire resistant building codes in order to further protect the life safety and property losses of our community.

Thank you,

Jerry Johnson, President  
Cloverdale RFPD  
Board of Directors



## CROOKED RIVER RANCH FIRE & RESCUE

6971 SW Shad Road, Crooked River Ranch, OR 97760  
Phone: (541) 923-6776 | Fax: (541) 923-5247  
[www.crrfire.org](http://www.crrfire.org)

Peter Gutowski  
Deschutes County  
PO Box 6005  
Attn: Community Development  
Bend, OR 97708-6005

DEAR PETER GUTOWSKY,

Crooked River Ranch Rural Fire Protection District is mainly in Jefferson County, but the lower part of our fire District is in Deschutes county. We pride ourselves in having an active community that is willing to keep their properties cleaned up and try their best to meet the defensible space standards. But that is not all of them. For some property owners, their neighbors do not abide by the defensible space standards. With more and more properties being developed in our district it would be nice to have enhanced building codes for improved safety.

In May of 2007 was our last major wildfire in our fire district. That fire burned over 350 acres and no homes were destroyed. With the assistance of tri-county fire departments and federal fire agencies there where no homes lost. It might not be that way again. There are more houses are being built in the same area of this fire.

With last summer's fire season still very fresh in people's minds our community members are asking about defensible space and how they could protect their homes if we had another large fire. This is a great time to have building codes put in place.

Crooked River Ranch Fire & Rescue is in support of enhanced building codes that would save lives and property. It will also save the lives of those firefighters who will be fighting the fire. These codes combined with good defensible space standards will help to make our and more fire resistive community.

Respectfully,

Harry Ward Fire Chief  
Crooked River Ranch Fire & Rescue



# REDMOND FIRE & RESCUE

341 NW Dogwood Avenue, Redmond, OR 97756  
Phone: (541) 504-5000 Fax: (541) 526-1254  
[www.redmondfireandrescue.org](http://www.redmondfireandrescue.org)

December 22, 2020

Peter Gutowsky  
Planning Manager  
117 NW Lafayette Avenue  
Bend, OR 97703

Subject: ORSC R-327

Mr. Gutowsky,

As the Fire Chief of Redmond Fire & Rescue, I am writing to offer my support for the adoption of Oregon Residential Specialty Code R-327 and defensible space standards throughout Deschutes County.

I have been a fire service professional for over 40 years, and I have seen firsthand the devastating impact of wildfire in the urban interface. Having spent the bulk of my career in California, I've sent my personnel to some of the largest wildfires in California's history including the Thomas Fire in Ventura, the Mendocino Complex, the Camp Fire in Paradise and countless more. I looked on in amazement beside the Governor's staff at the Coffee Park neighborhood which had been completely destroyed during the fires in Napa and Sonoma County by an ember cast that stretched well over a mile ahead of the actual fire line.

Though some might suggest it just doesn't happen like that here, we don't have the same kind of weather, or wind patterns as in California, one need only look back a few months to see many fellow Oregonians experiencing wildfire on a scope and scale thought impossible.

Having served on the Deschutes County Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee, I've had ample opportunity to discuss these issues with County staff, local builders, and concerned residents. Much of our time together was spent debating the merits of defensible space as well as building standards like those set forth in ORCS R-327. I assure you I fully understand there are myriad concerns and factors that must be taken into account when considering adoption of such standards.

We must recognize that fire seasons are getting longer, and wildfires are becoming more destructive. We must also recognize that what may have seemed unlikely, or even impossible just one year ago, is now part of our history. I believe it is our responsibility as public servants to take a lesson from that history and adopt Oregon Residential Specialty Code R-327 and defensible space standards throughout Deschutes County.

Thank you,

*Ken Kehmna*

Ken Kehmna  
Fire Chief, Redmond Fire & Rescue