

Position 3
Amy Sabbadini

OPB: How can the county address housing shortages and rents that are out of reach for many residents? What is your proposal for a long-term solution to the management of shelters and sanctioned camps?

Sabbadini: I believe everyone in Deschutes County should have access to affordable housing. We should build the majority of these homes in and around our cities. I firmly believe that the County should do all we can to secure funding and land for workforce housing options, low income developments. I will also advocate for economic development that will bring more living wage jobs to the region.

It's unacceptable to have so many people living on the streets or in their vehicles. The County should do more to help. Building more housing for our critical workforce needs to be part of the solution, but I also think there is a need for a whole mix of shelter options so we meet people where they are at. There are multiple regional coalitions of service providers coordinating this response. I want to support County workers in their important roles providing medical and behavioral health care, getting folks into the deflection program to get treatment, and helping our veterans navigate the processes to access their benefits. I will support managed camps and designated safe parking areas rather than doing nothing while folks are pushed into our public lands with no plan. The County should help our cities build more permanent supportive housing so we can get people transitioning out of vehicles and into stable housing.

OPB: What measures would you champion to address resident concerns about natural hazards like winter storms, wildfire and extreme heat? Please address each type of disaster in your response.

Sabbadini: County government must be ready to serve when disaster strikes, coordinating first responders throughout the region and informing the public as situations evolve. As a commissioner, I will work to ensure these critical departments are properly staffed and resourced for emergencies.

Winter storms - It's important that the County Roads Department have the staff and equipment to maintain safe driving conditions during winter storm events and that County Health directs unhoused people to warming shelters when temperatures dip. I will prioritize public safety services in these times of budget cuts.

Wildfire - We need to do more in terms of wildfire mitigation. I would like to see all neighborhoods become Firewise communities, with evacuation signage, fuels management, and a preparedness plan. County Public Health could provide portable air conditioning units to folks especially vulnerable and can train employers on how to protect their workers during smoke days, especially those working outside in hazardous conditions.

Heat - As the Public Health Authority, the County can identify when emergency shelters need to be opened for respite from extreme heat that will be more intense and more frequent with climate change.

OPB: How would you approach applications to rezone parts of the county for denser development? How do you propose the county grows to accommodate a growing population?

Sabbadini: Rezones should depend on location primarily – I am opposed to leapfrog development and prefer to see growth happen in and around urban areas to protect agriculture and open space. We should channel development where utilities are easily extended, where transit routes can help people move about, and where there is efficient and effective water use and treatment.

I will prioritize housing for the working folks we depend on, economic development that creates living wage jobs and sustainable business. I will encourage this growth to happen within urban growth boundaries and designated urban reserves. I will encourage neighborhood commercial and more middle housing and discourage luxury developments that don't fix our housing problem. I will welcome community land trusts, partnerships, and other creative solutions when market forces aren't meeting demand.

OPB: Where would you propose the county build a new solid waste facility and how do you propose helping the county reach the state's Department of Environmental Quality goal of reducing waste disposals in landfills to 45%?

Sabbadini: I will balance the recommendations of the steering committee and input from residents with scientific evidence on the geology, water table, and habitat conservation in order to make a responsible decision. I recently attended a forum on solid waste management for our region and it's clear that the biggest improvements can be made in construction waste. As commissioner, I would direct the Solid Waste Department to collaborate with industry to identify mutually beneficial solutions to develop more efficient processes to redirect waste to secondary uses and to change practices to reduce waste in the first place. Secondly, I would loop in the graduate students in the engineering program at OSU Cascades for innovative solutions. Thirdly, I would encourage recycling enterprises to locate a facility in our region to reduce trips for recycling to distant plants.

OPB: Do you support the district map going before voters in November? Why or why not? If not, how do you think commission seats should be apportioned?

Sabbadini: No, I do not.

Fundamentally, Map C would reduce the voting power of the electorate by 80%. I support fair and transparent processes based on quality data. This mapping process undermined public trust from the get-go by using partisan appointees to develop a map between census years

during a period of rapid growth, and before the concept of districting had been approved by voters.

First, voters should have a say in whether or not districting should happen. IF and only if voters want districts, it would make the most sense to have 4 districts and 1 at-large seat. Secondly, a nonpartisan process should be developed and agreed upon by all Commissioners before any results come out. Commissioners should agree that if the process is followed, the final map will be adopted. Thirdly, up to date census data should be used rather than voter registration data so as not to disenfranchise youth, nonvoters, and immigrant community members. Districting experts with no ties to the outcome should be employed to run the scenarios based on legal parameters for representation to protect The County from legal challenge.