



CITY OF BEND

October 17, 2024

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CITY MANAGER

Eric King

Patti Adair
Deschutes County Board of Commissioners
1300 NW Wall Street
Bend, Oregon 97703

Dear Chair Adair,

The Bend City Council is disappointed in the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners' decision not to move forward with the joint resolution that would facilitate the management strategy at Juniper Ridge that was agreed upon at the September 5, 2024, joint meeting. Your inaction has undermined our unanimous agreement and hurt public trust in our bodies. We urge you to reconsider your rejection of the carefully crafted joint resolution 2024-046 so the City and County can collaborate to manage this land effectively and increase safety for our community.

As discussed at this meeting, the resolution was intended to be the first step in moving forward by the Bend City Council and the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners. The resolution was not intended to include detailed strategies as the understanding was that an Intergovernmental Agreement and future Memorandums of Understanding were to follow with detailed work plans to select service providers and provide clear communication on how to rehouse those living in the area. To the extent the County believes that an Intergovernmental Agreement can accomplish the same purposes as the resolution while also insulating the City and County from a legal challenge on a land use decision theory, the City disagrees. The resolution provides the path and legal framework to allow vehicle sheltering on the property in a structured, managed fashion according to ORS 195.520, which does not require or involve a land use decision.

In fact, the County's existing orders on Safe Parking expressly prohibit camping with supportive case management on the City and County Juniper Ridge land, so a resolution is necessary for a viable defense in case of a challenge to the provision of case management and other activities to lessen the impacts of the unmanaged camping occurring today.

There have been claims made that there are already case management services in place by Deschutes County. This is not true. While there are security patrols and basic services being provided, service providers have not been brought into Juniper Ridge to help provide resources to individuals who wish to transition into more permanent housing. There are no County-held contracts we are aware of for housing-focused case management services.

City of Bend staff have already dedicated hours of work in preparing the resolution for the Temporary Safe Stay Area, including numerous hours spent by Housing Department Staff to prepare contracts to implement those case management services.

This resolution and information on contracting case management services was set to come before the Bend City Council at our Council meeting last night and had to be postponed due to your decision not to proceed at a public hearing two hours before the Bend City Council Meeting. This will cause a major delay in deciding how to allocate funds for this purpose, and likely result in the City being unable to designate American Rescue Plan Acts (ARPA) funds to support the joint agreement.

We are concerned with the lack of collaboration since our meeting on September 5. The City Attorney's Office has reached out on multiple occasions to the Deschutes County legal counsel and your legal counsel has refused to meet in person to discuss. This lack of collaboration undermines the joint agreement and what was promised to our constituents at the joint meeting. We urge you to direct your staff to work together with City of Bend staff to address concerns and incorporate appropriate changes into the resolution so both bodies can approve it.

The City Attorney's Office is willing and able to defend against a challenge to our efforts to improve conditions and enhance safety. Not taking steps to better the conditions at Juniper Ridge for fear of a legal challenge is not acceptable; our constituents are asking us to do something to help keep the entire community safe. The City Attorney's Office is eager to work more collaboratively with your legal counsel to find solutions and defend any challenges.

This work needs to happen quickly. Because of the inaction of the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners yesterday, and the delay this inaction has caused, the City of Bend is now poised to move the ARPA funds away from this project immediately in order to ensure they are obligated by the December 31, 2024, deadline. We're asking the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners to reconsider and approve a joint resolution by next Wednesday, October 23. We urge you to work with us to move forward with the agreed-upon Juniper Ridge Management plan. Our joint City and County constituents are demanding action. We must now follow through with the agreements we discussed and made on September 5 at our joint meeting.

Sincerely,



Mayor Melanie Kebler



Accommodation Information for People with Disabilities

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille, large print, electronic formats, etc., please contact Jacob Larsen at jlarsen@bendoregon.gov or 541-647-0696. Relay Users Dial 7-1-1.