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MEMORANDUM

## City of Sisters Residential Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI) Sisters Housing Needs Analysis

DATE March 22, 2021  
TO City of Sisters  
FROM Matt Hastie and Andrew Parish, Angelo Planning Group  
CC File

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The purpose of this memo is to summarize the methodology and results of a Geographic Information Systems (GIS)-based Buildable Land Inventory (BLI) for the City of Sisters Comprehensive Plan Update. This BLI is an update of work completed in 2019 as part of the City's Housing Needs Analysis.

This BLI addresses land designated for housing and employment uses in the City's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The memo summarizes the methodology and key findings of the analysis, then presents the results in a series of tables and maps.

### METHODOLOGY

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#### Residential Land Inventory

This BLI uses the methodology of the Simplified Urban Growth Boundary Methodology as identified in OAR 660-038-0060 – Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI) for Residential Land within the UGB. These administrative rules require:

- Classification of residential districts into low-density (8 dwelling units per acre or less); medium density (between 8 and 16 dwelling units per acre); and high density (greater than 16 dwelling units per acre) (660-038-0060(1)(B))
- For all parcels in a residential district:
  - o Identify vacant land as a parcel which is at least 3,000 square feet in size with a real market improvement value of less than \$10,000. (660-038-0060(2))
  - o For lots at least ½ acre in size that contain a single-family residence, subtract ¼ acre for the residence and count the remainder of the lot as vacant land. For lots that contain more than one single family residence, or other uses, use aerial

photography or other method to identify vacant land. These lots are “partially vacant.” (660-038-0060(3))

- The following lots are excluded: private streets, common open areas, utility areas, schools and other public facilities, rights of way, and other institutions (660-038-0060(3)).
- Determine the amount and location of low density, medium density, and high density vacant and partially vacant land.

In addition to these rules, OAR 660-038-0070 describes reductions of buildable land for natural resources (in this case, floodplain area) and Table 2 (OAR 660-038-0050(1)) describes the densities assumed for low, medium, and high-density residential districts. While we have used the provisions of Division 38 of OAR 660 for assumed densities and constraints, the assumed densities also are consistent with densities allowed by the City of Sisters’ Development Code and also are consistent with the provisions of Division 24 of OAR 660. Other aspects of the analysis and the analysis in general also are consistent with both OAR Divisions.

## Employment Land Inventory

The methodology for an inventory of employment land within the UGB is described in OAR 660-038-0120, which states:

- The city must classify its zoning/comprehensive plan districts as either “commercial” or “industrial”.
- Land is classified as vacant, partially vacant, or developed, as follows:
  - A parcel may be classified as vacant if the real market improvement value of a property is less than \$5,000, or less than 5% of the real market land value.
  - A parcel may be classified as partially vacant if its real market improvement value is between 5% and 40% of the land value, in which case the City must assume that 50% of the lot is vacant. Additionally, review of aerial photography may be used to identify partially vacant parcels, which are greater than 1 acre in size and have no improvements on at least ½ acre.
- The following are excluded from the inventory:
  - Open space, conservation easements, private streets, and similarly-designated land
  - Public uses such as schools, rights-of-way, and utilities.
  - Private uses such as private schools and religious institutions
- Land impacted by environmental constraints is removed from the inventory. Land within floodways is deducted entirely, as is land with slopes greater than 25%. For industrial land in

particular, land with slopes greater than 10% is deducted. None of these conditions are applicable to employment land in Sisters.

Similar to the residential lands inventory, our analysis of economic lands also is consistent with provisions of both Divisions 38 and 24 of OAR 660.

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## STEP 1: IDENTIFY RESIDENTIAL LAND AND EMPLOYMENT LAND

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### Residential Land

For the purposes of this analysis, residential land includes the following:

- Land with a comprehensive plan designation of “Residential.” Zoning designations for residential tax lots within Sisters city limits generally match comprehensive plan categories, with some small exceptions for lots with “Open Space” designations that have residential zoning. These are examined on a case-by-case basis.
- Land with a county residential zoning designation within the city’s urban growth boundary (UGB).

Other land (designated as open space, commercial, industrial, or airport) is excluded from the residential inventory as it is generally intended for non-residential purposes. Although the City’s development code allows for residential use in some of these zones, there is no requirement that it be used for residential development.

### Employment Land

For the purposes of this analysis, employment land includes the following:

- **Commercial Land** includes the zoning designations of Downtown Commercial (DC), Highway Commercial (HC), Tourist Commercial (TC)
- **Industrial Land** includes the zoning designations Light Industrial (LI) and North Sisters Business Park (NSBP).

### Mixed Use

A portion of the site formerly owned by the US Forest Service located in Sisters has recently been approved for a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial development. These changes have been reflected in the residential and employment inventories, and the tax lot is shown as “Mixed Use” in Figure 3.

### Public and UAR Land

These lands include comprehensive plan designations of Public Facility, Urban Reserve Area, and Open Space. They are not part of either the residential or employment inventories.

Figure 1. Sisters Comprehensive Plan Designations

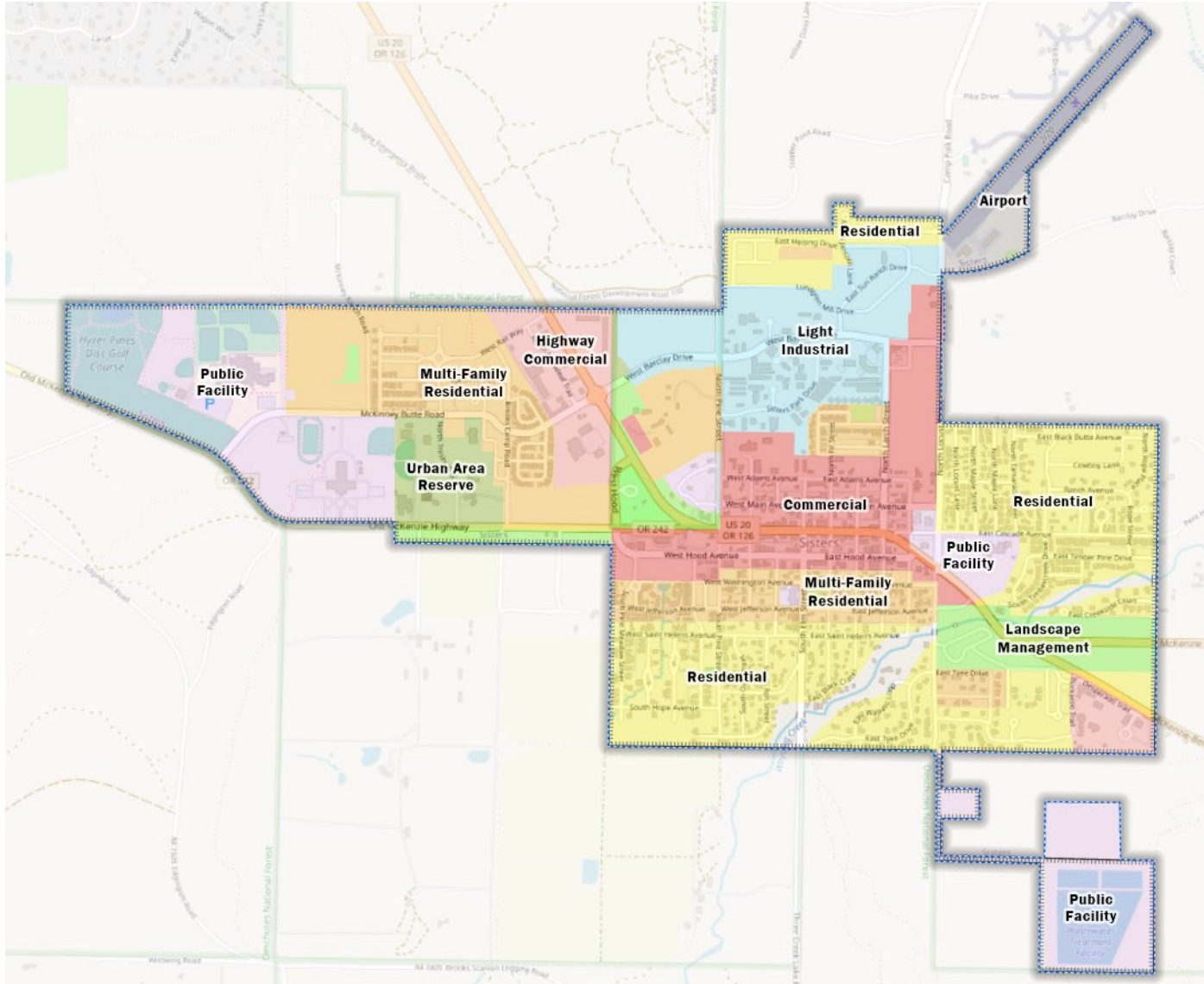


Figure 2. Sisters Zoning Designations

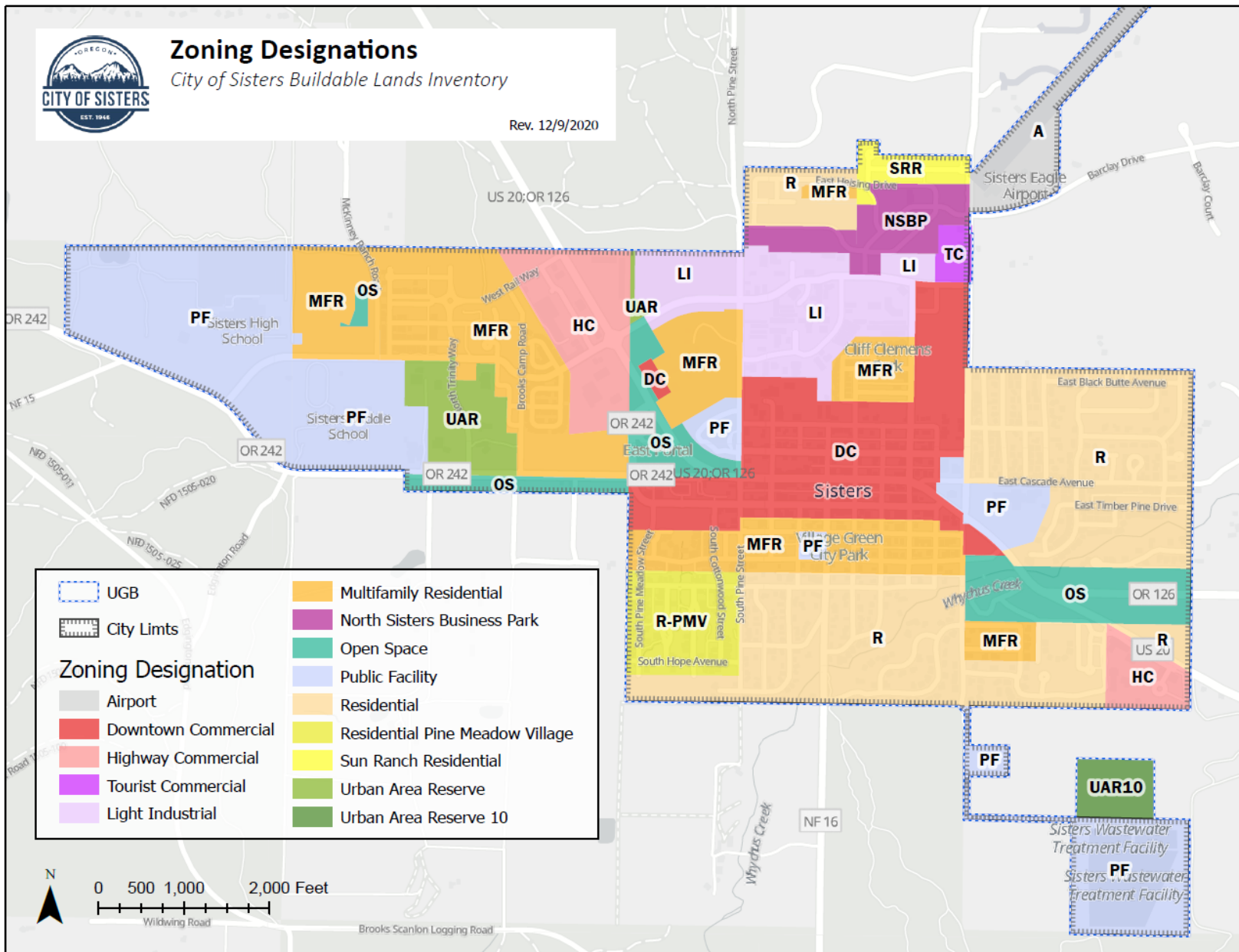
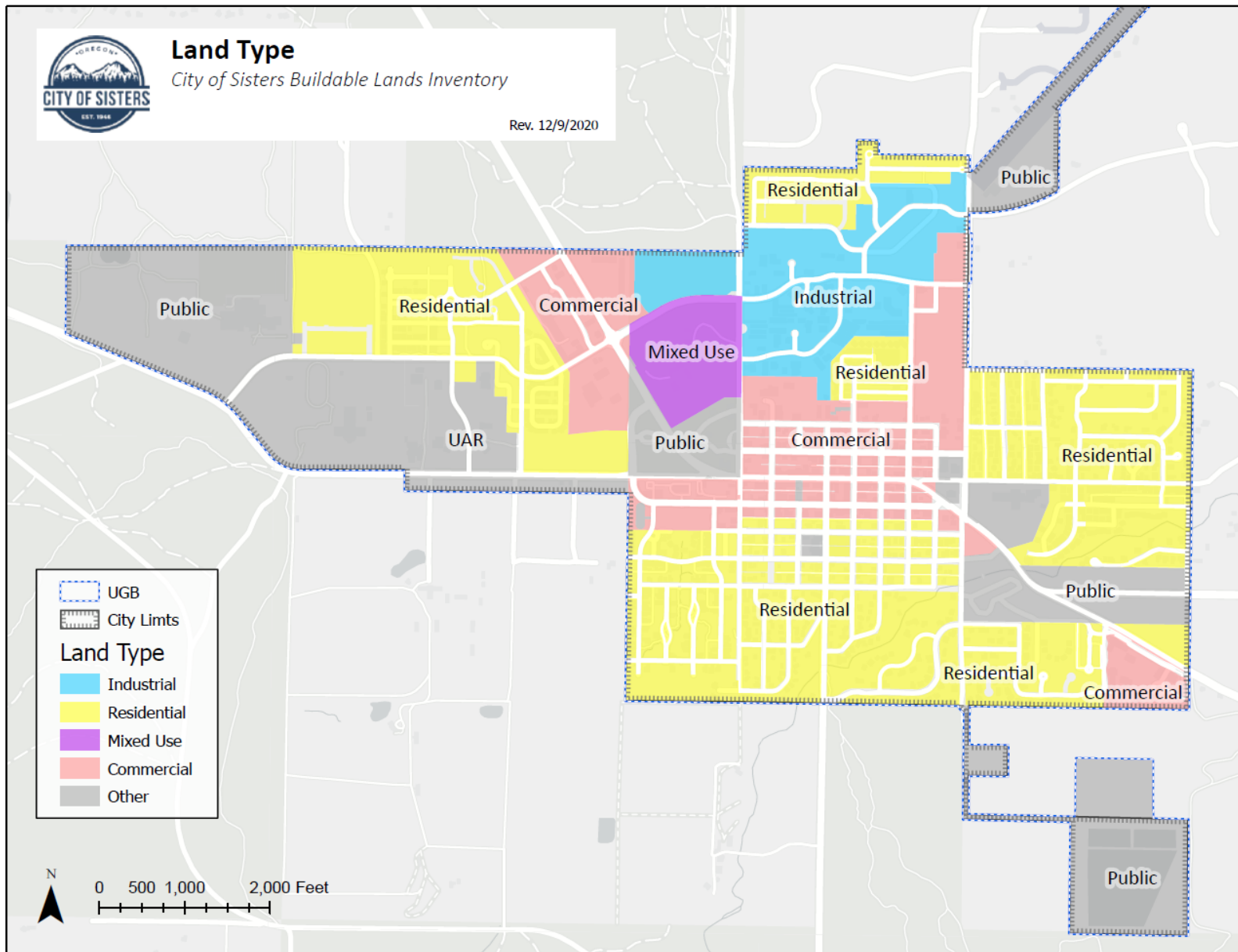


Figure 3. Land Type Map



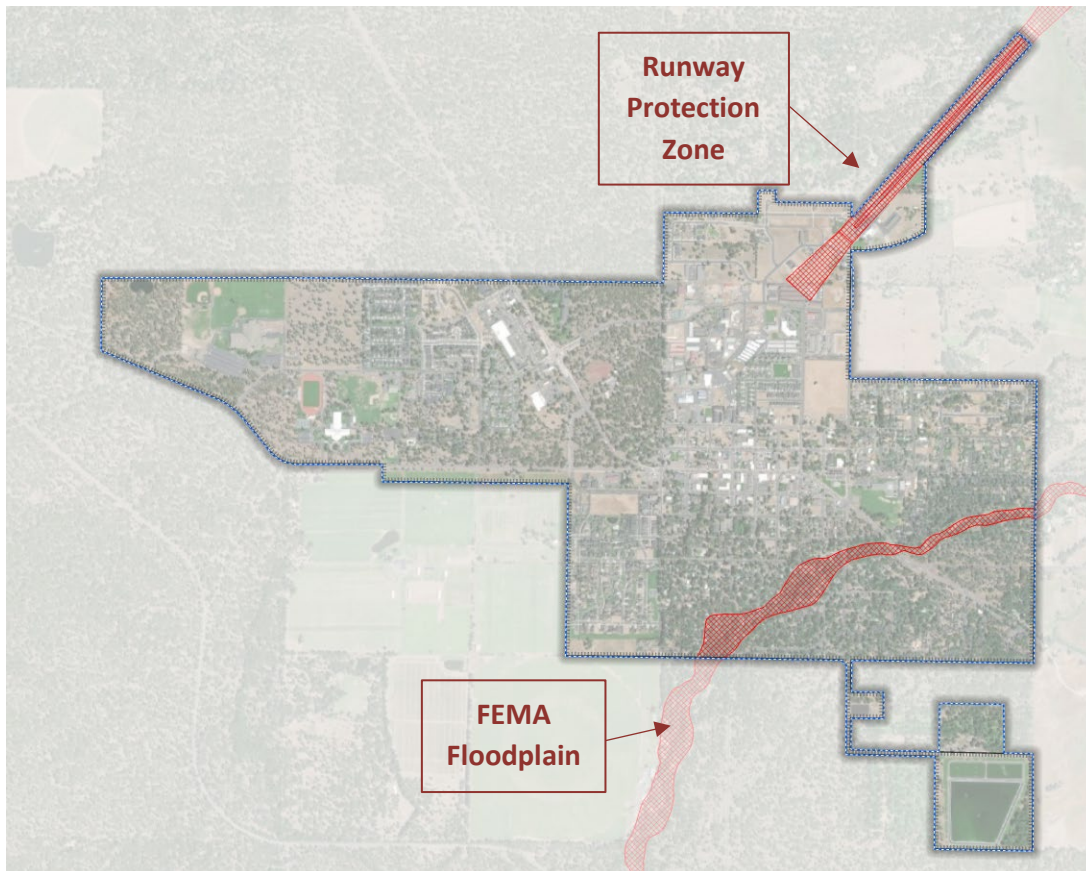
## STEP 2: IDENTIFY CONSTRAINTS

To estimate lands that may be buildable, it is necessary to remove any lands where development is constrained or infeasible due to environmental resources, hazards, topography, or other restrictions. Constraints in the City of Sisters include:

- **Floodplains:** Areas within the 100-year floodplain, based on the most recent version of FEMA floodplain maps released in 2012.
- **Runway Protection Zone:** The overlay zone that is intended to prevent obstructions within the Sisters Eagle Air Airport approach surface.

These constraints are shown in Figure 4. Constrained land is deducted from the total area of affected parcels, leaving portion of the parcel that is potentially buildable subject to further screening and deductions. There are no other documented constraints or hazard areas within the Sisters UGB.

Figure 4. Constraints



## STEP 3 – CLASSIFY PARCELS BY DEVELOPMENT STATUS

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Each parcel in the City was classified based on its potential for accommodating new residential or employment capacity. This classification is intended to separate parcels that have long-term capacity for development from those that do not. The classification is based on the amount of potentially buildable area on the parcel and the valuation of improvements (buildings, other structures), supplemented by more detailed review of site-specific conditions. Improvement values and property classification from the Deschutes County Tax Assessor and review of aerial photography/Google Street View was used for this analysis. Due to the rapid pace of development in Sisters, there is a noticeable lag time between construction of new units and updates to the Tax Assessor data. For this reason, we have used a March 15, 2021 cut-off date for final building inspection permits from the City to create a snapshot of recent development in this inventory.

Classifications for residential and employment land differ somewhat based on the methodology described earlier in this memorandum.

### Residential Land Development Status

The following four categories were used to classify parcels:

- **Developed:** Parcels that have an improvement value of more than \$10,000, but do not meet the definition of Partially Vacant or Constrained.
- **Constrained:** Parcels with less than 3,000 square feet of unconstrained land. These parcels are assumed to not be developable due to the small area on the lot that is potentially buildable. This figure is also the recommended threshold for DLCD’s Simplified BLI Method used for cities with populations greater than 2,500.
- **Partially Vacant:** Parcels that meet the state definition as partially vacant under provisions of (660-038-0060(3)) mentioned previously. These parcels are at least a half-acre in size, have an existing single-family dwelling, and have an improvement value greater than \$10,000. The amount of potentially buildable area on a parcel was estimated based on the type of structure, value of structure, and size of parcel, as follows:
  - A quarter-acre was removed from the unconstrained area of these parcels to account for the existing dwelling. If the remaining unconstrained area was less than a quarter-acre, then the parcel was classified as “Developed”, OR;
  - Parcels with an improvement value to land value ratio of less than 0.75. Those with a ratio greater than 0.75 were classified as “Developed”.
- **Vacant:** These are vacant parcels with sufficient area for development. They must meet a minimum of 3,000 square feet of unconstrained land and:
  - An improvement value of less than \$10,000, OR;
  - Have a tax assessor property class code that identifies the parcel as residentially zoned and vacant.



In cases where the data was unclear, aerial imagery was used to make the best possible determination of development status. The classification of land was reviewed by City Staff.

### **Employment Land Development Status**

- Vacant land has a real market improvement value less than \$5,000, or less than 5% of the real market land value. (After review and discussion with City staff and economic development stakeholders, some properties were identified as developed where land with little to no improvements is required by an existing business, such as for outdoor storage of materials or products which represents an integral use of the business.)
- Partially Vacant land has an improvement value between 5% and 40% of the land value, or is shown through review of aerial photography to have at least ½ acre with no improvements. The unimproved area is considered available for future development.
- All other land in commercial or industrial classifications is considered developed.

Figure 5. Residential Development Status with Constraints Shown

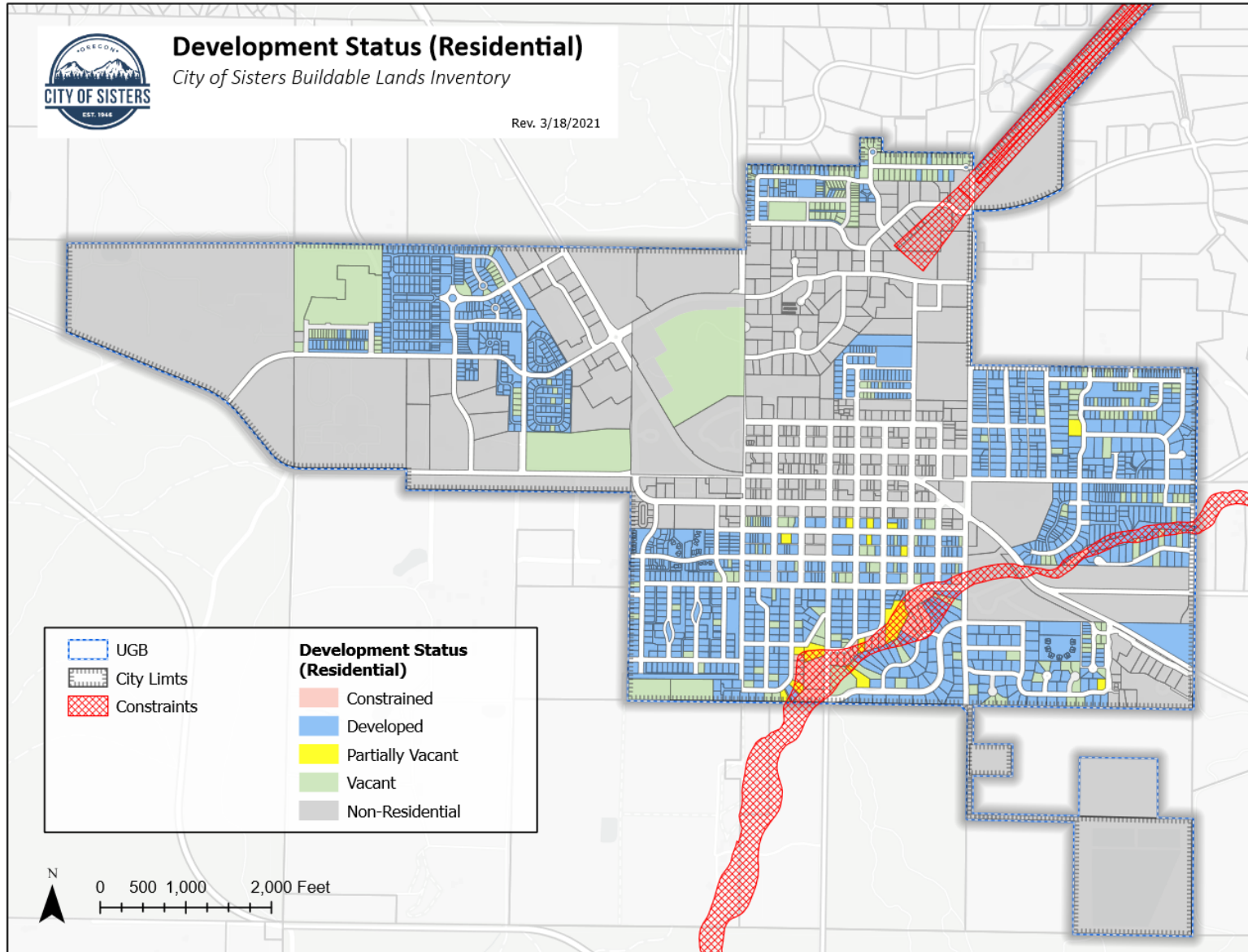
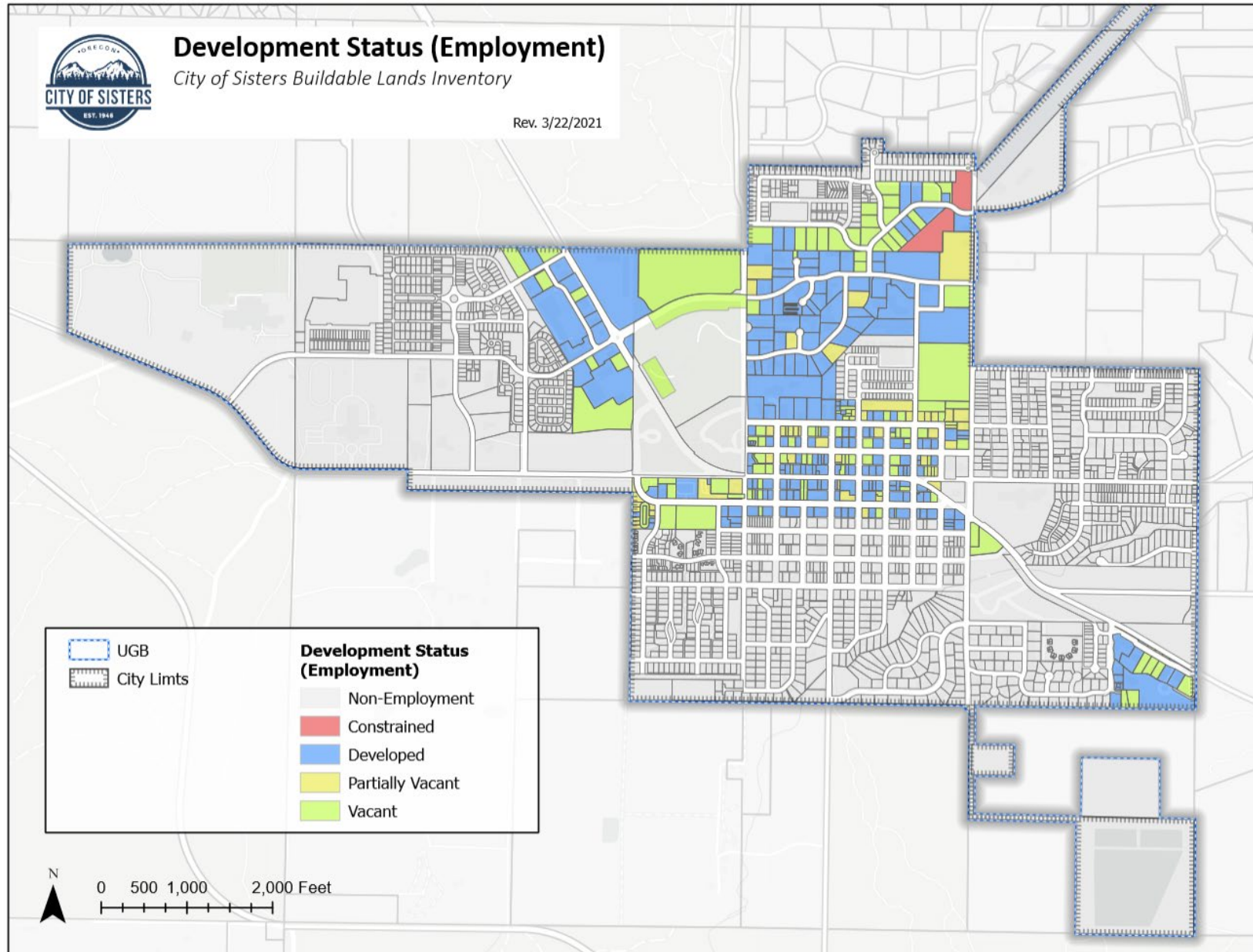


Figure 1. Employment Development Status with Constraints Shown



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## STEP 4 – DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

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### Residential Capacity

The capacity for residential development on each residential parcel was estimated based on the density regulations of the zone and/or approval of development applications specifying a specific number and type of future housing units. For each zone, a projected density (units per acre) was calculated based on the minimum lot size standards of the zone and the housing types (single-family, duplex, multi-family, etc.) that are permitted in the zone.

These assumptions for projected density are detailed in Table 3.

The projected density was applied to the buildable acres of each vacant/partially vacant parcel to estimate the capacity for new housing units on that parcel. Finally, the housing unit capacity of each parcel was rounded down to a whole number to reflect the actual maximum allowable number of units that could be permitted.

For several parcels, development approvals for specific numbers of units exist. These approvals have been used to assign these lots a development capacity that matches the number of units already approved.

### Impacts of HB2001 on Residential Inventory

HB2001 contains provisions intended to increase the supply of “middle housing” types, such as duplexes, cottage clusters, and small multifamily developments. HB2001 applies only to cities greater than 10,000 in population, and therefore does not impact the City of Sisters directly. However, it is possible that as the development community and the broader public become more accustomed to these housing types, the City of Sisters may see an increased demand for middle housing. This in turn could result in a modest increase in the capacity of residential areas previously zoned or developed primarily for single family detached homes. As a result, the estimate of capacity summarized in this memo are considered to be conservative in that regard.

### Employment Capacity

Tables 5 and 6 show the capacity of employment land in the City, by zone. Capacity is shown in terms of developable acres for comparison with the Economic Opportunities Analysis work being conducted as part of this comprehensive plan update.

## KEY FINDINGS AND RESULTS

### Residential Land

- There are relatively few physical constraints associated with the land base of the City of Sisters. Consequently, the City's vacant and partially vacant land has significant capacity for additional housing.
- The Sun Ranch Residential area in Northern Sisters, while mostly vacant, comprises a small portion of the City's housing capacity, due to the cap on the number of units permitted in the district.
- Land included within existing or approved subdivisions which is committed, planned or dedicated for roads or open space was not included in the acres of buildable land.
- Recently adopted comprehensive plan and zone changes to the site formerly owned by the US Forest Service represent significant new residential and employment capacity for the City.
- Land that is designated "Urban Area Reserve" in the western portion of the city, owned by several religious institutions, may represent further capacity depending on the long term plans these institutions have. Coordination with these property owners should be a specific focus for the comprehensive plan update to help plan for the area.
- Current zoning allows for roughly 1,000 new residential units within the City of Sisters. The bulk of this capacity (750 units) is in the MFR zone.

*Table 1. Development Status of Residential Land*

Development Status	Total Parcels	Total Acres	Constrained Acres	Vacant Acres (Gross)
Constrained	25	10.2	10.2	-
Developed	1522	295.7	9.8	-
<i>Total Not Buildable (sum of constrained and developed)</i>	<i>1547</i>	<i>305.9</i>	<i>19.8</i>	<i>-</i>
Partially Vacant*	13	6.5	2.5	4
Vacant	270	113.3	2.0	110.3
<b>Total Potentially Buildable</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>144.5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>139.5</b>

\* Partially Vacant properties are assumed to have .25 acres for an existing home, with the remaining area available for development. This is removed as part of the gross-to-net calculation of Table 2.

*Table 2. Potentially Buildable Acres by Zoning Designation*

Residential Zoning Designation	Partially Vacant or Vacant Parcels	Gross Vacant Acres			Net Vacant Acres <sup>1</sup>
		Partially Vacant	Vacant	Total	
R – Residential	156	3.0	35.8	38.8	<b>33</b>
MFR – Multi-Family Residential	92	1.3	70.4	71	<b>63</b>
SRR – Sun Ranch Residential	35	0	7.1	7	<b>5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>113.3</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>102</b>

*Table 3. Development Assumptions for Sisters and Deschutes County Zoning Designations*

Zone	Min lot size (for single-family detached)	Max DU/Net Acre	Notes (single-family detached allowed in all residential zones)	Projected DU/Net Acre
R	6,000	8	Manufactured dwellings and parks, accessory dwelling, townhomes, cottage cluster, duplexes allowed	5
MFR	4,500	20 (minor conditional use)	Manufactured dwellings and parks, accessory dwelling units, duplex/triplex, multi-family, townhomes, cottage cluster allowed	15
SRR	2,000	45 Total in District (Development Code 2.13.1000.A.1)	Cottage cluster, manufactured dwelling, townhome, accessory dwelling unit allowed	4

<sup>1</sup> Subtracting 25% of acreage to account for public utilities and open space, as well as .25 acres for “partially vacant” properties.

Table 4. Housing Unit Capacity by Zone, Residential Zones

Residential Zoning Designation	Estimated Housing Unit Capacity		
	Net Vacant Acres	Projected Density (for unplatted parcels)	Projected Housing Capacity*
R – Residential	33	5 units/acre	211
MFR – Multi-Family Residential	63	15 units/acre	750
SRR – Sun Ranch Residential	5	4 units/acre	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	--	<b>996</b>

\* The City of Sisters has many parcels that have been platted but are currently vacant. These subdivisions are assumed to develop at one unit per parcel. Where available, more specific information is used (such as an approved land use application). While these assumptions differ somewhat from the overall projected density for a given zone, they provide a more accurate picture of the City’s projected housing capacity.

### Employment Land

- There is a total of about 110 acres of developable employment land within Sisters.
- The DC – Downtown Commercial district makes up the largest portion of this acreage (38 Acres), followed by the LI – Light Industrial district (23 acres).

Table 5. Development Status of Employment Land

Employment Zoning Designation	Development Status	Number of Parcels	Total Acreage
DC - Downtown Commercial	<i>Developed</i>	142	45.5
	<i>Partially Vacant</i>	41	11.4
	<i>Vacant</i>	69	32.5
LI - Light Industrial	<i>Developed</i>	84	46.5
	<i>Partially Vacant</i>	5	4.1
	<i>Vacant</i>	5	21.3
NSBP - North Sisters Business Park	<i>Developed*</i>	13	13.2
	<i>Partially Vacant</i>	0	0
	<i>Vacant</i>	20	14.5
HC - Highway Commercial	<i>Developed</i>	24	43.0
	<i>Partially Vacant</i>	0	0
	<i>Vacant</i>	13	13.6
TC - Tourist Commercial	<i>Developed</i>	0	0
	<i>Partially Vacant</i>	1	4.6
	<i>Vacant</i>	0	0

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>250.1</b>
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*\*includes "Constrained" property adjacent to Sisters Eagle Airport*

*Table 6. Employment Acreage by Zone*

<b>Employment Zoning Designation</b>	<b>Vacant or Partially Vacant Parcels</b>	<b>Unconstrained Acres</b>	<b>Net Vacant Acres**</b>
DC - Downtown Commercial	110	41.9	38.2
LI - Light Industrial	10	25.4	23.3
NSBP - North Sisters Business Park	20	14.1	14.1
HC - Highway Commercial	13	14.8	13.6
TC - Tourist Commercial	1	4.3	3.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100.5</b>	<b>92.9</b>

*\*\*Generally assumes 50% of partially vacant properties developable. Assumptions for TC zone differ somewhat based on aerial photo review.*