

# SISTERS WOODLANDS MASTER PLAN/SUBDIVISION PROJECT DESCRIPTION

AS AN OVERVIEW AND SUPPLEMENT TO OUR FORMAL BURDEN OF PROOF

## Overview

Sisters, Oregon is known for its high quality of life; for those who love the outdoor lifestyle and want to live in a small town environment that fosters strong community, Sisters is remarkable.

However, there is a major shortfall of housing inventory for families and service and commercial workforces, which makes it difficult for younger people, working families, local entrepreneurs and artisans to be able to afford to live in town. These families are the backbone of a healthy community, as they support the local small business economy by living in Sisters year-round. With the addition of more working- and middle-class families, Sisters will remain a welcoming and thriving community, which will lead to a shared prosperity.

Sisters Woodlands — the Woodlands — is a development on land previously owned by the US Forest Service within the city limits and Urban Growth Boundary. Very near the geographic center of town, it will provide a range of community housing options, while balancing the need for economic development and open space for a mixed-use community. The 31.56-acre Woodlands site is located east of Hwy 20 and south of Barclay Drive. Named after the cherished Three Sisters mountains and the site's wooded nature, the proposed development is being designed to complement Sisters' small, Western town charm, and its vibrant arts and crafts scene. As the development is adjacent to downtown, the existing light industrial area, primary shops, and local schools, the project team envisions a multi-modal connected community that will add much needed housing to Sisters, in a thoughtful, less car-centric, and sustainable manner.

The primary goal of the project is to make the City of Sisters more welcoming and viable for local residents, young families, and the expanding light industrial businesses. The objectives of the development include creating a diverse mix of community-based housing opportunities for the growing population; five new light industrial and commercial building sites; an interactive commercial marketplace; and significant public amenities for the community at-large, including enhanced pedestrian connections into and out of town. More, a large three-acre open space has been earmarked for public use, and the project designers have taken care to create additional open spaces throughout, including over ten *pocket parks*, which adds another 2.5-acres of open space, nearly doubling the amount required by the Sisters Development Code (SDC).

The project will prioritize sustainable and durable building construction, the preservation of a large portion of the existing ponderosa pine trees that currently occupy the mostly vacant site, Firewise guidelines to enhance public safety, and one of the project's primary building goals: the creation of structures that will last for generations.

In 2020, the first step in the entitlement process was taken: rezoning the Sisters Woodlands site from Public Facility and Urban Area Reserve, to a meticulously crafted assembly of Multi-Family Residential, Downtown Commercial, North Sisters Business Park, and Open Space (public amenity). The next step in the land use entitlements process is the master plan and subdivision application submittal.

## ***Housing***

The Woodlands is focused on creating a community of attractive, functional homes that are affordable for working- and middle-class incomes. The City's 2019 Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) states that Sisters has experienced strong growth, with a population increase of 185% since 2000, and the fact that no other area of the County has experienced a similar surge. The *Sisters Housing Strategies Report* demonstrates the City's support of and need for compact development with diverse housing, specific recommendations for creating small housing types, and removing unnecessary barriers to housing development.

The vision of this project is to begin to address Sisters' growth and housing needs by providing a diversity of efficient, attractive and affordable residences, from apartments and condos, to cottages and townhomes. Due to their lack of affordability, single-family homes are not proposed for the development. The Woodlands community is designed to be natural, with its wealth of open spaces and community-style housing, which collectively will enhance the feel and appearance of the town. Further considerations for individual lot planning and building design are included at the end of this document.

The Sisters Woodlands team is committed to creating an equitable and just development; one that provides handsome, safe and affordable housing or condominiums that will allow residents to live, work, educate their kids, and play in their home community. The Woodlands team aspires to provide a minimum of 10 affordable cottages or condominiums to moderate-income households (80 to 120 percent of area median income).

Further, the development team is making it a priority to define a strategic and innovative mechanism that will allow low- to moderate-income families to purchase a home at the Woodlands, which will in turn allow them to build financial equity. The development team continues to research options on a manner to structure this affordable housing, as well as work with local entities such as Habitat for Humanity who may ultimately be provided with Woodlands cottage lots for creation of affordable units.

## ***Business Growth and Retention***

Key amenities that will draw businesses and workers to Sisters is the ready availability of commercial space and affordable housing . The EDCO 2019-2021 Strategic Plan specifically identifies affordable workforce housing as an ongoing regional barrier to attracting and retaining businesses:

“Going hand-and-glove with available workforce concerns expressed by employers are double-digit increases of average home prices over the past five years in many of Central Oregon’s communities. There are many stories from the private and public sectors where a job was offered to an out-of-region applicant only to be turned down due to the lack of (affordable) housing options. A number of factors are at play, and our region mirrors similar trends happening across the U.S. With the painful memory of the Great Recession still fresh in the memory of many developers, home builders and subcontractors, the industry is simply not expanding to meet demand.”

Recent accounts from EDCO staff have noted: *“For the past few years the biggest challenge for expanding traded sector employers in Sisters has continued to be the availability of affordable workforce housing.”*

Further, the City’s Housing Strategies Report confirms that the majority of employees in Sisters do not live in town: *“...[r]elatively few jobs are held by local residents (208), while nearly 1,470 employees commute into the city from elsewhere. This pattern...is more pronounced in Sisters than in many urban metropolitan communities in closer proximity to other places to live or work.”*

The proposed Woodlands master plan and subdivision will result in an increase of available residential, commercial and light industrial lands within the city; and the community will provide a variety of affordable housing types and mixed-uses, which will help attract new businesses and retain the existing. Additionally, the inclusion of small-scale light industrial along Barclay Drive, and downtown commercial opportunities along the highway, will provide additional employment land inventory to attract new entrepreneurs, makers, and businesses that will further diversify the local economy. It is anticipated that the Woodlands will include an interactive commercial artisan-style marketplace that will foster local artisans and innovators.

### ***Setting/ Walkability/ Bikeability***

The Woodlands is designed to be very natural, with numerous open spaces and community-style housing that will enhance the feel and appearance of the town. The design team is specifically focused on retaining as many trees as possible, designing around specific groupings.

The Woodlands is sited and designed to provide residents access to all of town's amenities by foot and bicycle, which is friendlier to the area's traffic patterns than car commuting for all outings. By providing housing and facilities in Sisters that encourage families to walk to parks, the library, schools, shops and restaurants, the proposed centrally-located development is designed to help residents make better-for-the-environment transportation choices. To facilitate this walkability and bikeability, the master plan includes numerous open spaces, connected by multi-use trails, pocket parks and sidewalks. The community-centered design of the housing types is intended to encourage social engagement, outdoor connections and walking and biking to and through the neighborhood. Great detail has been given to connectivity as illustrated throughout the master plan exhibits.

## ***Zoning and Uses***

The zoning of the Sisters Woodlands property was adopted by City Council on October 14, 2020 (Ordinance 508) and includes four zones: Multi-Family Residential (MFR), Downtown Commercial (DC), North Sisters Business Park (NSBP), and Open Space (OS). Around the time the property was acquired by the current owners and developers, several acres of right-of-way for West Barclay Drive and North Pine Street were dedicated to the City, resulting in the following remaining gross acres within each zone:

Multi-Family Residential (MFR)	23.59 acres
Downtown Commercial (DC)	1.97 acres
North Sisters Business Park (NSBP)	2.58 acres
Open Space (OS)	3.42 acres

This diversity of zoning provides an opportunity for the creation of a mixed-use vibrant community, and supports infill development within city limits, delaying the need for expansion of the urban growth boundary. Planned uses for each zone are noted below.

### Multi-Family Residential Zone

- Townhomes with ADUs – (64) 2-unit townhomes, three stories, with ADUs.
- Triplex (at location of the “58er”, the largest tree in Sisters, where two townhomes were removed).
- Cottages - (101) 2-3 bedroom, 1.75-2.5 bathroom cottages, with attached garages.
- Congregate Housing, NE corner of community - approximately 11,000-sf facility with two floors over open-air parking. Community kitchens and a mix of shared and private bathrooms. This facility could serve several local employers, such as USFS, Black Butte Ranch, while providing interim housing for visiting and short-term employees.
- Apartment Building - along Hwy 20 with approximately (48) 1-3 bedroom apartments on upper two floors over ground floor, covered parking.

### Downtown Commercial

- Mixed-Use building along Hwy 20 with approximately (64) 1-3 bedroom apartments on upper two floors.
- Ground floor are planned to have 20,000-sf of commercial use, with a mix of restaurants, and services such as salons, retail and artisan tenants.
- Open-air garage is planned to occupy the other half of the ground floor behind the commercial use.

### North Sisters Business Park Zone

- Five separate lots likely consisting of mixed-use structures.
- Possible uses will be three apartment units, second floor over ground floor commercial or light industrial uses.
- Total building area will be approximately 10,000-sf between both floors.

### Open Space Tracts

- 23 separate parcels have been set aside for amenities, pocket parks, connecting trails, and community experiences.
- These areas are seen as discoverable and enjoyable for all generations, and for repeat visits, as evidenced on the conceptual landscape plans as part of this submittal.

### Open Space/Public Amenity Zone

The OS interim program use will be as follows:

- A “storybook” trail and a series of other light-touch features, as shown on our conceptual landscape plan, exhibit B2.
- Rehabilitate the three-acre parcel and leave all native landscaping in place.
- In coordination and preliminary agreement with Sisters Park & Recreation District (SPRD), we intend to partner with them on interpretive moments along the trail using QR codes to provide users an interactive experience. SPRD suggests programming these moments for users, and changing them periodically for different seasons and variety.
- Further, we may highlight a particular mountain viewpoint and provide seating along the trail.

SPRD has shared a couple of key pieces of guidance from their local experience:

1. Take care to provide a fun and interesting experience, but caution against including anything that residents may become attached to that will be removed when the longer term use is created on the site.
2. Do not recommend providing restroom facilities, as they require constant attention (issues with vandalism); and similar to above, if removed, folks will miss having them on the site.

The long-term OS program as follows:

- Long-term programming will be decided based on City, agency, and public input. Could possibly be a combination of indoor and outdoor facilities.
- Near-term programming could be open-space trails, small-scale exercise equipment, playground equipment, etc.

## ***Trees & Landscaping***

The Woodlands is appropriately named after the setting provided by years of tree growth on the property. It is appreciated that these trees took generations to establish and the team is respectful of that heritage. The development team has catalogued and classified each existing tree on site with the goal of nestling the development within many of them. The preliminary goal was to retain at least 300 of the existing trees that are currently on this site, and integrate them into the natural setting of the Woodlands community and culture; we are currently projecting that over 600 trees can be preserved, pending a health assessment of all trees slated for preservation by the project team arborist (pending).

The preliminary plans include the following inventoried and retained tree counts:

Total = Preserved, Maybe, Removed

All Trees: (1134) T = (581) P, (179) M, (374) R (51% P, 16% M, 33% R)

42" PINE: (5) T = (5) P

30" PINE: (75) T = (62) P, (7) M, (6) R

24" PINE: (143) T = (95) P, (18) M, (30) R

16" PINE: (320) T = (150) P, (62) M, (108) R

SMALL PINE: (381) T = (174) P, (58) M, (149) R

24" JUNIPER: (17) T = (8) P, (1) M, (8) R

16" JUNIPER: (20) T = (11) P, (3) M, (6) R

SMALL JUNIPER: (173) T = (76) P, (30) M, (67) R

SDC 3.2.500.D.2: Significant trees removed shall be replaced at a 3:1 ratio of trees removed to trees planted. We plan to exceed this replacement rate.

We also foresee opportunities to use harvested trees for a variety of purposes on-site and in portions of our amenity areas as referenced on our conceptual landscape plans.

In addition to significant tree preservation, the Woodlands landscaping will embrace native species and Central Oregon-appropriate species selected for Firewise-approved designs and high desert survivability.

## **Future CC&Rs**

Design Guidelines and CC&Rs will be crafted to include lessons learned from previous developments in Sisters, and others that the project team formerly created.

The architectural guidelines will prioritize diversity and harmony among the different homes and facilities. The project team has devised prototypes for Woodlands' buildings that are specific to our site plans, as noted on the Exhibits listed above. These *test fits* establish the design language, which took cues from the history of Sisters and Western frontier themes, and presents forward-thinking design, form, materials, and adjacencies.

Woodlands residents will be aware that they border previously active light industrial businesses along Pine and Barclay; these are responsible neighbors who have intermittent daytime activity, access, noise, etc.

### **Preliminary (sample) Design Guidelines**

To be used in conjunction with Exhibits G3, G4, G5, G6, G7

Woodlands is planned as a walkable community with a strong concern for sustainable design and construction in a mountain village setting. It is a community where innovative design and construction elements are encouraged. These guidelines support the master plan that established the community, and the specific lot site planning that was completed during the master planning and subdivision development phases. The Master Plan is illustrated by schematic design options and a "kit of parts" that is available from the Woodlands Owners' Association.

Architectural styles generally appropriate to Central Oregon are simple in form, and thoughtfully detailed and assembled. Illustrations and descriptions in these guidelines are examples only, and other construction and design methods may be used to achieve the goals. These guidelines are assigned to categories addressing: site layout, community design, home exteriors, construction types and standards.

These standards are primarily intended to support walkability and friendly streets. Just as the streets, alleys, pocket parks and open spaces in the Woodlands have been designed to encourage walking and gathering, with narrower widths and traffic calming measures, the site and exterior planning design of homes can help make the community more lively.

Sections, using a code-based form-type of diagrams illustrating axonometric site design guidelines for massing, setbacks, heights, FAR, etc. will be included (pending).

Conformance with SDC 2.3.300.H provision 4 "detailed design", and supplementary list for:

"An alternative feature providing visual relief and detail, similar to options a-m above" will be provided as part of the final design guidelines for acceptable design features.

Further design rules will be provided as part of final guidelines, including:

1. Entries, porches and relationship to common areas.
- 2a. Garages, access from alleys and streets, use of alleys.
- 2b. Off-street parking (minimum of two spaces home w/ provision for third spot for ADUs).
3. Roof lines and street-facing facades.
4. Relationship to neighboring structures, window placement in relationship to neighbors, and privacy.
5. Allowable screening (and very limited use of fences).
6. Universal design considerations.
7. Firewise design considerations, including: fire-retardant roofing; a minimum perimeter (of a few feet) of non-combustibles around each building; landscaping maintenance to prevent fire spread (non-flammable plantings, minimal bark dust and away from structure, trees limbed appropriately); etc.



## 8. Landscaping attention to native, drought-tolerant, Central Oregon plantings and groundcovers

### **Construction Standards**

These standards are primarily intended to assure durable construction and to encourage sustainability best practices. While there is no required architectural theme to follow in the Woodlands, the high desert and forested setting naturally beckons thoughtful and integrated architecture that works with existing topography and the colors and textures of the surrounding environment. All of the landscapes and buildings within the Woodlands are expected to employ high standards for design and construction to ensure that structures are sensitively integrated into the site and surrounding environs.

Guidelines for acceptable materials for roofing, siding, windows, etc. (to be drafted) will be provided. Additionally, building materials in general should convey the appearance of quality, permanence and durability, strength, and authenticity.

The following building materials are specifically prohibited from being used:

- Reflective or bright colored.
- Pressed board and plywood.
- Vinyl or plastic siding.
- Plain concrete block and plain concrete (except that up to 8" of exposed foundation).
- Mirrored window glazing.

General standards:

Proven green building practices shall be incorporated to the extent feasible, such as those set out in the Building America Best Practices Series and Earth Advantage programs.

- a) Energy savings and durability measures, including the design of the building enclosure and the selection of materials, fixtures and appliances.
- b) Water saving fixtures such as low-flow toilets and showerheads should be provided.
- c) Low-VOC finishes and sealants should be selected to enhance air quality.
- d) Sustainably-sourced materials are encouraged, including FSC-certified wood and materials made from
- e) recycled content.
- f) On-site stormwater infiltration shall be installed, to the extent it is supported by site soil characteristics.
- g) Construction waste should be managed tightly, and the minimum amount of waste sent to landfill.
- h) Materials shall be diverted to recycling collectors to the greatest extent feasible, and quantities shall be ordered so as to avoid waste.

### **Design Review**

For each house a builder proposes to build, prior to applying for a building permit the builder shall submit an application for design review consisting of detailed elevations and plans, a materials list, and a completed Woodlands design checklist. Woodlands may request additional information concerning materials, design or other construction elements, and may retain the services of an architect to review the application and propose modifications to the exterior of a house. The design review fee, not to exceed \$1000 per design, shall be paid by the builder. Builders shall submit a proposed exterior palette for approval at least two weeks prior to installing the exterior finish. If changes are to be made to the exterior of a house that has already received design approval, prior to applying for a building permit, the builder shall submit elevations and plans showing the changes. An additional design review fee may be assessed.

For houses that will be certified under the Earth Advantage, LEED, or other third-party green building program accepted by Woodlands, no additional submittals concerning "green" building practices are required for design review. For houses not certified by a third-party, the builder shall submit to Woodlands as part of the design review application, a list of best green practices and best Firewise practices that will be used for construction of the house. Upon issuance of the certificate of occupancy, the builder shall submit to Woodlands a confirmation that the best practice items were incorporated in the house.

**Commercial and Multifamily Design and Construction**

Commercial and apartment buildings are considered *featured* structures, and therefore shall be designed by an architect. Each building will be evaluated individually based on site layout, sustainability, durability, exterior aesthetics of the structure and landscaping, and functionality.

More guidelines to follow in future phases of Woodlands land use review....