

Issues and Comments – What We’ve Found or Heard So Far...

Property Ownership

- The majority of the property in the project area located between the river and the RiverRim neighborhood is owned by one individual. That property is constrained by two city of Bend zoning designations – the “River Area of Special Interest Sub-zone” and the “Upland Area of Special Interest Overlay Zone”.
- The owner has established the Helen H. Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary on the southern portion of the property. The owner has indicated that he is not willing to have the bridge, trailhead parking, or trails located on any portion of his property.
- The proposed Renaissance Subdivision west of RiverRim (which included a trail near the river) was under appeal at the State Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) but now appears to have been cancelled by the owner and applicant.
- The owner of land at the north end of River Bend Drive that is located between public right-of-way and the USFS land has also expressed an unwillingness to allow public access across their property.
- The United States Forest Service (USFS) owns land that could be used for the bridge site on both sides of the river. They have not taken a position on the project due to uncertainty over the eventual local land use process related to the State Scenic Waterway and the status of the bridge relative to the adopted Forest Plan.
- The bulk of the remaining land in the project area is comprised of private individual residential lots.

Parking/Access

- The streets in the RiverRim community are privately-owned and maintained by the RiverRim HOA.
- There is a “public use overlay” on them that allows public use into and out of the subdivision.
- Many of the streets are narrow and don’t allow for on-street parking, while some allow limited parking on one side of the street only.
- We’ve heard numerous comments about traffic and parking already negatively impacting the local street system, and concerns for the safety of pedestrians with increased traffic.
- Of the written comments received, many have requested that we provide trailhead parking elsewhere outside of the RiverRim neighborhood since the homeowners pay for the upkeep of their private roads.
- There may be an opportunity to provide additional/better on-street parking by creating parking “bays” along the frontage of Wildflower Park on River Rim Drive, as well as along the southern frontage of Elk Meadow on Amber Meadow.
- Similar to River Rim, River Bend Estates residents (area between River Rim and Deschutes River Woods) have stated a general opposition for parking to be located on Buck Canyon Road.
- Buck Canyon Road (east portion) is within the River Bend Estates Special Road District which means that district residents pay for road maintenance.
- Several have mentioned that if there is parking, it needs to shift as far west as possible to not be behind existing homes.
- Others have said that they would be fine with parking on Buck Canyon as long as the district paved Buck Canyon Rd. from the proposed parking area east to Brookwood. The estimated cost to pave this segment of Buck Canyon is approximately \$270,000 plus approximately \$10,000 per year in maintenance. The County is no longer accepting roads into the County road system and instead relies on local special road districts for locally-funded maintenance.
- Residents on River Bend Drive have also expressed a desire for trailhead parking to be located outside of River Bend Estates, and particularly no parking being allowed at the north end of River Bend Drive.
- River Bend Drive is County-maintained and not part of the River Bend Estates Special Road District.



Trails

- As stated previously, the owner of the large parcels located between River Rim Park, the Cinder Cone Natural Area and the river has stated his desire for no public trails to be located on his property.
- We heard that an alternative could be for the public to divert off the Deschutes River Trail (sidewalk) near the west end of River Rim Drive and transition to the River Rim trail network, then follow it out the wildlife corridor to the Cinder Cone, then transition across private property to Buck Canyon Road, then on to River Bend Drive, then once again over private property to the bridge site on USFS land.
- The riverfront portion of River Bend Estates lots include a 20' wide public access easement for fishing, with two 25' wide public access easements leading to the fishing access from River Bend Dr.
- These easements were established with the original subdivision mapping back in the early 60's. Over the years these types of easements are commonly forgotten and often effectively blocked by eventual building and/or landscaping. Such appears to be the case with the more southern of the two easements connecting to River Bend Dr.
- There appears to be no other public access to the river south of River Bend Estates, nor is there public access to the Arnold Irrigation Canal ditchrider road that also leads to the river near Pine Dr.

Bridge

- Without willing property owners, the bridge would most likely need to be located on USFS land on either side of the river or the private land would be subject to eminent domain should the BPRD Board choose to go that route.
- Being on federal land and crossing a "Wild and Scenic" River section will trigger federal requirements for environmental analysis and compatibility with the adopted Forest Plan, and require a USFS Special Use Permit.
- The narrowest portion of the river in this area is approximately 150' between banks, not accounting for possible wetlands. Past BPRD bridge installations have demonstrated that maximum free-span bridges can be up to 180' as a practical design. As the river widens nearby to over 230' between banks, the bridge would likely need to have a mid-stream pier.
- The longer the free-span bridge is, the heavier it needs to be built to support the weight.
- Access to either side of the river for construction activities is challenging.

Permitting

- The potential bridge sites appear to be within the mapped floodplain and the sites on the east side may involve seasonal wetlands and Spotted Frog habitat.
- The river in this area is classified as State Scenic Waterway downstream of the UGB boundary and as both federal Wild and Scenic and State Scenic Waterway upstream of the UGB.
- Current state regulations prohibit new bridges of any type within these sections of State Scenic Waterway, and bridges are "discouraged" in this section of the federal Wild and Scenic waterway.
- There is a process through the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) for working to overcome the prohibition in state administrative rules for new bridges in this section of the river. However, BPRD will need the cooperation of the property owner to move forward. Given that the property owner has declined to consider allowing the bridge on his property, this limits the options.
- BPRD may be able to purchase the needed federal land but if not, it is unclear if they (USFS) would be able to cooperate on the OPRD process since the bridge is not in the Forest Plan.

River Access

- Several comments have pointed out the dangerous river rapids downstream of River Rim Park.
- Emergency responders take too long to reach any victims in this reach of the river so it is incumbent upon nearby residents to render aid. The introduction of additional potentially unskilled or under-skilled floaters/paddlers is cause for concern for these residents that already perform this service.
- It was also mentioned that unsafe river cliff-jumping also occurs on private property just upstream of River Rim Park.

