

Position 1 Brooke West

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?

West: Housing affordability is one of the most pressing challenges facing Deschutes County, and addressing it will require a balanced, long-term approach.

Addressing homelessness requires both compassion and practical pathways. Emergency shelters and other temporary responses may be necessary during immediate crises, but long-term success depends on helping people transition into stable housing while maintaining public safety and clear community standards.

Local government cannot solve housing challenges alone, but it can create conditions that allow communities, builders, and service providers to be part of effective solutions.

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.

West: Deschutes County faces several natural hazards, and preparing for them requires proactive planning and strong coordination between the county, cities, and regional partners.

Wildfire remains the most serious threat to Central Oregon. I would prioritize continued investment in forest health and fuels reduction projects, expand partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service and local fire districts to thin overgrown forests, and help homeowners create defensible space around their properties. We must also strengthen evacuation planning and improve emergency communication systems.

Winter storms can isolate rural communities and disrupt critical services. The county should continue improving snow removal coordination on key routes, strengthen emergency preparedness outreach, and ensure warming shelters and backup power resources are available during severe weather.

Extreme heat is an increasing concern, especially for outdoor workers, seniors, and other vulnerable residents. I support improving public awareness about heat safety, and increasing access to shade, water, and cooling resources in our communities.

Across all hazards, our focus should be resilience and preparedness—supporting first responders, investing in infrastructure, and ensuring residents receive timely and reliable emergency information.

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?

West: Deschutes County continues to experience significant growth, and thoughtful planning will be essential to ensure that growth remains sustainable while protecting the natural beauty and quality of life that residents value.

Rezoning decisions should be evaluated carefully based on infrastructure capacity, water resources, transportation access, and long-term community impact. Higher-density development is generally most appropriate in areas where infrastructure already exists or can reasonably support it. We must also ensure that services such as schools, emergency response, and transportation can keep pace with population growth.

Responsible planning means allowing communities to grow while protecting farmland, rural character, and the natural landscape that makes Central Oregon such a special place to live.

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%?

West: Deschutes County will need additional solid waste capacity as our population grows, and selecting a location for a future facility should be guided by careful planning, environmental protection, and community input. I support a site selection process that considers transportation access, environmental impact, long-term capacity, and distance from residential neighborhoods to reduce impacts on nearby communities while ensuring the county can manage waste responsibly.

At the same time, building a new facility cannot be the only solution. To meet the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's goal of reducing landfill disposal to 45%, we must expand waste reduction and diversion efforts. That includes improving recycling participation, expanding composting for food and yard waste, and supporting businesses and residents in reducing waste at the source.

Public education and partnerships with schools, businesses, and regional waste providers can also increase recycling and composting participation. By combining thoughtful facility planning with stronger waste reduction programs, Deschutes County can protect the environment while preparing for future growth.

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? Why?

West: Residents should have the opportunity to decide whether district-based representation is

the right approach for Deschutes County. I believe voters should be able to weigh in on that decision. Deschutes County is remarkably diverse, so whether the voters choose to be district-based representation to support their specific needs, challenges, and priorities or vote for commissioners at-large, I trust the people of Deschutes County to weigh in and make the right call for their community.