



PHOTO PROVIDED

The triangle between Highway 20 and Highway 126 at the east end of Sisters is part of a larger land swap.

ODOT to use Zimmerman Cinder Pit for storage

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) will be temporarily storing cinders and pavement grindings in the lower stockpile area of Zimmerman Cinder Pit, west of Sisters.

The storage of the grindings is being done through a special-use permit with the Deschutes National Forest's Sisters Ranger District. ODOT's use of the cinder pit will not impact access to or use of Zimmerman Pit.

ODOT is expected to use the material, coming from a paving project from Jack Lake Road to Santiam Junction, in the future to help repair Highway 242.

Sisters land part of proposed swap

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Twenty-seven acres of land on the east side of Sisters would be transferred to the jurisdiction of ODOT if a proposed land swap is approved.

The swap has been discussed since 2014 between Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) by the OPRD Commission and will be addressed at their September 17-18 meeting in Brookings.

The land spans the intersection of Highways 20 and 126, including the red dirt triangle and trees beyond, as well as swaths of land to the north of 126 and south of 20. The City of Sisters' most recent Transportation System Plan illustrates a footprint for a future roundabout construction project in the immediate vicinity of this property.

According to Bob Townsend, ODOT Region 4 area manager, the proposed roundabout "is a high

priority moving forward... It is definitely on our radar and acquiring the land ahead of funding the project is definitely beneficial."

Townsend went on to explain that ODOT schedules their capital improvement projects in four-year cycles. The next cycle is 2020-2024 and the roundabout is not in that plan. He estimated that it would probably be 10 years out before definite plans would be established for the project and funding allocated.

The proposed roundabout at Locust Street and East Cascade Avenue, the intersection by the elementary school, is of higher priority to enable truck traffic to use the Barclay Drive/Locust bypass around town.

Historically, State Parks was a division of ODOT when the identified properties were originally acquired. In 1989, legislation created OPRD as a separate State department. At that time, lands to be managed by each department were divided between them. The Creekside Campground along Whychus Creek, and

the adjacent 27 acres, came under OPRD, with the City assuming responsibility for the park. OPRD maintained ownership of the remaining land.

OPRD needs more land in the Tumalo State Park and Service Creek (in Wheeler County) areas to develop new outdoor recreation opportunities. The land in Sisters is impacted by ODOT rights-of-way and is needed by ODOT if they are to make traffic improvements to the 126/20 junction and improve egress/ingress to Highway 20 from Buckaroo Trail in the FivePine campus.

According to Chris Havel, associate director for OPRD, the proposed land swap is an action item on the September agenda in Brookings. Staff is requesting the Commission approve the exchange of fee title ownership of OPRD's Sisters SP property for fee title to ODOT's Tumalo and Service Creek Recreation Site property. He indicated that both his department and ODOT are in favor of the swap, which would allow all

three properties to be better utilized.

Sisters City Manager Cory Mисley confirmed that any action on the 20/126 roundabout is "a long way off." He indicated the City has a very positive ongoing relationship with ODOT, having worked successfully with them on the Cascade Avenue improvement project and the roundabout at Barclay/Highway 20.

Community Development Director Patrick Davenport is hopeful the City and ODOT can reach agreement to allow creation of pedestrian/bike paths and other improvements to the land after the right-of-way for the proposed roundabout is dedicated/reserved.

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