

Existing Conditions Memo

May 22, 2026

Project# 32254

To: Henry Stroud, Principal Planner
Bend Park and Recreation District

From: Edward Guo, Matt Kittelson, and Nick Gross; Kittelson & Associates
Justin Mason and Nick Robertson, DOWL

RE: Deschutes River Trail South Study

Purpose of this Study

The Deschutes River Trail South Study will develop and evaluate alternative alignments for a segment of the planned Deschutes River Trail in Bend, Oregon. It will also carry out preliminary engineering feasibility analyses for two “preferred alternatives” including schematic design, order of magnitude cost estimates, a summary of the regulatory framework and permitting requirements, right of way acquisition needs and a high-level review of environmental impacts/mitigation requirements. The intent of this study is to provide the district, the public, and other stakeholders with more detailed and accurate information about the project to inform future community conversations and project design.

Purpose of this Memorandum

In response to the continued community interest in completing one of the last remaining gaps on the Deschutes River Trail and enhancing access to the Deschutes National Forest, the Board of Directors of Bend Park and Recreation District (BPRD) requested that staff collaborate with stakeholders and the community to develop and evaluate alternative trail alignments to connect the southern portion of the Deschutes River Trail to the Deschutes National Forest.

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the work completed to-date on the Deschutes River South, as well as pertinent baseline data, providing a common reference point for a fresh community discussion on trail alignment alternatives and a potential river crossing.

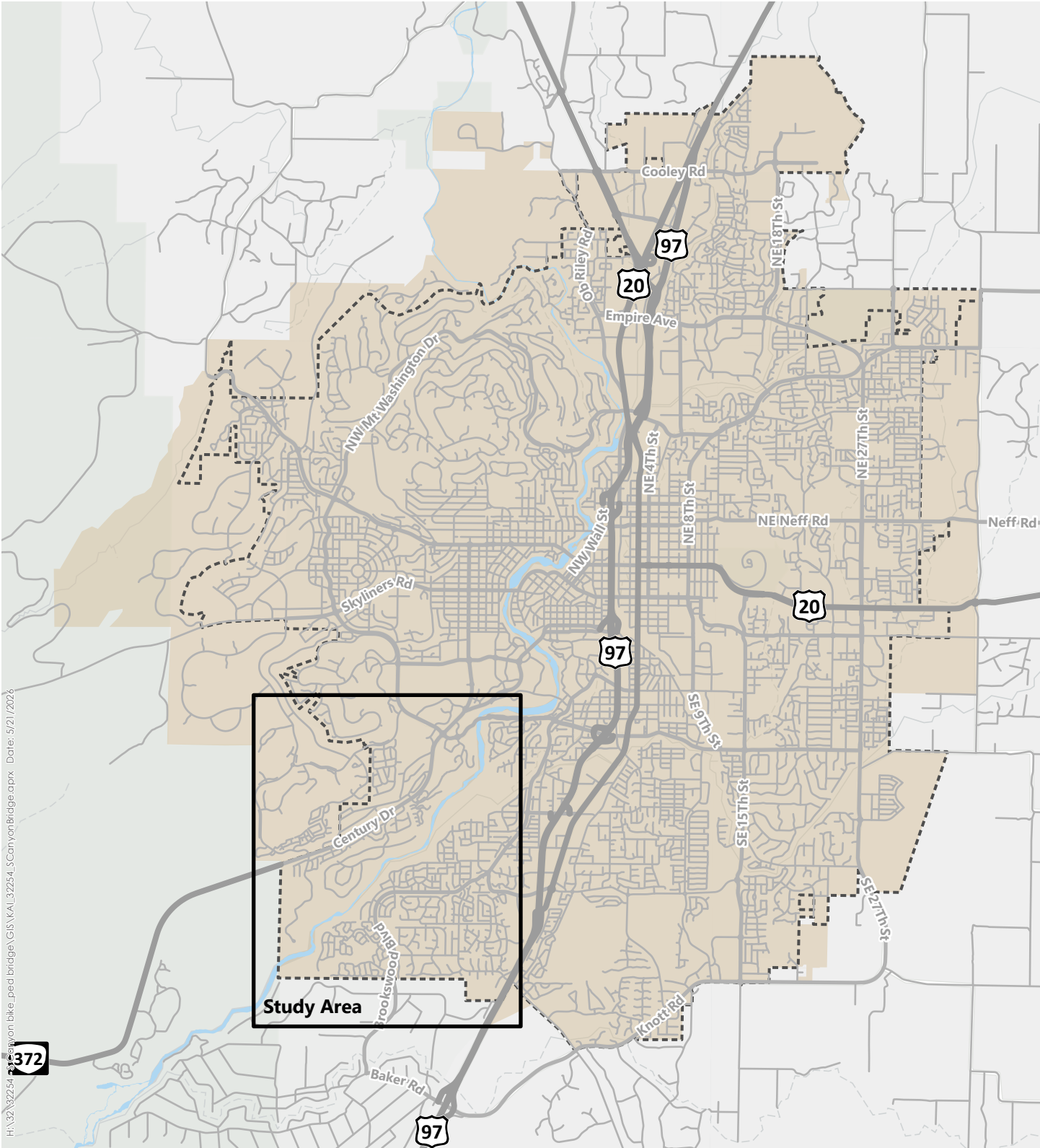
The memorandum is organized as follows:

- Background Documents
- Existing Transportation Network Conditions
- Physical Site Conditions
- Environmental Considerations
- Existing Regulatory Framework
- Property and Easements
- Summary of Considerations

Background Documents

Some form of southern trail extensions and bridge crossings have been identified in locally adopted plans since the mid-1990s, including in the City of Bend - Urban Trails Plan (1996), the City of Bend & Bend Park & Recreation District - Deschutes River Trail Action Plan (2002) and the BPRD - Trails Master Plan (2008). In 2012, BPRD began work on a study of Deschutes River Trail South after voters approved a bond measure to support the development of new parks and trails. A citizens advisory committee established by BPRD evaluated eight trail alignments and five bridge locations. The committee selected a planned trail alignment and bridge location based on an evaluation of several criteria including environmental impacts, constructability, property impacts, user experience, and connectivity. The selected bridge location was on federal property managed by the United States Forest Service (USFS) and was within a portion of the upper Deschutes River that is classified as a State Scenic Waterway and a Federal Wild and Scenic River.

The following discussion briefly outlines more recent planning efforts to address the southern trail alternative alignments and bridge crossings. Figure 1 shows the Project's study area in relation to Bend. Figure 2 shows the extent of the study area.



H:\32\32254\BPRD\on bike_psd_bridge\GIS\KAI_32254_S Canyon Bridge.aprx Date: 5/21/2026




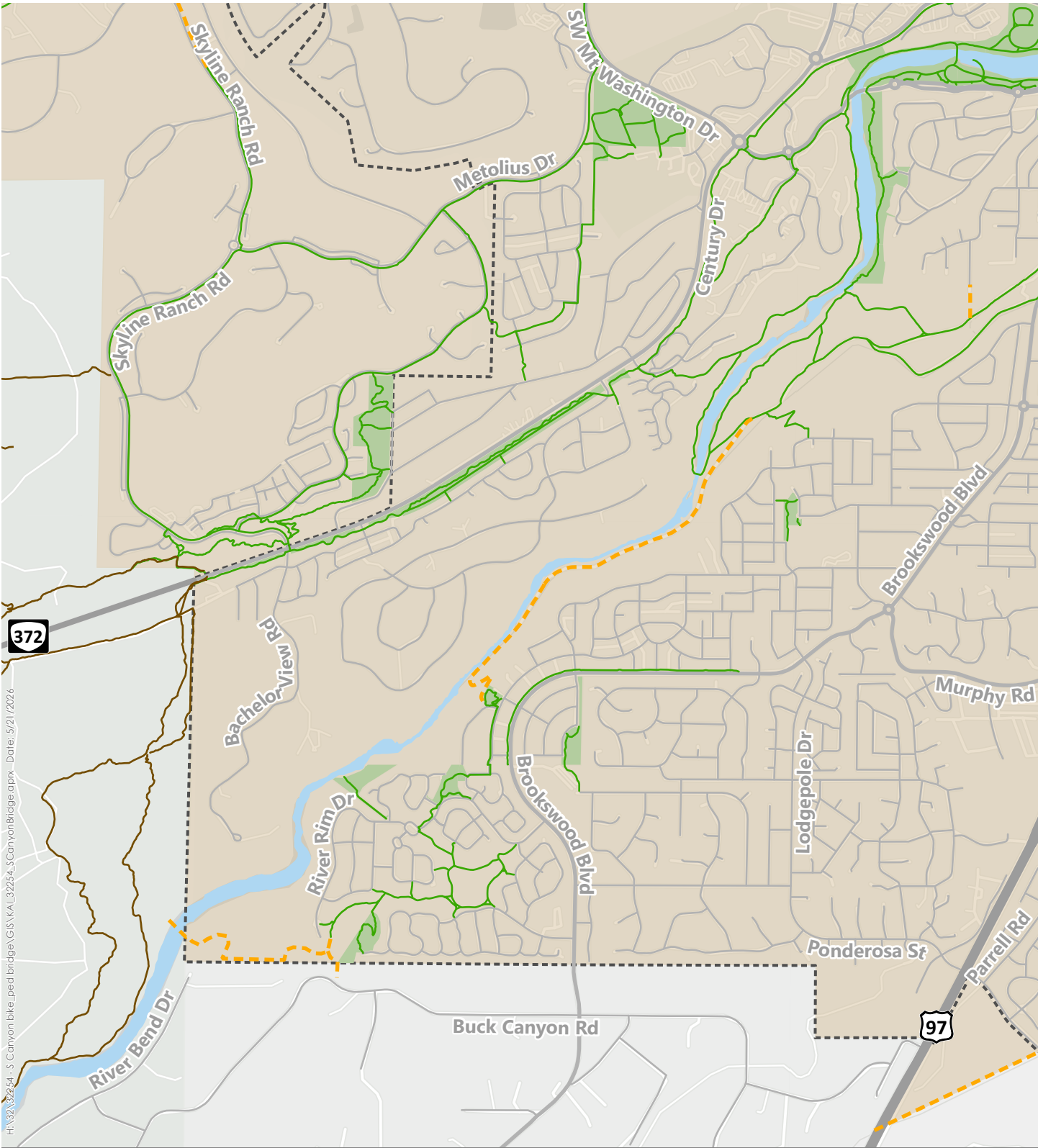
-  Deschutes River
-  Bend City Limits
-  BPRD Boundary



Figure 1
Bend Extent and Study Area
Bend, OR



H:\32\32254\32254_S Canyon Bridge\GIS\KAI_32254_S Canyon Bridge.aprx - Date: 5/21/2026


-  Deschutes River
-  USFS Existing Trails
-  Bend City Limits
-  BPRD Existing Trails
-  BPRD Boundary
-  BPRD Planned Trails
-  BPRD Parks



Figure 2

**Study Area
Bend, Oregon**

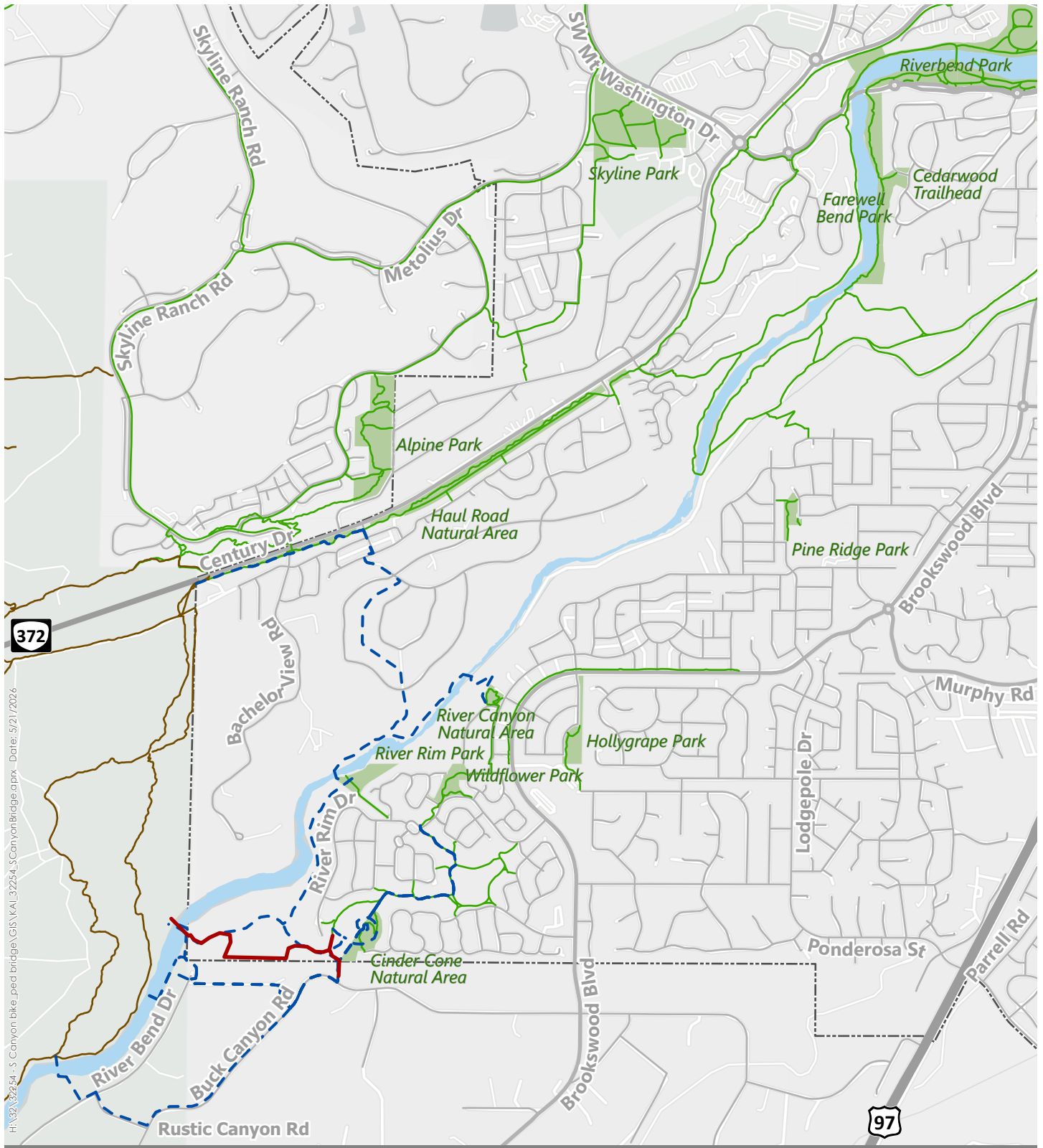
2015 ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

BPRD conducted an alternatives analysis in 2015 to study possible alignments for the Deschutes River Trail South trail alignment and bridge. The analysis examined five possible bridge locations combined with varying trail alignments along the river located approximately between Rustic Canyon Road and the River Canyon Natural Area. The analysis criteria included estimated wetland and riparian impact, estimated habitat impact, private property impacts, distance to public trail or park, linkages to the Deschutes National Forest (DNF) trail system, ownership of possible rights-of-way for the trail or bridge, visibility to existing properties, road surface and conditions, support for trailhead parking, adjacency to the river, and whether the alignment is located within BPRD's boundary. The criteria were unweighted and did not consider costs for property acquisition, estimated construction costs, or individual stakeholder input, as the analysis was intended to remain a high-level, objective comparison of alignment alternatives.

The 2015 Alternative Analysis shows a preferred trail connection to a potential bridge location traversing through private properties on the east side of the river. A proposed bridge at approximately the northern end of River Bend Drive was the highest ranked bridge location alternative after considering the analysis criteria. The planned Deschutes River Trail South trail alignment and bridge location adopted into the BPRD Comprehensive Plan was based on the 2015 alternative analysis.

This Study builds on the 2015 alternatives analysis and focuses on analyzing the existing conditions in the updated project study area.

Figure 3 shows the alignment alternatives considered during the 2015 analysis, as well as the alignment adopted into the BPRD Comprehensive Plan.



- Current BPRD Comprehensive Plan Alignment
 - - - 2015 Alternatives Study Alignments
 - USFS Existing Trails
 - BPRD Existing Trails
 - [Symbol] Deschutes River
 - [Symbol] BPRD Parks
 - [Symbol] Bend City Limits
- 0 1,000 2,000 Feet ↑

Figure 3
**2015 Alternatives Analysis Alignments
 Bend, OR**

H:\321_32254_1_S_Canyon_bike_pedal_bridge\GIS\KAI_32254_1_S_CanyonBridge.aprx - Date: 5/21/2026

2015 DESCHUTES NATIONAL FOREST ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION STUDY

A southern trail extension and potential bridge crossing are identified in the DNF Alternative Transportation Study (2015), which provides recommendations to enhance non-motorized access to high-use recreational areas in the DNF.

2023 COMMUNITY NEEDS SURVEY

Community interest in trails as well as the southern trail connection has remained strong. BPRD's [2023 Community Needs Survey](#) found that trails, both natural and paved surfaces, are the most utilized recreational facilities within its system with over 90% of community members having utilized them in the previous 12 months. Over 85% of households surveyed express need for more trails. In addition, 46% of invited survey respondents (n = 840) were very supportive of "BPRD completing a footbridge crossing of the Deschutes River, which would connect the Deschutes River Trail on the south end of Bend to the Deschutes National Forest," 25% somewhat supportive, 15% neutral, 5% not supportive, 6% not at all supportive, and 4% don't know/sure. 49% of open survey respondents (n = 1,582) were very supportive of "BPRD completing a footbridge crossing of the Deschutes River, which would connect the Deschutes River Trail on the south end of Bend to the Deschutes National Forest," 21% somewhat supportive, 15% neutral, 4% not supportive, 9% not at all supportive, and 3% don't know/sure.

2024 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

In its 2024 [Comprehensive Plan Update](#), BPRD included a project called the "Deschutes River Trail South Urban Growth Boundary & Bike/Pedestrian Bridge."

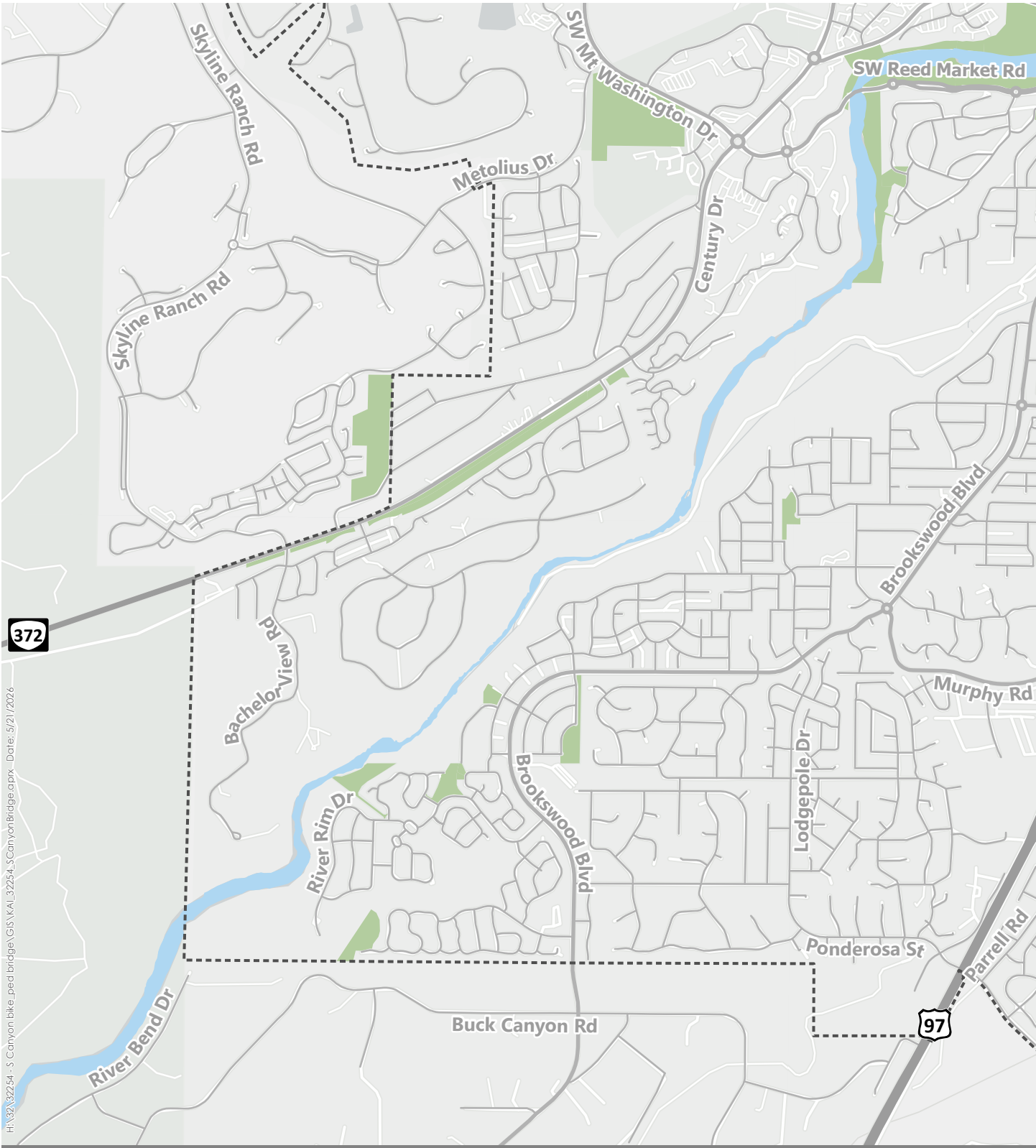
Existing Transportation Network Conditions

The existing transportation, trail, and park network in southern Bend provides limited bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across the Deschutes River. Healy Bridge (SW Reed Market Road) serves as the only vehicular crossing of the river within the study area, and trail connections near the study area remain disconnected from larger trail networks within Bend. This section describes current road, trail, and park infrastructure to illustrate existing access and to identify gaps that are relevant to evaluating potential river crossing alternatives.

MOTOR VEHICLE ROADS AND BRIDGES

The only road bridge across the Deschutes River in the study area is the Healy Bridge (SW Reed Market Road). The closest public vehicular bridge to the south of the study area is Harper Bridge (Spring River Road) in Sunriver. Both crossings are outside of the study area. River Bend Drive and River Rim Drive run along the east bank of the Deschutes River and provide road connectivity to residential properties along the river.

Figure 4 shows the existing road network within the study area.



H:\32\32254 - S Canyon bike, ped bridge\GIS\KAI_32254_S Canyon Bridge.aprx - Date: 5/21/2026



-  Bend City Limits
-  BPRD Parks



Figure 4
**Existing Road Network
 Bend, OR**

TRAILS AND PARKS NETWORK

BPRD's system includes over 98 miles of trails and 84 parks and natural areas throughout the city and its surrounding areas. The US Forest Service manages 4.75 miles of Rimrock Hiking Trails on its property between SW Century Drive (OR372) and the Deschutes River. The Rimrock Trails connect north and west to a wider network of trails and natural resources within the DNF.

The Deschutes River Trail runs intermittently between the River Canyon Natural Area and Cinder Cone Natural Area with portions of the trail utilizing existing City sidewalks and passing through open space managed by the River Rim Community Association. The Deschutes River Trail between the River Canyon Natural Area and south canyon footbridge exists but has been closed to public access during the last several years. BPRD has recently secured approval from the Central Oregon Irrigation District (COID) to reopen this section for public access. The study area also contains other public trails notably through the River Rim neighborhood and along Brookwood Boulevard.

The underlying ownership of existing trails within the study area varies, however all trails are open to public access either through public access easements, easements granted to BPRD, or they exist on BPRD owned property.

Trails within the study area are a mixture of natural surface, gravel, and paved/concrete trails. BPRD lists a planned trail connection from the Central Oregon Historic Canal Trail to the River Canyon Natural Area, as well as a planned trail across the Deschutes River from the River Rim Drive to the DNF, in its 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update.

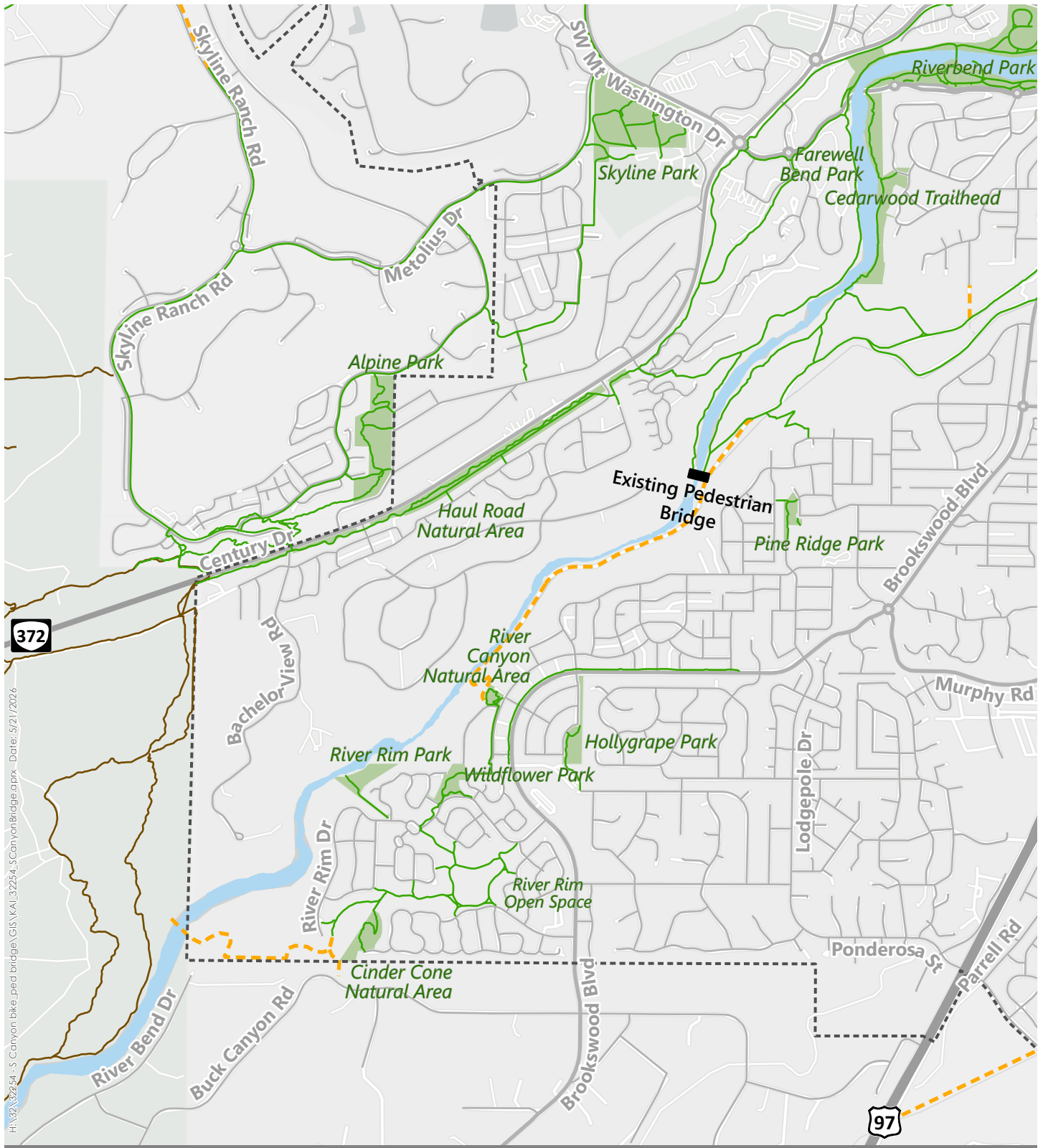
Existing public park facilities within the study area south of the Deschutes River include Cinder Cone Natural Area, Wildflower Park, River Rim Park, River Canyon Natural Area, and Hollygrape Park. The nearby River Rim Open Space is managed by the River Rim Homeowners Association. The Meadow Day Use Area on the west side of the river is managed by the US Forest Service.

Good Dog! park, which operates as a recreational area as an off-leash dog park, is located on DNF lands west of the river. BPRD does not operate this park. This area is immediately west of the current planned trail alignment and bridge crossing location shown in the existing BPRD Comprehensive Plan.

The only bicycle crossing in the study area is the Bill Healy Bridge at SW Reed Market Road. The pedestrian river crossing nearest to the DNF is the footbridge located on the Deschutes River Trail – South Canyon Reach. The trails on both sides of the river leading up to the footbridge are unpaved. Bicycles are not allowed on the west side of the River Trail from just south of the Healy Bridge (SW Reed Market Road) to the South Canyon Reach river crossing¹.

Figure 5 shows the existing and planned trails and parks within the study area.

¹ The barring of bicycles on this section of trail was part of an agreement with Touchmark (an over 55 community) to reduce conflicts between users.



- BPRD Existing Trails
- USFS Existing Trails
- Planned Trails
- Deschutes River
- BPRD Parks
- Bend City Limits



Figure 5
**Existing and Planned Trails and Parks
 Bend, OR**

H:\323_32254_-_S_Canyon_bike_ped_bridge\GIS\KAI_32254_-_S_CanyonBridge.aprx - Date: 5/21/2026

Physical Site Conditions

Physical characteristics of the Deschutes River corridor, including river width and steep topography, can influence where a bridge crossing could be feasibly located. Design considerations aimed at minimizing ecological disturbance and visual impacts further constrain potential options. This section summarizes key physical conditions and limitations that affect bridge span length, placement, and trail connectivity.

RIVER WIDTH CONSIDERATION

To minimize impacts to the river, its ecology, and scenic character, a single-span pedestrian bridge that avoids any structural elements within the riverbed is preferred. In-water piers represent a significant permitting challenge and can introduce impacts related to habitat disturbance, scour, debris accumulation, and construction access. A clear-span solution reduces these risks and simplifies permitting.

A previous feasibility study identified a preferred maximum span on the order of 160–165 feet, based on the design context and anticipated bridge types. While this range is reasonable and aligns well with common pedestrian bridge systems, longer single-span pedestrian bridges are technically feasible. Longer spans typically introduce increased structural depth, cost, visual prominence, and constructability considerations.

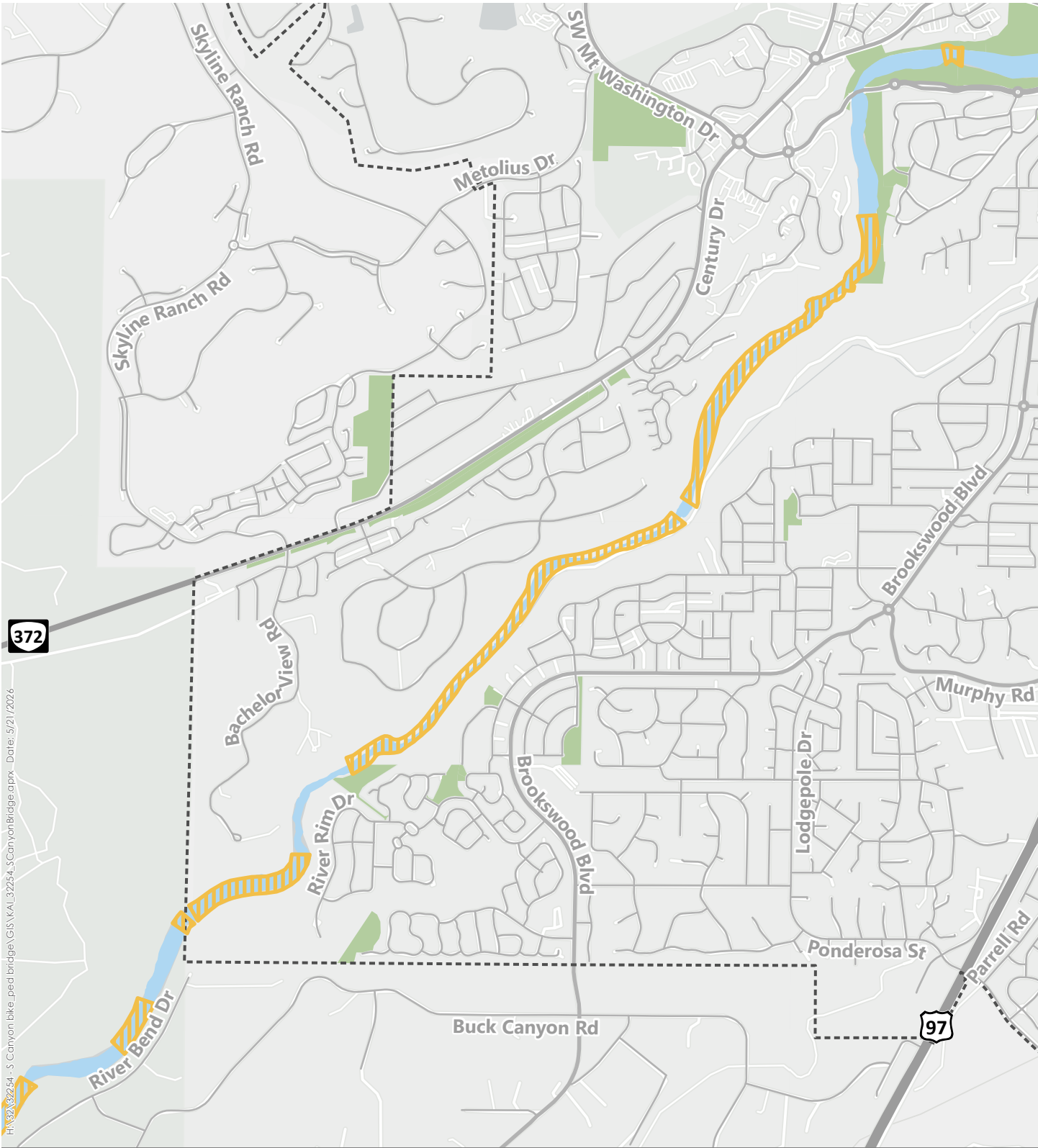
Typical span ranges for pedestrian and trail bridges include:

- Steel or prestressed concrete girder bridges are generally most efficient up to ~100–120 feet.
- Prefabricated steel truss or shallow arch systems are commonly used for spans of 120–200+ feet.
- Cable-supported or suspension bridge systems are capable of much longer spans, but with increased visual and structural complexity and cost.

A maximum span on the order of 220 feet is a reasonable starting point for planning efforts because it sits near the upper end of what can be achieved with conventional, prefabricated systems—such as pony trusses, or shallow tied arches—without forcing a step change in structural complexity. At this length, structural demands can typically be met using readily available member sizes and standard connections. Pushing beyond this range, however, will increase the complexity of the structural systems and will result in higher square foot costs for the bridge. In addition to more complicated structural systems these changes also result in heavier foundations, more demanding erection schemes, larger cranes or temporary works, and increased design and review effort.

Figure 6 shows the sections of the river within the study area where the 100-year flood can be spanned with a 220-foot bridge.

Final selection of bridge type and confirmation of feasible span length will depend on determination of the required bridge width, design loading, and user needs, as these factors directly influence structural efficiency and overall form. DOWL and BPRD will coordinate to confirm bridge width, bridge type, and other design considerations if the project advances.



H:\82\32254 - S Canyon bike, ped bridge\GIS\KAI_32254_S Canyon Bridge.aprx - Date: 5/21/2026



Areas Where 100-yr Flood Plain Can Be Spanned by 220-Foot Bridge



BPRD Parks



Deschutes River



Bend City Limits

0 1,000 2,000 Feet



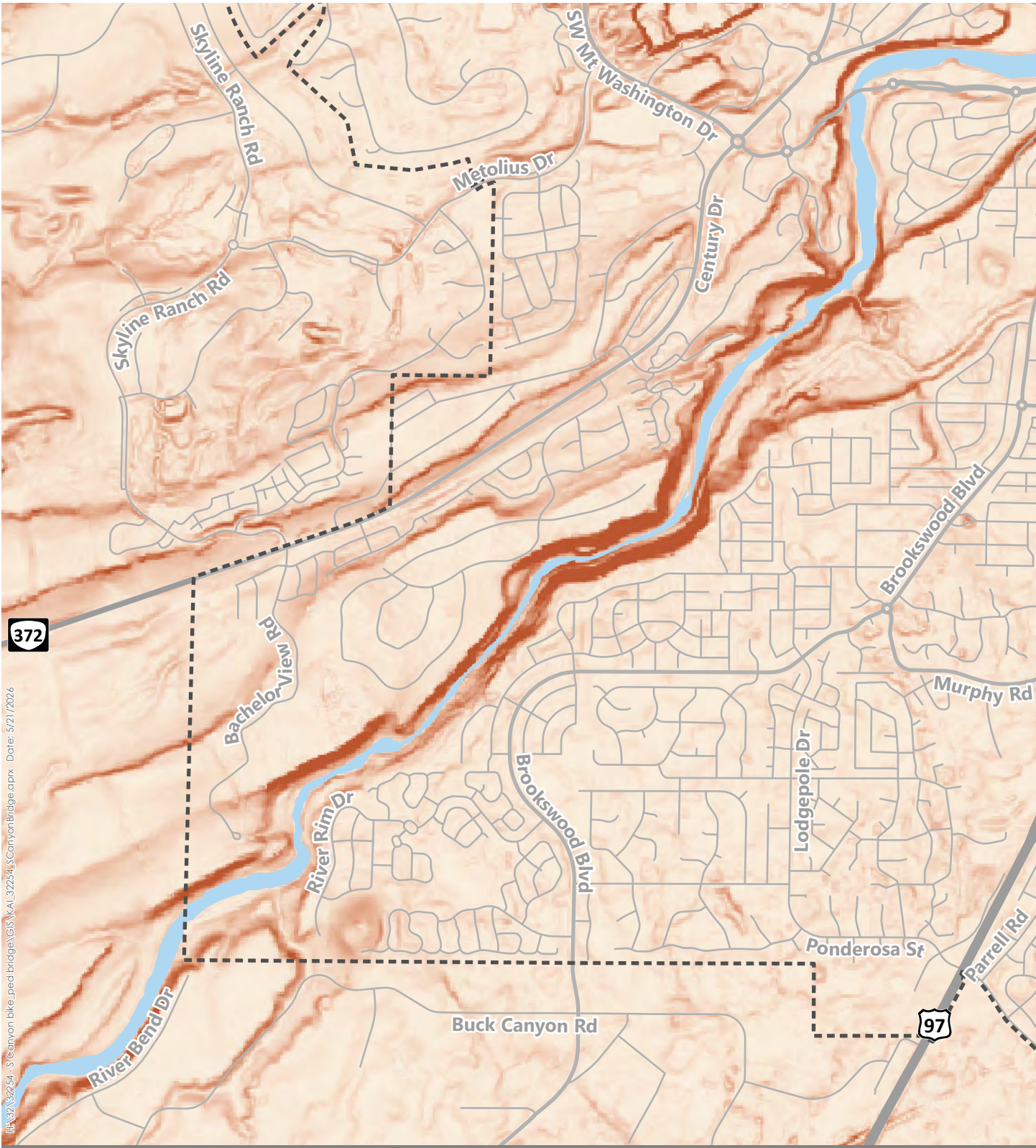
Figure 6

River Sections That Can Be Spanned by 220-Foot Bridge Bend, OR

STEEP TOPOGRAPHY

The banks of the Deschutes River include steep slopes that limit where a bridge crossing and associated trail connections can be established. Steep slopes along the riverbanks constrain the feasibility of ADA-compliant trail connections, as grade requirements for accessible routes may only be met without significant site modification at select locations. Within the study area, both riverbanks exhibit significant grade north of River Rim Drive. The southern bank also includes constrained topography along River Bend Drive.

Figure 7 shows the terrain slope within the study area.



D:\332\32254 - S\Canyon bike_ped bridge\GIS\KAI_32254_S\CanyonBridge.aprx Date: 5/21/2026

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 40%;"> <p>Vertical</p> <p>Flat</p> </div> <div style="width: 40%;"> <p>Deschutes River</p> <p>Bend City Limits</p> </div> </div> | <p>0 1,000 2,000 Feet</p> |
|--|---------------------------|

Figure 7
**Terrain Slope within Study Area
 Bend, Oregon**

Environmental Conditions

The study area includes riverine, riparian, and wetland environments that require careful consideration during planning and feasibility analysis. While no designated critical habitat overlaps the immediate study area, nearby sensitive species habitats and inventoried wetlands may add additional environmental constraints. This section identifies known environmental resources to inform trail alternative development. Information presented within this section may inform the evaluation of potential trail and crossing alternatives within subsequent phases of this study.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) map lists the following Threatened and Endangered species potentially present in the study area:

- Gray wolf (*Canus lupus*, Endangered)
- Yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*, Threatened)
- Northwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*, Proposed Threatened)
- Oregon spotted frog (*Rana pretiosa*, Threatened)
- Monarch butterfly (*Danaus Plexippus*, Proposed Threatened)
- Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee (*Bombus suckleyi*, Proposed Endangered)

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) Compass Map lists at least one documented observation of Oregon spotted frog in the study area, although the date and specific location of the sighting are not provided.

The Oregon Explorer mapping service indicates the Deschutes River does not support any endangered aquatic species in the study area but does provide habitat for native red banded trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss Gairdneri*) and non-native brown trout (*Salmo trutta*). Bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*, Threatened) is listed as historically present.

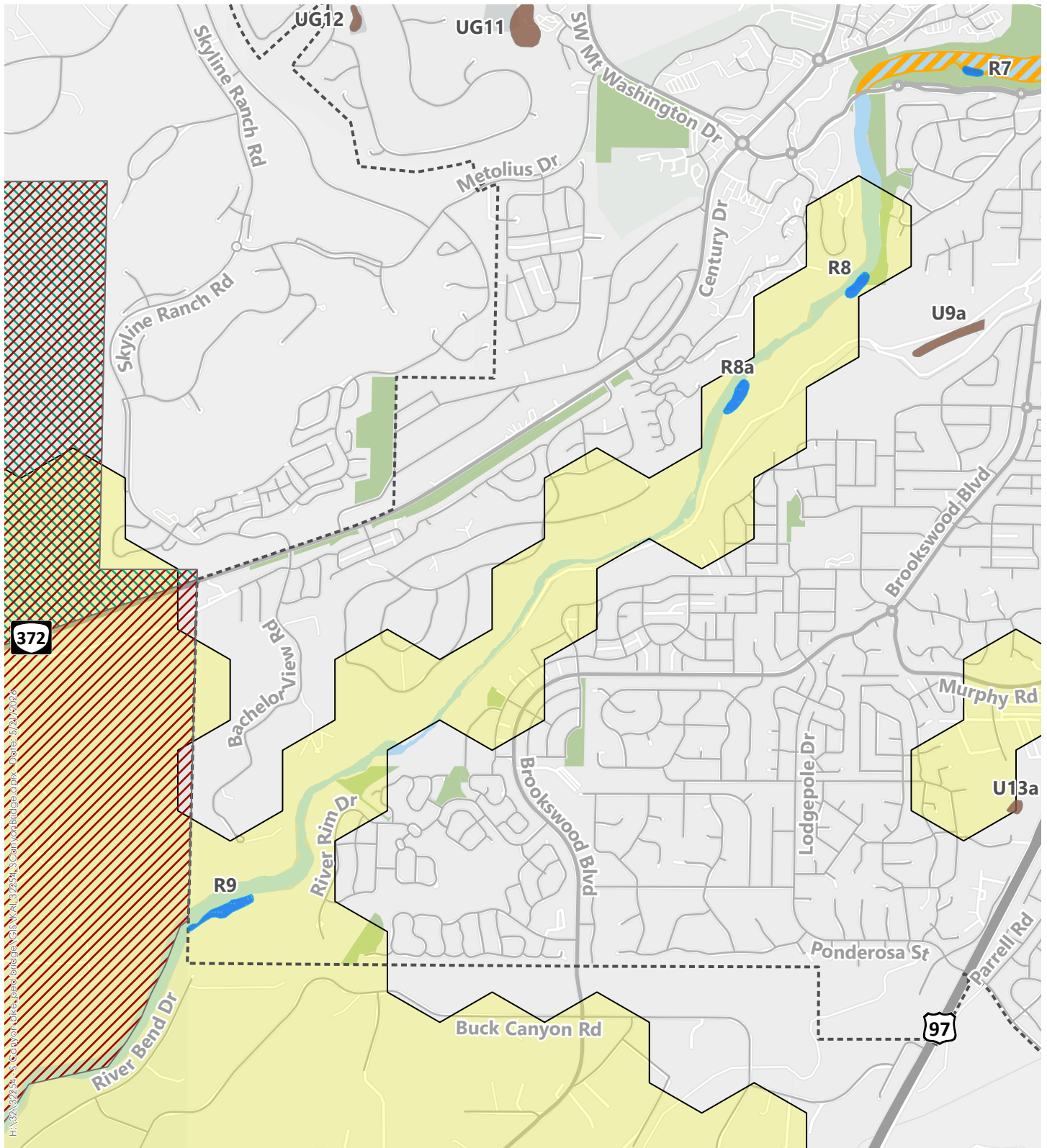
CRITICAL HABITAT

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Essential Fish Habitat Mapper does not show any designated or proposed critical habitats for threatened or endangered species in the study area except for in the Deschutes River north of SW Reed Market Road. The river between SW Reed Market Road and SW Colorado Avenue, as well as south of Lava Island, is designated as critical habitat for Oregon spotted frog according to the USFWS Critical Habitat database.

WETLANDS AND WATERS

The Oregon Division of State Lands (DSL) maintains an inventory of wetlands called Local Wetland Inventories (LWI), which has also been adopted by the City of Bend as part of its Comprehensive Plan. The Bend LWI Inventory includes several wetlands along the Deschutes River within the Study area that are identified as significant. Any project potentially impacting these wetlands will require permitting through the State Fill and Removal Permit process, which also requires mitigation.

Figure 8 shows the environmental conditions within the study area, including the significant identified wetlands and their designated number.



- Non-Significant Wetlands
- Significant Identified Wetlands
- ODFW Priority Wildlife Connectivity Areas
- Elk Habitat Area
- Deer Winter Range
- Spotted Frog Critical Habitat
- Deschutes River
- BPRD Parks
- Bend City Limits



Figure 8

**Environmental Conditions
Bend, OR**

OTHER WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) maintains a [list of Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate species](#) protected at the state level. The ODFW Compass map does not record any observations of state-listed species in the study area, however two Species of Greatest Conservation Need – Lewis' woodpecker (*Melanerpes Lewis*) and olive-sided flycatcher (*Contopus Cooperi*) – are documented. ODFW also indicates a large part of the study area is part of the EC-R12 Priority Habitat Connectivity Area.

The [Oregon Biodiversity Data Center \(ORBIC\)](#) maintains records of known observations of state-listed rare and endangered species. A project would be required to coordinate with ORBIC to better ascertain the likely presence of state-listed species in the study area.

Portions of the study area overlap with the ODFW and Deschutes County-mapped elk range and deer winter range. The elk range is isolated to the west of SW Century Drive in the study area, while the deer winter range extends east of SW Century Drive to the western bank of the Deschutes River. The mapped deer winter range is currently enforced through seasonal restrictions on motorized vehicles, including e-bikes. This would affect how a potential future trail alignment in the study area could be managed. Bridge construction may impact deer winter range habitat but will not impact the designated elk range.

The Priority Habitat Connectivity Area, deer winter range, and elk range are shown on Figure 8.

Environmental Regulatory Framework

Multiple layers of federal, state, and local policy govern land use and development within the Deschutes River corridor, including the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the State Scenic Waterways Act, the Oregon Scenic Waterways Administrative Rules, the Endangered Species Act, wetland and waterway protections, and zoning regulations. These policies establish both prohibitions and processes that shape what types of projects may be considered and under what conditions. This section outlines the applicable regulatory framework to clarify approval pathways, limitations, and the coordination required among agencies. Additional federal regulations, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance, may apply if a future project includes federal funding or the usage of federal lands. A future project will require a Wetland and Waters Delineation Report to determine the boundaries of all waters of the U.S. and/or the state within the study area to inform total project impacts and subsequent mitigation requirements.

FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Federal Wetland/Waterway Permitting

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to regulate the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. Activities regulated under this program include fill for development and infrastructure development such as bridge abutments and piles. Projects that require a Section 404 permit also require CWA Section 401 water quality certification. CWA Section 401 permitting is administered by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

A CWA Section 404 permit will not be required if a future project avoids regulated impacts to waters of the U.S., e.g., discharge of fill material. A future project may also be permissible under a nationwide permit (NWP), such as NWP 14 for linear transportation projects.

Endangered Species Act

If a future project were to include a federal nexus and has the potential to affect ESA-listed species, it will be required to consult with USFWS and NMFS. Conversely, a no-effect memorandum can be submitted if a future project is unlikely to impact ESA-listed species.

National Historic Preservation Act Section 106

If a future project were to include a federal nexus, it must demonstrate compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). An assessment of cultural and historic resources in a project area may be required under NHPA Section 106 to evaluate potential project impacts to these resources.

STATE REGULATIONS

State Wetland/Waterway Permitting

Oregon's removal-fill law requires a removal-fill permit for most projects that add, remove, or move more than 50 cubic yards of material within waters of the state. Work within a state scenic waterway requires a permit for removal or fill of any amount of material. The removal-fill permit is administered by Oregon Department of State Lands. A removal-fill permit will not be required if a project avoids impacts to waters of the U.S. and waters of the state.

A National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) 1200-C stormwater permit will be required if a project disturbs more than one acre of land. NPDES 1200-C permits are administered in Oregon by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Fish Passage Plan

ODFW regulates the construction of roads and bridges that cross fish-bearing stream channels. A project will be required to submit a fish passage plan to ODFW to demonstrate the bridge does not inhibit the passage of native fish species at the bridge crossing. Among other requirements under the fish passage plan, a project will need to demonstrate the bridge is at least 1.2 times the active channel width plus two feet at the proposed river crossing.

SCENIC RIVER AREA DESIGNATIONS

The Deschutes River corridor is a federally designated Wild and Scenic River, and a State of Oregon designated Scenic Waterway. The federal designation begins at Bend's southern Urban Growth Boundary and continues south along the river. The state Scenic Waterway designation begins south of the study area, and extends approximately 5,000 feet inward of the Urban Growth Boundary along the river. The federal Wild and Scenic River designation denotes that the designated area has "scenic, recreational,

cultural, geologic, wilderness, fish and wildlife as well as historic and botanical values." The State Scenic Waterway designation is intended to protect the scenic, recreational, and natural resource values of designated rivers while allowing uses consistent with those protections.

Figure 9 shows the areas under federal and state scenic river designations within the study area.

BPRD has reviewed and continues to monitor the relevant laws and regulations that govern federal- and state-designated scenic river segments of the Deschutes River. A more detailed summary of the laws and regulations compiled by BPRD are shown in Attachment A. The Project Team utilizes the BPRD summary as the basis for understanding how relevant laws and regulations apply to this Project, and the following section reflects BPRD's understanding.

The 1996 Upper Deschutes Wild and Scenic and State Scenic Waterway Comprehensive Management Plan (CRMP) guides the management of state and federal waterways within the upper Deschutes area. The CRMP does not permit new bridges in any of the State Scenic Waterway classification areas, stating that within the State Scenic Waterways reaches of the river, per Oregon Administrative Rule 736-040-0073 - Upper Deschutes River Scenic Waterway, "New bridges will not be permitted." The CRMP also discourages new bridges within the federal Wild and Scenic classification areas.

In 2014, BPRD submitted a request to Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), which administers the CRMP, to narrowly amend relevant Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) to allow for the construction of "bicycle and pedestrian bridges" within the State Scenic Waterway.

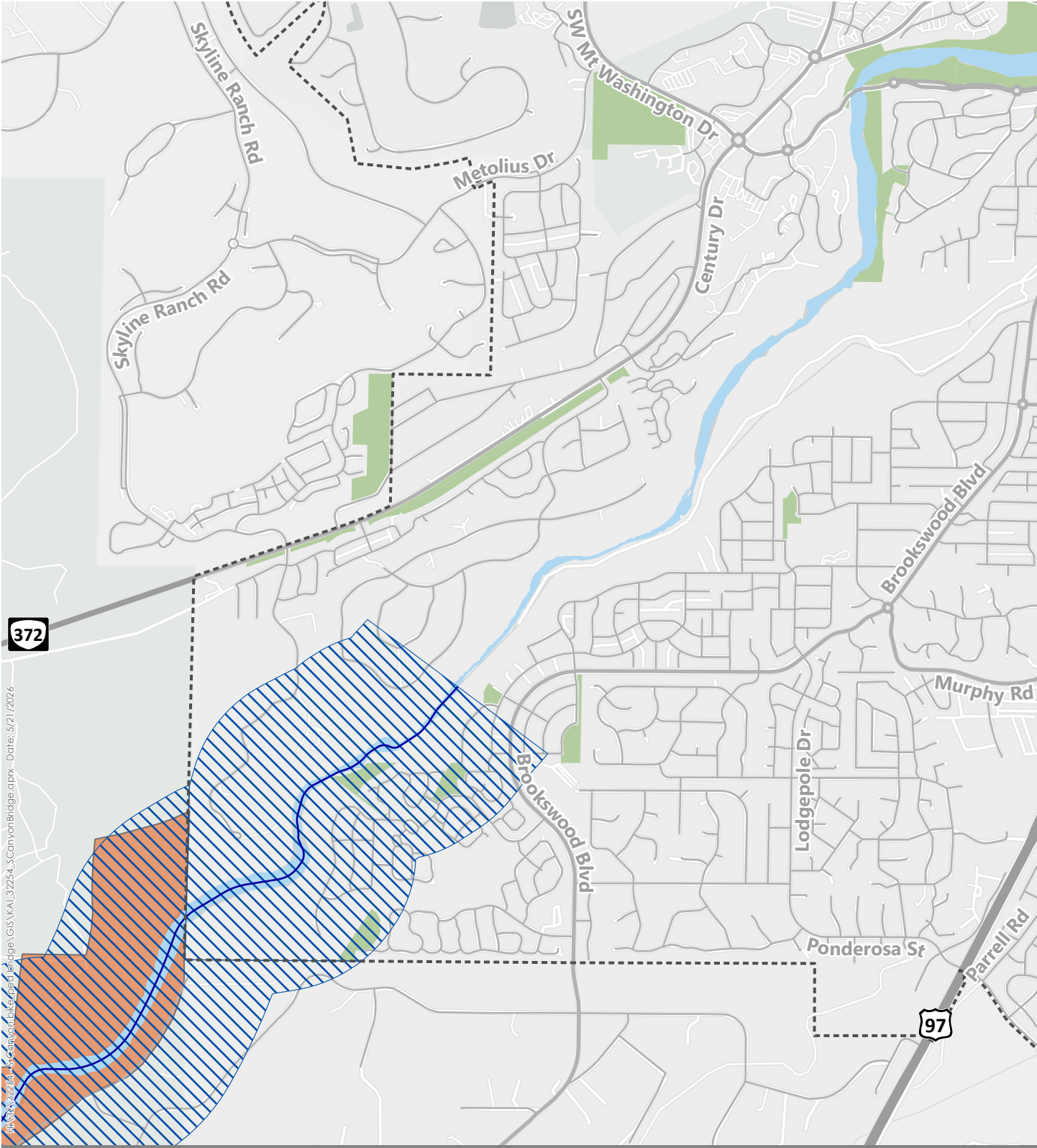
Following this request, an OPRD advisory group recommended against "any administrative rule review or action unless provided compelling evidence of a statutory basis for, local policy changes conducive to, or public sentiment in support of amendment to Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) allowing for a pedestrian bridge over the Upper Deschutes State Scenic Waterway" per the Upper Deschutes Advisory Group Final Report.

At the same time, OPRD confirmed that the State Scenic Waterways Act includes a review process (ORS 390.845) that allows a landowner to submit to OPRD an application for projects not permitted under the CRMP (such as bridges). This review process, which is also detailed in the CRMP (page 48) and the Oregon Administrative Rules (736-040-0030 and 736-040-0080), provides a mechanism for evaluating such proposals within the statutory framework established by the State Scenic Waterways Act.




This application triggers the State Scenic Waterways Act's mandatory 12-month review period during which time OPRD works with the applicant to minimize impacts to the State Scenic Waterway or purchases the property to stop the project entirely. If no agreement is reached within a year, the project is not required to adhere to the State Scenic Waterway Administrative Rules under that process and may proceed subject to applicable requirements (Oregon Revised Statutes 390.845).

The key issue for this study is that OPRD's decision not to open a new rule-making process effectively limits the location of the trails and bridge, since the DNF has indicated they will not apply for a bridge on their property unless the CRMP is changed to allow for the bridge.

Following the ruling by OPRD, two legislative proposals—HB 2027 and HB 4029—were introduced to prohibit new trail bridges over the Deschutes River; neither passed. In 2018, BPRD hired Oregon Consensus to conduct a conflict assessment, which found that disagreement over the Study reflected broader tensions between access and environmental protection, compounded by disputes over basic facts. In 2019, the BPRD Board concluded the project was at an impasse and directed staff to pause work and focus on other priorities.



H:\23\32214 - Skyline Ridge\GIS\KAI_32254_SkylineRidge.aprx - Date: 5/21/2026

-  State Scenic Waterway Course
-  State Scenic Waterway Classification Area
-  Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Area - Recreational


-  Deschutes River
-  BPRD Parks
-  Bend City Limits



Figure 9
Federal and State River Regulations Areas Bend, OR

ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING SUMMARY

Table 1 summarizes the environmental permits which may apply to a future project in the area, pending final bridge design and onsite field investigation:

Table 1 – Environmental Permits that May Apply to Future Project

| Permit, Authorization, or Compliance Documentation | Administering Agency | Applicability |
|--|---|---|
| <u>Federal Permits</u> | | |
| Endangered Species Act Section 7 No Effect Memo or Biological Assessment | National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | Required if the project includes a federal nexus, e.g., a CWA Section 404 permit, to demonstrate compliance with the endangered species act. |
| Clean Water Act Section 404 nationwide or individual permit | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers | Required if the project results in fill within waters of the U.S. (the Deschutes River or adjacent wetlands). |
| Historic and Cultural Resources Report | State Historic Preservation Office | Required if the project includes a federal nexus, e.g., a CWA Section 404 permit, to demonstrate compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. |
| <u>State Permits</u> | | |
| Clean Water Act Section 401 permit | Oregon Department of Environmental Quality | Required if the project results in fill within waters of the U.S. |
| Removal-fill permit | Oregon Department of State Lands | Required if the project results in removal or fill within waters of the U.S. or waters of the state, including wetlands. |
| NPDES 1200-C permit | Oregon Department of Environmental Quality | Required if the project results in more than an acre of ground disturbance. |
| Fish Passage Plan | Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife | Required to demonstrate the bridge does not inhibit the passage of native fish species at the bridge crossing. |

Source:

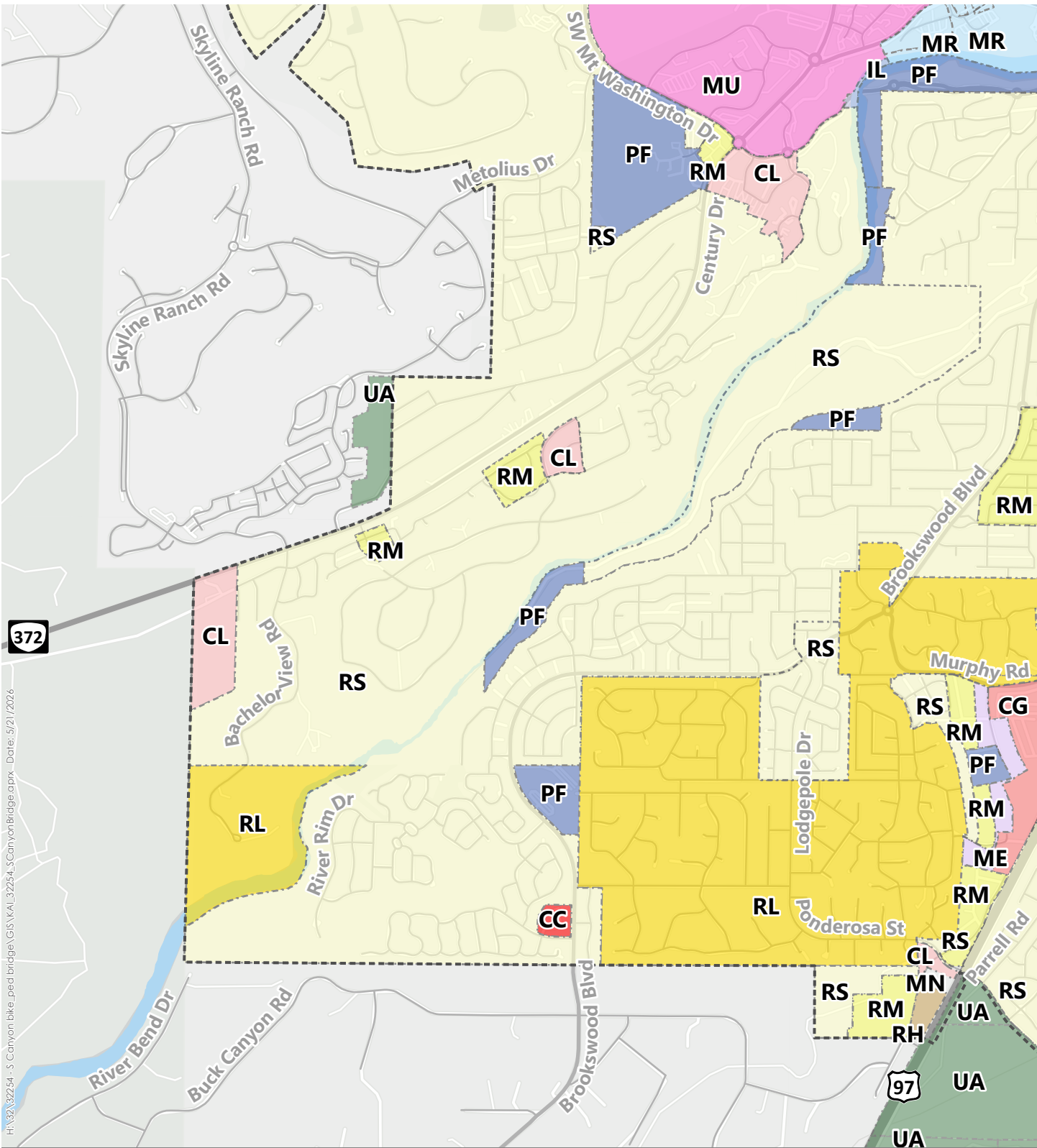
<https://www.epa.gov/cwa-404/overview-clean-water-act-section-404>
<https://www.epa.gov/cwa-404/further-revisions-clean-water-act-regulatory-definition-discharge-dredged-material>
<https://www.epa.gov/cwa-404/final-revisions-clean-water-act-regulatory-definitions-fill-material-and-discharge-fill-0>
<https://www.epa.gov/node/176979/>
<https://www.epa.gov/cwa-404/nationwide-permits-chronology-and-related-materials>
https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/ors/ors196.html

ZONING AND LAND USE REGULATIONS

The area within and around the study area is primarily zoned residential. The area encompasses several overlay zones that set strict guidelines on land use, including bridges. However, the zoning districts generally have special provisions or exemptions that would allow projects such as a bridge to be constructed, provided certain rules and processes are followed.

Figure 10A to 10D shows the City of Bend zoning districts, City of Bend zoning overlays, unincorporated Deschutes County zoning districts, and unincorporated Deschutes County zoning overlays, respectively.

Federally owned properties are not required to adhere to local zoning regulations. Per the Oregon Revised Statutes 227.286, city ordinances regulating the location, construction, maintenance, repair, alteration, use and occupancy of land and buildings and other structures apply to publicly owned property, except as the ordinances prescribe to the contrary.

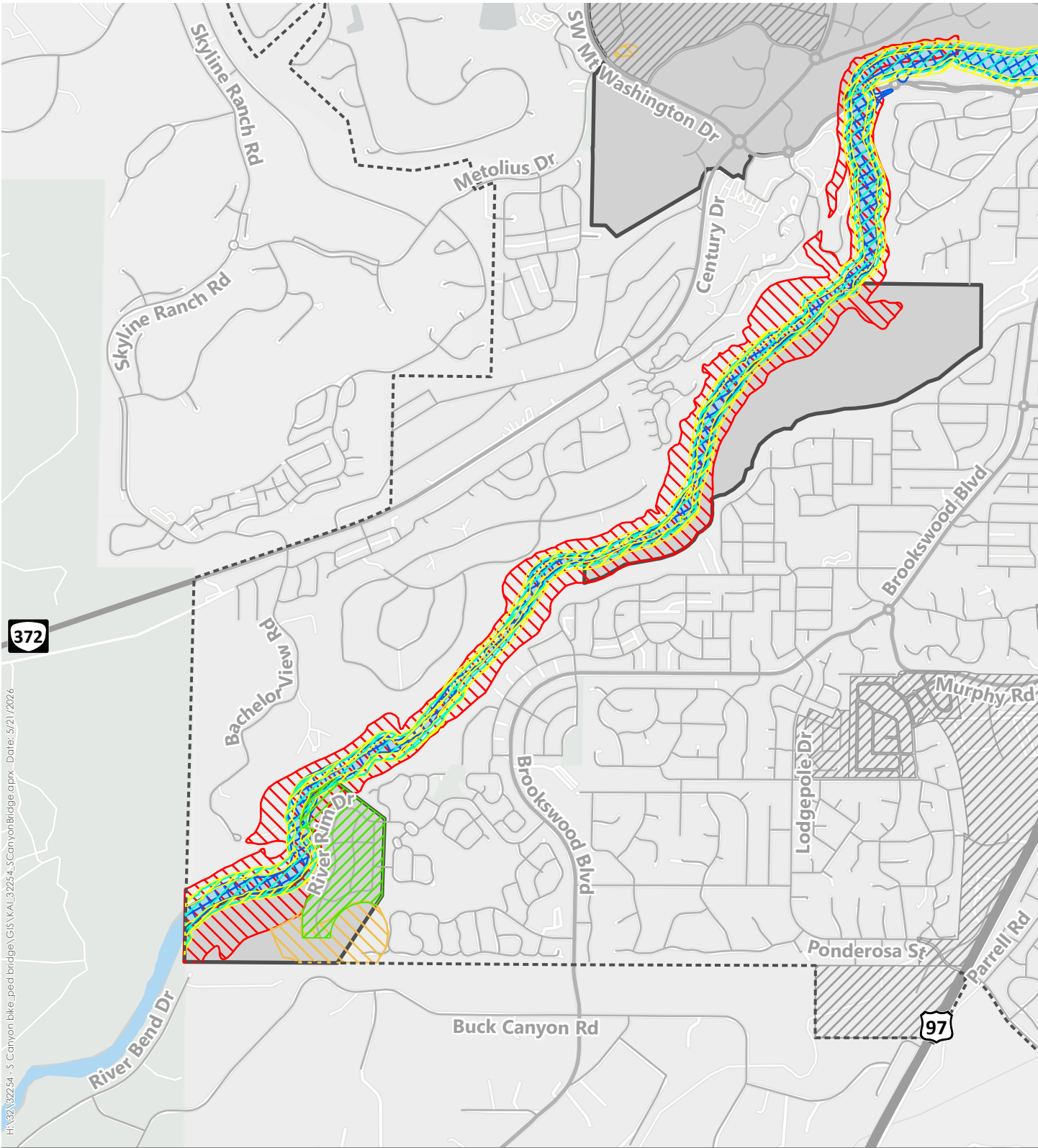


H:\32\32254 - S Canyon bike, ped bridge\GIS\KAI_32254_S Canyon Bridge.aprx - Date: 5/21/2026

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| Convenience Commercial (CC) | Mixed-Use Riverfront (MR) | Medium Density Residential (RM) |
| General Commercial (CG) | Mixed-Use Urban (MU) | High Density Residential (RH) |
| Limited Commercial (CL) | Public Facilities (PF) | Urbanizable Area (UA) |
| Light Industrial (IL) | Low Density Residential (RL) | Bend City Limits |
| Mixed Employment (ME) | Standard Density Residential (RS) | |



Figure 10A
City of Bend Zoning Districts
Bend, OR



H:\32\32254 - S Canyon bike, ped bridge\GIS\KAI_32254_S Canyon Bridge.aprx - Date: 5/21/2026

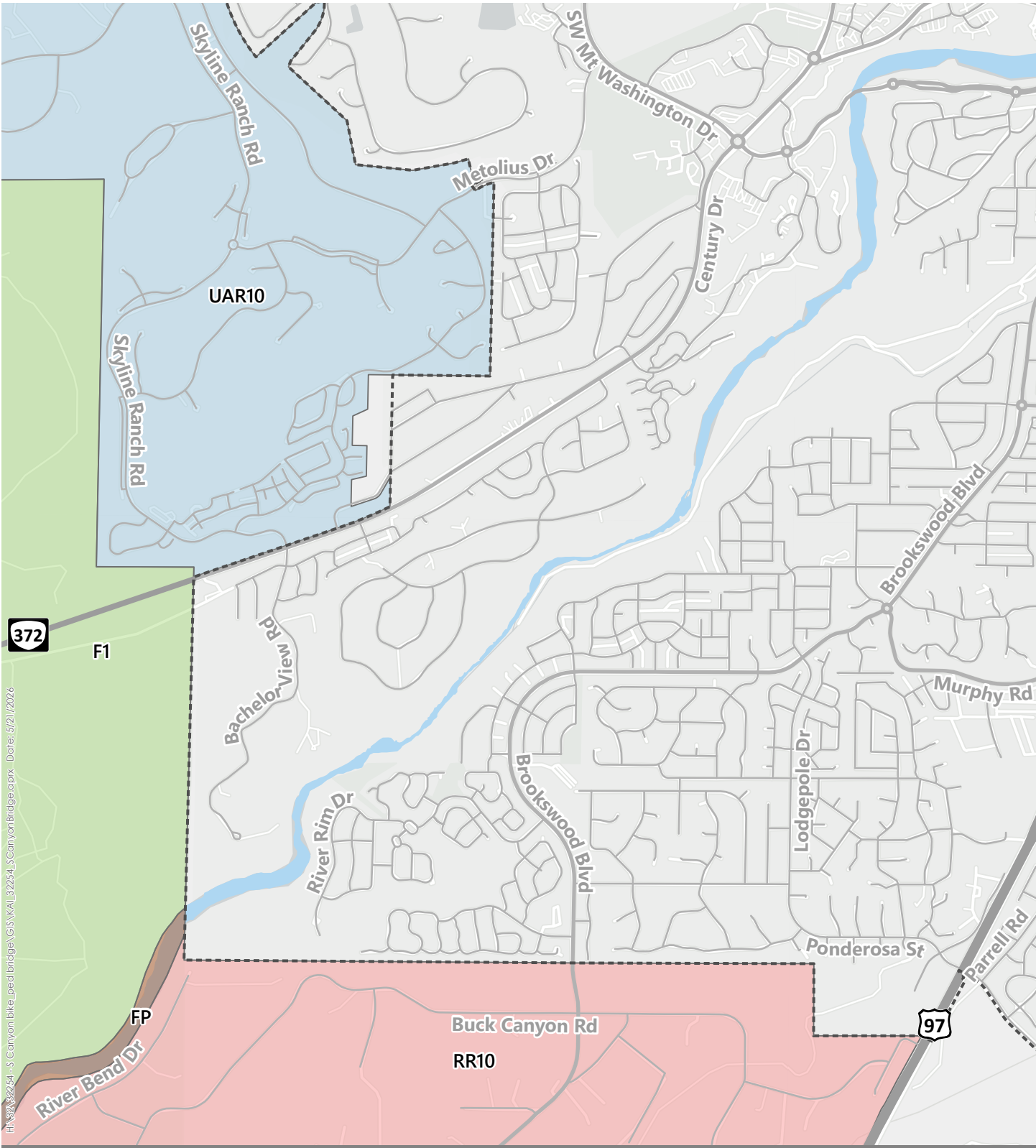
- ASI - River
- ASI - Upland
- Floodplain
- Riparian Corridor
- Waterway Overlay Zone

- River Vale Master Planned Community
- Other Special Planned Districts
- Opportunity Areas
- Bend City Limits



Figure 10B

**City of Bend Zoning Overlays
Bend, OR**



H:\323\32254 - S Canyon Lake Pedal Bridge\GIS\KAI_32254_S Canyon Bridge.aprx | Date: 5/21/2026

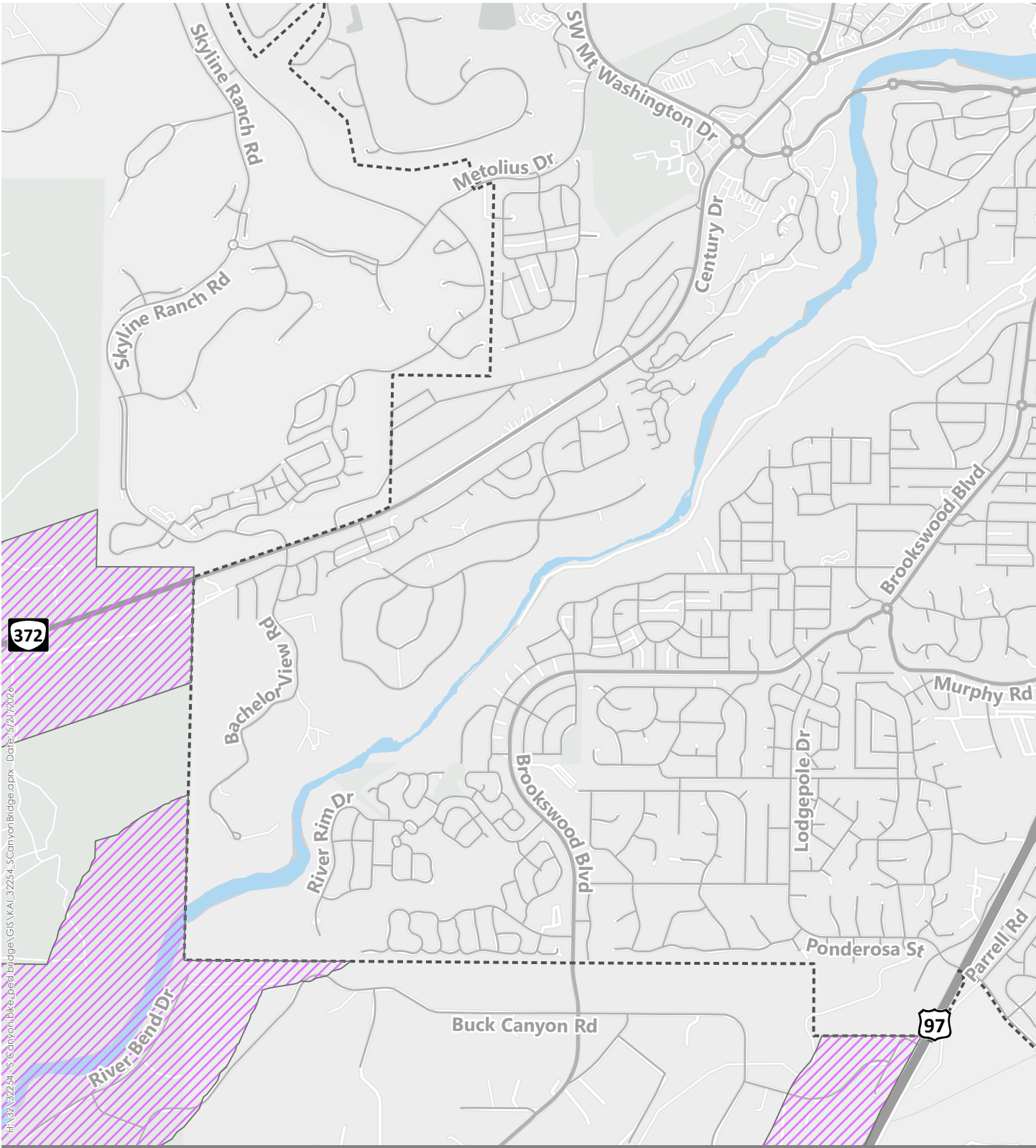
- Flood Plain (FP)
- Forest Use 1 (F1)
- Rural Residential (RR10)
- Urban Area Reserve (UAR10)

Bend City Limits

0 1,000 2,000 Feet



Figure 10C

**Unincorporated Deschutes County
Zoning Districts
Bend, OR**



H:\32\32254 - S Canyon bike pedal bridge\GIS\KAI_32254_S Canyon Bridge.aprx - Date: 5/21/2026

 Landscape Management Combining Zone

 Bend City Limits
 Deschutes River


0 1,000 2,000 Feet 

Figure 10D

**Unincorporated Deschutes County
 Zoning Overlays
 Bend, OR**

STANDARD DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Within Bend's Urban Growth Boundary on the south side of the river, the land is zoned Standard Density Residential (RS) by the City of Bend. This zoning district is intended to provide opportunities for a wide variety of residential housing types at the most common residential densities in places where community sewer and water services are available. The residential density range in this district is 4.0 to 7.3 dwelling units per gross acre. Permitted uses are mainly residential and park space.

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Within Bend's Urban Growth Boundary on the north side of the river, the land is zoned Low Density Residential (RL) by the City of Bend. This zoning district generally consists of large urban residential lots that are served with a community water system, private on-site septic systems, or municipal sewer systems. The residential density range in this district is 1.1 to 4.0 dwelling units per gross acre. Permitted uses are mainly residential and park space.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL

Outside Bend's Urban Growth Boundary on the south side of the river, the land is zoned as Rural Residential (RR10) by Deschutes County. The purposes of the Rural Residential Zone are to provide rural residential living environments; to provide standards for rural land use and development consistent with desired rural character and the capability of the land and natural resources; to manage the extension of public services; to provide for public review of nonresidential uses; and to balance the public's interest in the management of community growth with the protection of individual property rights through review procedures and standards. Various residential uses are permitted outright. Public park, recreation facility, fill or removal within the bed and banks of a stream or river or in a wetland area are conditional uses subject to review.

Additionally, all structures, buildings, or similar permanent fixtures shall be set back from the ordinary high water mark along all rivers, streams, or lakes a minimum of 100 feet measured at right angles to the ordinary high water mark.

FLOOD PLAIN

The Deschutes County Flood Plain Zone is intended to protect the public from the hazards associated with flooding, to conserve important riparian areas along rivers, and to preserve scenic and natural resources. Uses permitted outright include agricultural and forest uses, open space, residential uses that do not require structures and certain road projects. Conditional uses include single-family dwellings, agricultural accessory buildings, hydroelectric facilities, excavation/grading/fill/removal activities, subdividing or partitioning of land, expansion or substantial improvement of existing structures, boat docks and piers, and certain recreational uses.

FOREST USE 1

The Forest Use 1 Zone of Deschutes County is intended to conserve forest land. Forest operations along with select forestry-related activities are permitted uses. Construction of transportation improvements on

rural lands and of parks are conditional uses. Structures should be set back from the ordinary high water mark along rivers, and should be set back from rimrock.

ZONING OVERLAYS

The Deschutes River corridor within Bend's Urban Growth Boundary is generally within the City of Bend's Waterway Overlay Zone (WOZ), which is designed to conserve and enhance the natural resource values of areas along the Deschutes River. The Study area is also located within four sub-zones of the Waterway Overlay Zone: the Riparian Corridor Sub-Zone, the River Corridor Areas of Special Interest Sub-Zone, the Floodplain Zone, and the Deschutes River Corridor Design Review Combining Zone. In the Waterway Overlay Zone, removal of trees greater than four inches of diameter at breast height requires review.

Three other overlay zones are located in the vicinity of the Study area: the Upland Areas of Special Interest, the River Vale Master Planned Development, and City of Bend's Opportunity Areas overlay.

The Deschutes River corridor outside Bend's Urban Growth Boundary is governed by an additional Deschutes County Landscape Management Combining Zone that limits placement of buildings within 100 feet of rimrock.

Riparian Corridor Sub-Zone

Within the Riparian Corridor Sub-Zone, trails may be approved after review. The construction of a new bridge may be approved as a land use action within this Sub-Zone if all State and Federal permits have been or will be obtained, and if it can be demonstrated that the proposed development or activity is designed and constructed to minimize intrusion into the riparian corridor.

River Corridor Areas of Special Interest Sub-Zone

Within the River Corridor Areas of Special Interest Sub-Zone, a proposed development or land use action should be designed and constructed so as to maintain the integrity of the existing natural features and biological system while minimizing removal of native vegetation. A public or private river crossing may be placed within a River Corridor Area of Special Interest to access development activities if it is shown that no other practical method of access exists, provided that roads and driveways are designed to be the minimum width necessary and the minimum intrusion into the River Corridor Area of Special Interest. An exception to the provisions of the River Corridor Areas of Special Interest sub-zone may be permitted for the construction of public trails or paths that provide public access into the preserved River Corridor Areas of Special Interest. A proposed development or land use action within this sub-zone may trigger a requirement for mitigation of visual resources lost during the development activity.

Floodplain Zone

Within the Floodplain Zone, a development permit must be obtained before construction or development begins within any area horizontally within the special flood hazard area, and the various standards for flood hazard reduction apply.

Deschutes River Corridor Design Review Combining Zone

Within the Deschutes River Corridor Design Review Combining Zone, all new developments and structures are subject to a design review process. The City may approve streets and bridges crossing the river, among other features to enhance public use, within the building setback area within the zone, but these

features must comply with various site and design review criteria that require the features to conserve natural features and be compatible with existing area.

Upland Areas of Special Interest

The Upland Areas of Special Interest Overlay Zone is intended to protect valuable natural resources within the City of Bend's Urban Growth Boundary while ensuring reasonable use of the property. Land use activities such as partitioning and subdividing land, developing new structures, expanding of buildings or structures, removing trees, and modifying the site's grade require a permit.

The construction of public trails or paths that provide public access into the preserved Upland Areas of Special Interest is a permitted exception to zoning restrictions, provided such exceptions are necessary to allow reasonable economic use of the subject property or to provide public benefit. Special development standards and mitigation standards apply in the zone.

River Vale Master Planned Development

The River Vale Master Planned Development creates overlay development standards that supersede the development standards of the underlying Residential Urban Standard Density zoning district within the master plan boundaries. The Master Planned Development also creates its own Street Standards.

Opportunity Areas

Bend's Comprehensive Plan Figure 11-1 shows designated Opportunity Areas that are determined to be appropriate to focus new growth due to their location, zoning (existing or planned), amount of vacant or underdeveloped land, and/or proximity to urban services. Within the Opportunity Areas, a maximum of 20 acres of residential designated land proposed for public and institutional uses and miscellaneous uses may be excluded from the density calculation and housing mix. Two Opportunity Areas, COID Property and River Rim, are located within the study area. The River Rim Opportunity Area has been developed as the River Vale Master Plan.

Landscape Management Combining Zone

The Landscape Management Combining Zone is an overlay zone with the purpose of protecting and enhancing scenic vistas as seen from designated roads and rivers. New structures within the zone need to obtain site plan approval, unless the structures or the lots they are located on are not visible from the designated roadway, river, or stream and are assured of remaining not visible due to vegetation, topography, or existing development. New structures in the zone are expected to have a minimum setback of 100 feet from the edge of the ordinary high water line, and a minimum setback of 50 feet from the rimrock. Exceptions to the rimrock setback may be granted under certain conditions.

Property and Easements

Property ownership within and around the Study area is divided among private landowners and public agencies, with limited existing public access across parcels. Potential bridge and trail connections would likely require new or expanded easements across private property to provide public access to any crossing. This section summarizes ownership patterns and known easements to identify access constraints relevant to feasibility and alternative evaluation.

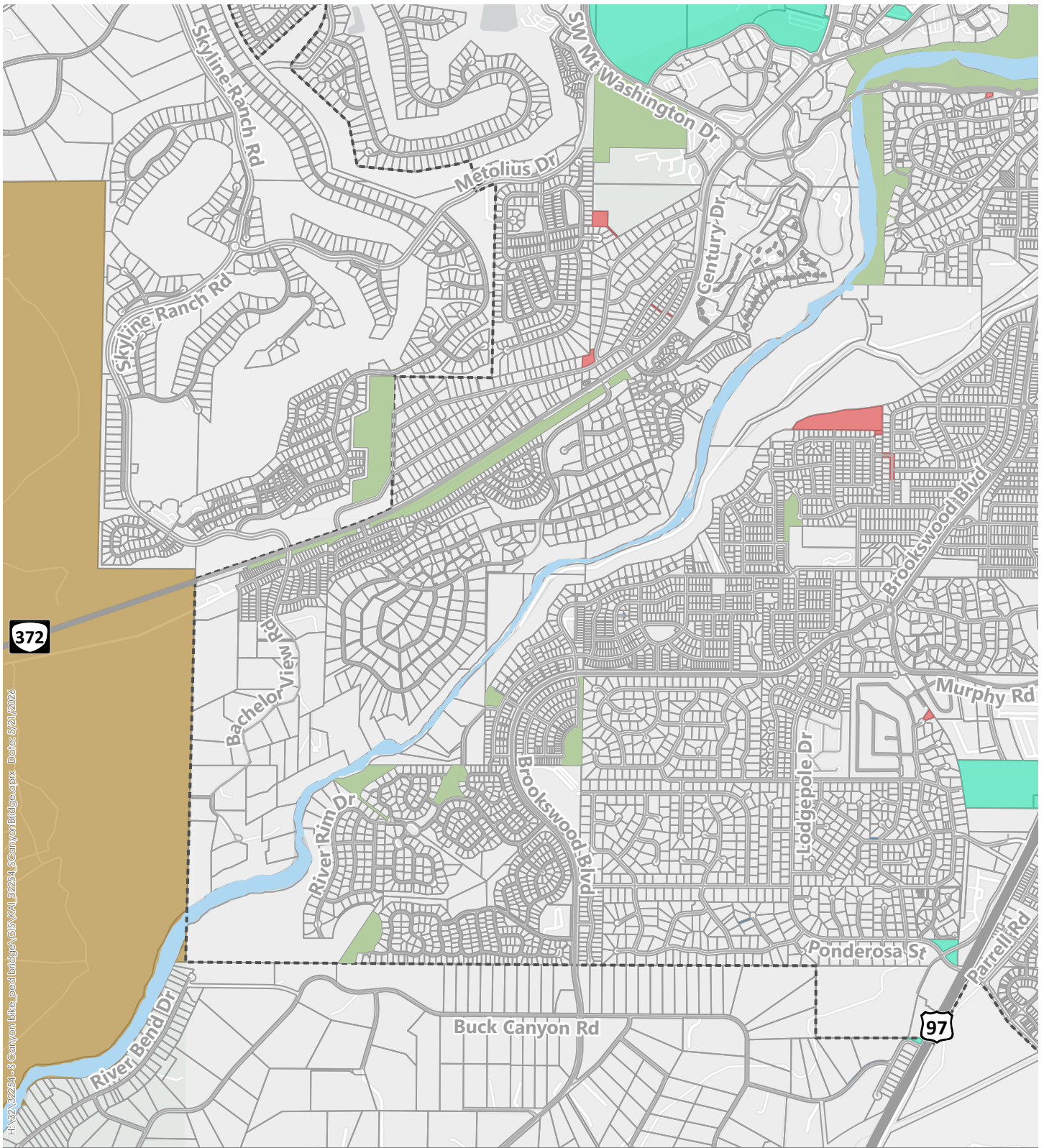
PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

On the north side of the river, properties east of Bend's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) are privately owned. Property west of the UGB is owned by the US Forest Service.

On the south side of the river, properties along the river and with the UGB are privately owned. Properties outside the UGB are also privately owned, except for a small triangle of landlocked parcel directly adjacent to the UGB owned by the US Forest Service.

Within the study area on the south side of the river, accessing the US Forest Service land would require one or more easements across privately owned property.

Figure 11 shows property ownership within the study area.



H:\323\3224 - S Canyon bike, ped bridge\GIS\VAI_3224_S_CanyonBridge.aprx Date: 5/21/2026

- City Land
- County Land
- Federal Land
- State Land
- Private Land

- Deschutes River
- BPRD Parks
- Bend City Limits

0 1,000 2,000 Feet



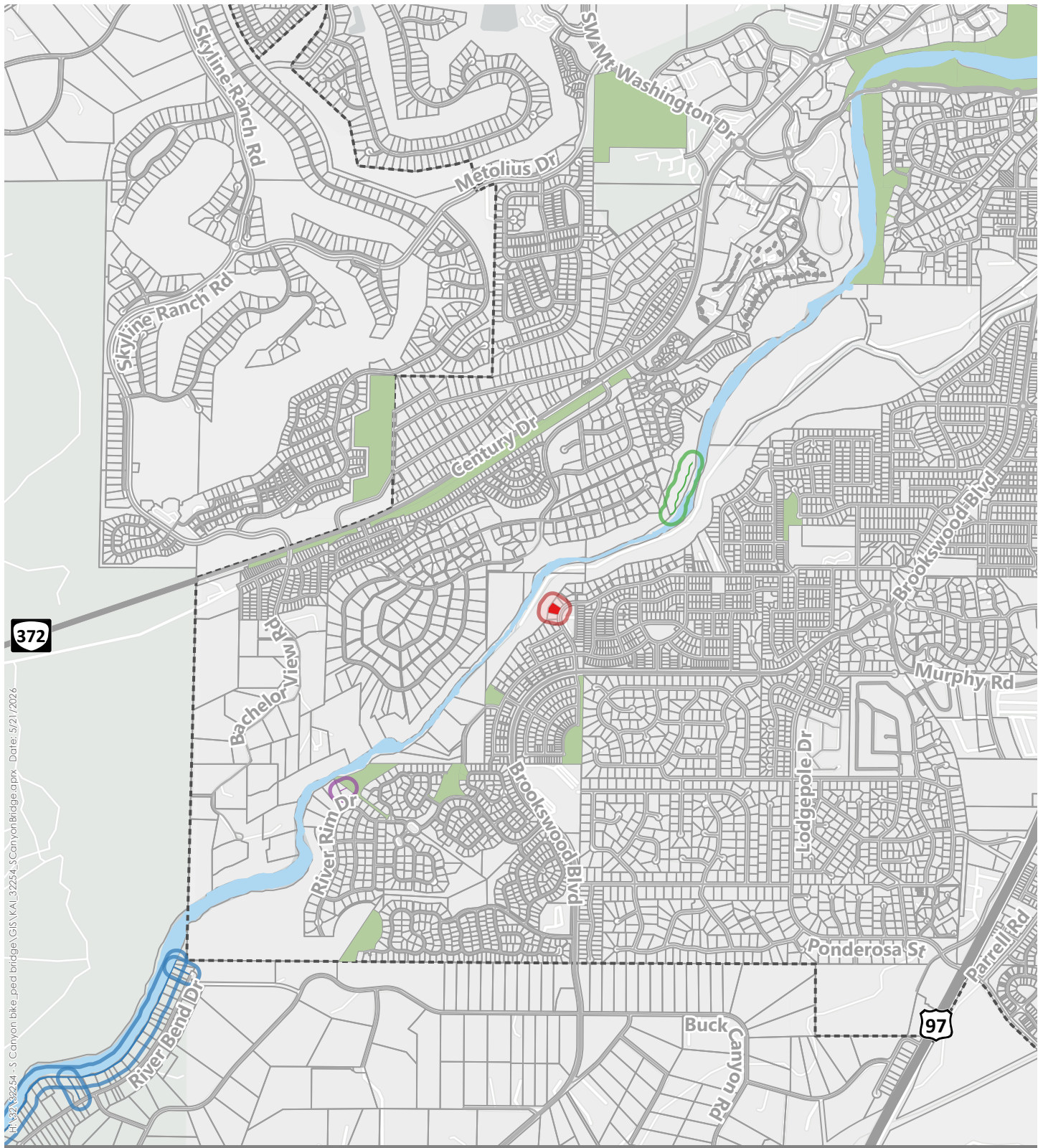
Figure 11

**Property Ownership
Bend, OR**

EASEMENTS

The study area contains a number of easements that grants BPRD or the public access through certain private properties and to the riverfront. The easement along the Deschutes River at the southern end of the study area was granted to the general public for fishing access, and BPRD has no rights to place a trail through the easement. Overall, the existing easements in the study area are unlikely to significantly impact trail alignment.

Figure 12 shows the existing easements in the study area.



372

97

ht:\323\32254...S\Canyon bike_ped bridge\GIS\KAI_32254_S\CanyonBridge.aprx - Date: 5/21/2026









-  Public Access Easement to BPRD (Trail Development Permission Unclear)
-  Public Access Easement Only
-  Public Foot Traffic Only Easement to BPRD
-  Trail Easement to BPRD
-  BPRD Parks
-  Bend City Limits
-  Private Land
-  Deschutes River



Figure 12

**Existing Easement
Bend, OR**

Summary of Considerations

Based on a review of background material and work completed to-date, the following bullets summarize key considerations for the project:

- The nearest existing full access river crossing within the study area is the SW Reed Market Road. The nearest pedestrian crossing is at the DRT–South Canyon Reach bridge, approximately one mile south of the Reed Market Road bridge. There are no other river crossing locations within the study area, and pedestrians and cyclists from southeastern areas of Bend need to travel out of direction to cross the Deschutes River at Reed Market Road. Existing connectivity to trails and parks in the study area is limited, and no trail connections currently exist between the study area, the riverfront, and the Deschutes National Forest.
- Steep slopes along the river, combined with a desire to protect the river ecology and natural beauty, limits the maximum river width the bridge can cross to around 220 feet based on reasonable engineering and cost considerations. This constrains bridge placement.
- Land use regulations within and around the project area are shaped by federal and state scenic river designations and local zoning regulations. However, a proposal for bridge construction could be submitted through the twelve-month review process established in the State Scenic Waterways Act (ORS 390.845). Such a proposal would require coordination between multiple agencies across various levels of the government.
- The project area has a mixture of privately and publicly owned land and accessing a potential bridge within the project area would likely necessitate obtaining easement through private properties.

NEXT STEPS

While no single consideration in the above section is determinative for the trail alignment, these considerations combine to narrow the options of where a bicycle and pedestrian crossing of the Deschutes River and the associated trail connections could be located. These constraints inform the next steps, which will involve developing feasible alternatives and engaging stakeholders and the community around clearly defined options.

Identify Viable Alternatives and Options for Trail River Crossing

Building on this Existing Conditions review, the project team will develop up to five conceptual trail and river crossing alternatives, including a no-build option. Alternatives will take into account the identified physical, environmental, regulatory, and property constraints; meet applicable accessibility standards; and conform to best practices for multi-use trail design. Concepts will describe approximate alignments, crossing types and various trail characteristics. These concepts will serve as the basis for the Preliminary Feasibility Studies phase of the project, in which two alternatives will advance to schematic design and order-of-magnitude cost and constructability analysis.

Overall, the following goals stated by BPRD will guide the conceptual alternative development:

- Complete the southern portion of the Deschutes River Trail,
- Minimize impacts to the natural environment and the scenic qualities of the Deschutes River,

- Provide enhanced non-motorized access to the Deschutes National Forest,
- Provide close-to-home recreation opportunities, and,
- Reduce travel length/time to the Rimrock Trailhead from Southwest Bend.

Engage with the Public and Stakeholders to Ensure Alignment

Structured engagement with stakeholders and the public will be conducted throughout the Alternatives Development and Analysis phases of the project to ensure a shared understanding of project purpose, constraints, and tradeoffs between BPRD, the project team, stakeholders, and the general public.

Engagement will include facilitated touchpoints to review existing conditions, alternative concepts, and evaluation criteria, with feedback documented and used to inform refinement of alternatives and support transparent and fact-based decision-making.

Appendix A
BPRD Memo on Federal Wild and Scenic and
State Scenic Waterways



March 24, 2026

RE: Stakeholder Group Communication, Request for More Information about the Upper Deschutes River Federal Wild and Scenic and State Scenic Waterways

In response to the Stakeholder groups request for more information regarding the Federal Wild and Scenic and State Scenic Waterways designations that apply to portions of the project study area, here is a summary of BPRD's understanding. I have also included a summary of BPRD's past request to narrowly amend the guidelines to expressly allow new bicycle and pedestrian bridges. As I mentioned during our meeting, our intent is to fully document any relevant land use regulations that would apply to the alternatives we develop during this study.

The *Upper Deschutes Wild and Scenic and State Scenic Waterway Comprehensive Management Plan (1996)*, or "CRMP," guides the management of the state and federal waterways within the upper Deschutes. State scenic waterways are administered under the authority of the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department ("OPRD") coordinates the program. The current Oregon Administrative Rules ("OAR") specific to the Upper Deschutes River, which are included in the CRMP, do not permit new bridges in any of the State Scenic Waterway classification areas (OAR 736-040-0073). New bridges are discouraged within the Federal Wild and Scenic Waterway classification areas. The majority of the designated State Scenic Waterways in Oregon allow new bridges, including portions of the Deschutes River that pass through Riley Ranch Nature Reserve immediately north of Bend, and we do not fully understand why the no-bridge provision was included in the rules for the Upper Deschutes River. It may have been a reaction to community debate surrounding the Reed Market Road Bridge (Bill Healy Bridge) that was in the early planning phases at that time.

In 2014, the district submitted a request to OPRD to narrowly amend the OAR for the Upper Deschutes River to allow for the construction of "bicycle and pedestrian bridges" where the planned bridge was located. OPRD convened an advisory group to determine if the OAR should be amended which ultimately recommended not to make any changes to the OAR unless provided compelling evidence of a statutory basis for, local policy changes conducive to, or public sentiment in support of an amendment. OPRD followed the advisory group's recommendation not to amend the OAR and asserted that there is an existing process that allows landowners to construct projects that are not permitted by the CRMP (i.e. the bridge) by submitting an application for review to OPRD. This application triggers a mandatory 12-month review period during which time OPRD may work with the applicant to minimize impacts to the State Scenic Waterway or purchase property to stop the project entirely. If no agreement

play for life

District Office



is reached within a year, the project is not required to adhere to the State Scenic Waterway Rules and may proceed (Oregon Revised Statute 390.845).

I have attached two letters that were sent to BPRD from OPRD and the Deschutes National Forest in 2023 and 2024 that provide an additional perspective on these regulations and how they may impact the decision making of OPRD and the Deschutes National Forest with regards to any future proposal for a bridge within the State Scenic Waterway.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Henry D. Stroud". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "H".

Henry Stroud, AICP
Principal Planner
(541) 706-6155
henrys@bendparksandrec.org
Bend Park & Recreation District Office, 799 SW Columbia St., Bend, OR 97702
www.bendparksandrec.org

A faint, light-colored watermark logo consisting of the words "play for life" written in a casual, handwritten-style font.

District Office



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Parks and Recreation Department

725 Summer St. NE, Suite C

Salem, OR 97301-1271

(503) 986-0707

Fax (503) 986-0794

stateparks.oregon.gov

Don Horton, Executive Director (Don@bendparksandrec.org)
Michelle Healy, Deputy Executive Director (MichelleH@bendparksandrec.org)
Bend Park and Recreation District
799 SW Columbia Street
Bend OR 97702

Nov. 13, 2023

Dear Don and Michelle,

It's been a couple months since our staff spoke to yours about the ongoing efforts to place a footbridge over the Deschutes just upstream from town as part of the Deschutes River Trail, and we wanted to put into writing what we've been telling Bend Parks and Recreation District staff and anyone else who asks for our understanding of how the Upper Deschutes State Scenic Waterway affects a potential project.

The short answer is, "Nothing has changed since the concept was first introduced several years ago." While we have never received a request to review an actual proposal, and refrain from pre-judging notifications from property owners about intended changes to a Scenic Waterway Corridor, the longer answer is:

1. Oregonians voted two-to-one to establish the State Scenic Waterway (SSW) system in 1970. The Upper Deschutes River was designated as a Scenic Waterway via Ballot Measure 7 in 1988. The SSW program seeks to balance the protection of river systems with their use by people. The program strives for this balance through cooperation between federal, state, and local agencies, individual property owners, and those who recreate along Scenic Waterways. When a waterway is designated as part of the SSW system, a set of rules is created to maintain the river's unique outstanding natural and scenic features. These rules apply to the river itself, as well as to the adjacent lands stretching one quarter mile in either direction of the waterway's banks, known as the Scenic Waterway Corridor.
2. Property owners who propose changes within the Scenic Waterway Corridor submit a Notification of Intent to OPRD describing the proposed property improvements and vegetation changes.
3. Once we receive a complete notification from a property owner, or someone acting with permission from the property owner, we determine whether the project is indeed located within that boundary and would be visible from the river.
4. If it is, we compare the requested change to Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) adopted for the location.
5. In this case, OAR 736-040-0073 (2) (f) reads "[n]ew bridges will not be permitted. Maintenance, repair and replacement of existing bridges shall be consistent with OAR 736-040-0035(6) and (7), Deschutes County and City of Bend land use and development regulations, and Oregon Department of State Lands regulations;" and (h) reads "[n]ew, above ground river crossings will not be permitted;," and a request for a project that includes a bridge or crossing would result in a "denial of the notification" from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.
6. By statute (Oregon Revised Statute 390.845), the date of the denial starts a 12-month waiting period. During this period, our staff normally continue working with an applicant to see if there are alternative designs, materials, or locations that comply with administrative rules. If no agreement is reached after a year, the project is not required to adhere to the requirements of SSW rules.

Our agency is not familiar with the local land use or permit-related consequences of proceeding with a project absent a favorable Scenic Waterway notification review. We naturally cannot advise you on the decision to proceed or relocate any specific project, but we understand the tension that exists between the values of the Scenic Waterway and the goal to expand equitable public nonmotorized trail connectivity in the Bend area.

If the project does produce a notification to our staff, we will evaluate it thoroughly and provide the applicant with a prompt response.

Please let me or our local Scenic Waterway coordinator, Fiona Noonan (fiona.noonan@opr.oregon.gov), know if we can provide any further information.

With regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Havel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chris Havel

Government Relations and Policy, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

Cc by email:

Fiona Noonan, Mountains Region Natural Resource Specialist, OPRD

Bridget Tinsley, Mountains Region Park Resource Program, OPRD

Chris Parkins, Central Resource Manager, OPRD



File Code: 2300
Date: July 9, 2024

Bend Park & Recreation District
Michelle Healy
Executive Director
799 W Columbia Street Bend, OR 97702

Dear Michelle,

For more than a decade, our agencies have been working together along with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) to consider BPRD's proposal to build a pedestrian bridge across the Deschutes River on National Forest lands to improve local trail connectivity. Deschutes National Forest (DNF) staff and leadership recognize and appreciate the benefits a pedestrian bridge could bring to Central Oregon. Collaboration to support access to public lands is an important component of the DNF's mission and values.

We are grateful for all the work BPRD, OPRD, and Connect Bend have done to bring a diverse set of voices into this discussion. The DNF has not taken a position on a proposal for a new bridge and associated trail connections on National Forest System lands; we would only reach such a conclusion after conducting an environmental analysis as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

As is well established, the proposed location of a pedestrian bridge lies within the Upper Deschutes Wild and Scenic River (WSR) corridor and the Upper Deschutes State Scenic Waterway (SSW). The Upper Deschutes River Corridor Management Plan is specific in its guidance regarding bridges, stating "new bridges... will be discouraged" in the WSR (p. 42), and "new bridges will not be permitted" in the SSW (p. 54). The Forest Service is committed to preserving and enhancing the ecological integrity of the Upper Deschutes WSR and SSW as outlined in the Comprehensive River Management Plan (CRMP).

In his November 13, 2023 letter to you, Chris Havel from OPRD laid out the notification process for intended changes to a SSW Corridor. Were the DNF to propose changes to the SSW corridor, we would not meet the intent of the direction set in the CRMP and could harm the trust we have developed with the publics we serve. For the reasons described above we do not intend to submit any proposals to add a bridge within the SSW at this time.

Collaboration remains a critical foundation of every facet of our work. This has been a complicated and controversial proposal since its inception, but I want to acknowledge the partnerships we have built and maintained through the various efforts around a bridge proposal, and the collaborative spirit that continues in our work today. We all share an interest in providing safe, equitable, and sustainable recreation opportunities, and we recognize that a pedestrian bridge across the Upper Deschutes River could help meet that interest.



We hope that we can engage in a broader community discussion of how to provide a sustainable experience of the WSR and SSW corridor. If we gain consensus on a vision of the future, and a pedestrian bridge is compatible with that vision, we would be willing to consider a revision to the CRMP to reflect that change. While we understand that such a dialog will take time and effort to reach fruition, we believe this is the best path to meeting all of our shared goals and values.

In closing, I want to express my appreciation once again for the open communication and willingness to engage in challenging conversations that has characterized our work on this proposal thus far. I hope that we will continue our work on this and all future projects with that continued spirit of collaboration and transparent dialogue in mind.

Sincerely,



HOLLY JEWKES
Forest Supervisor

cc: Chris Havel, Kevin Larkin, Kevin Stock, Jodie Barram, Donna Owens, Nathan Hovekamp, Cary Schneider, Deb Schoen