

## EDITORIALS &amp; OPINIONS

The Bulletin  
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERHeidi Wright  
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Publisher  
Editor  
Editorial Page EditorVeterans Village  
is well on its way  
but still has hurdles

Individual tiny homes for 15 veterans with support for them. It may sound small, but it's an extraordinary leap forward for this community's efforts to find answers for the homeless.

The Central Oregon Veterans Village broke ground last month. It's on a plot of Deschutes County-owned land near the Sheriff's Office off U.S. Highway 20 on the north end of Bend. It could have its first residents sometime this month.

That's what can happen when dedicated volunteers, staff, local officials and the state Legislature work together.

On Wednesday, another hurdle was squashed. Bend's Affordable Housing Committee voted unanimously to exempt the project from city of Bend system development charges of \$130,597.40. It then passed a second motion asking the Bend Park & Recreation District to do the same. Those charges are \$88,890.

Don Horton, the park district's executive director, said the veterans village is "a unique opportunity."

"Our SDC ordinance on affordable housing does allow the board to consider project like this and gives them the discretion to approve," he told us Thursday in an email. "Staff is planning on bringing this project to the board."

Let's hope the park district can do it.

So many others have chipped in to make this development happen. A critical piece was House Bill 4212, sponsored by House Speaker Tina

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Kotek. That bill swept away the land use hurdles that can make siting an emergency shelter so challenging. Former state Rep. Cheri Helt helped ensure this development would fit under HB 4212. Deschutes County commissioners granted the project a 10-year lease on the county land — for free. And they threw in \$150,000 to help with construction and a commitment of \$100,000 per year to help provide the vital services to help the veterans improve their lives. It's really the Bend Heroes Foundation and Central Oregon Veterans Outreach that have led on this project and vowed to make it a success. There are many, many more who have contributed we are not listing here.

The project will continue to face needs for volunteers and financial support. Check out [centraloregonveteransvillage.org](http://centraloregonveteransvillage.org). See what you can do to help.

When the snow comes, it  
comes with strings attached

By the time you read this, if the weather forecast was right, Bend has a fresh dose of snow and cold.

Most people who have lived in Bend know the drill. The city doesn't keep a full stable of plows to clear every street quickly. Bend city councilors seem to revisit the issue after every major snow event. The answer is usually the same: Bend just doesn't get enough snow to invest in more snow-clearing equipment and manpower. It can, though, call out contractors to help.

Residents and businesses are responsible for clearing the sidewalks that border their property. Businesses have six hours after the snow accumulated. Residents have 24 hours. And though the city does not fine people indiscriminately, it did fine some repeat residential offenders \$200 in 2019. Businesses can face \$400 fines. A good thing to avoid.

The city also has what it calls emergency snow zones. Those are certain important streets where on-street parking and snowfall can mean traffic can have real trouble getting through. If there is a declared

snow emergency, the city wants the streets cleared of parked cars. It may tow your car.

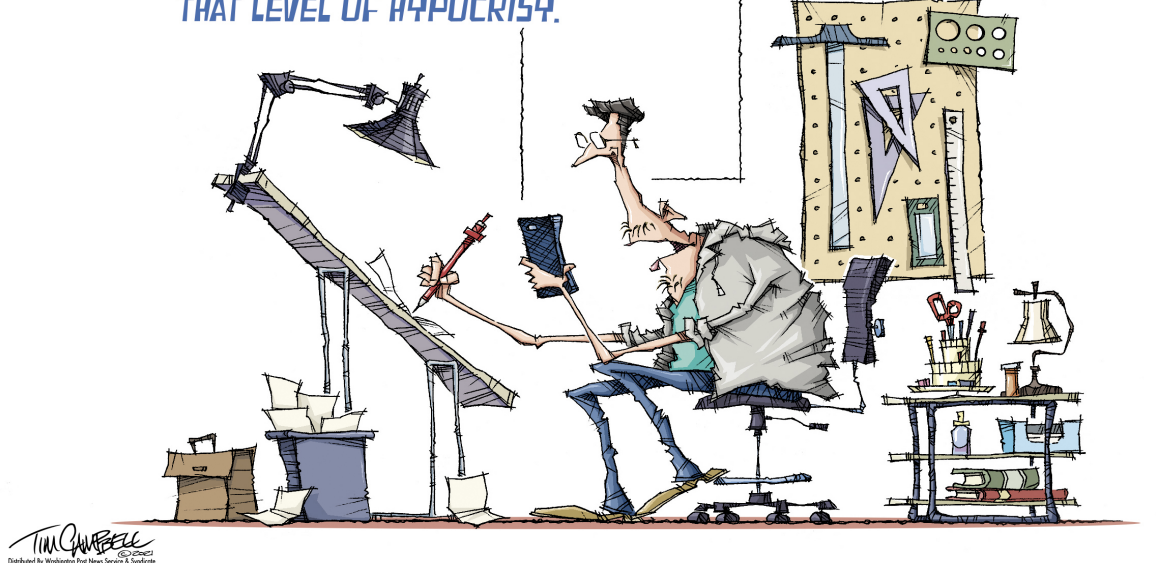
Emergency snow zones are:

- Wall Street (Portland Avenue to Colorado Avenue)
- Bond Street (Wall Street to Colorado Avenue)
- Chandler Avenue (Mt. Washington Drive to Century Drive)
- NE Courtney Drive (27th Street to Connors Avenue)
- NE Connors Avenue (27th Street to Courtney Drive)
- NW Broadway Street (Franklin Avenue/Riverside Boulevard to Colorado Avenue)
- NW Tumalo Avenue (Riverside Boulevard to Broadway Street)
- 17th Street & Troon Avenue (Galveston Avenue to Mt. Washington Drive)

And one last thing: Some people are just not fit enough to shovel their own driveway, let alone their sidewalk. If you can, please help them out and make sure they are OK. If you know of someone who might need shoveling or other help, you can also call the city's volunteer coordinator at 541-388-5579.

CAN YOU DRAW A CARTOON ABOUT BIDEN WANTING TO INCREASE THE MINIMUM WAGE?

SURE, BUT WILL YOU AT LEAST PAY ME THE CURRENT MINIMUM WAGE TO CREATE IT?  
NO, BUT WE'D LIKE FOR IT TO HAVE THAT LEVEL OF HYPOCRISY.



## Housing solutions Bend should consider

BY KARON JOHNSON

Bend should study how other cities deal with "missing middle" housing: homes middle-class wage earners can afford.

We are told the only way to have "affordable housing" is building higher densities, necessarily destroying our trees and green spaces.

In fact, residents in Bend are never going to have "affordable housing" because we cannot compete in a nationwide market against folks who can pay cash. However high the density, we can't outbid them. We need a different approach.

## Define the terms

"Affordable housing" means housing in which the mortgage, amortized interest, taxes, insurance and HOA fees are no more than 30% of a family's gross annual income at no more than 80% of the area median income, or AMI. All affordable housing depends on subsidies or incentives from government.

"Attainable housing" is unsubsidized, market-priced housing that meets the needs of those with incomes between 80% and 120% of the AMI: \$61,300 to \$91,920. A family's maximum mortgage payment should not be more than 25% of its monthly take-home income. "Attainable housing" means housing for the middle class.

## Do the math

Affordable Housing. Bend's AMI is \$76,600; 80% is \$61,300. The highest-priced home the family can afford \$257,000. How many homes in Bend sell for \$257,000? "Affordable housing" will not happen without massive subsidies.

Attainable Housing. Bend's median salary for a high school teacher

## GUEST COLUMN

is \$59,801; fire fighter, \$45,968; police officer, \$55,700. Bend's median home price is \$560,000. To purchase a \$400,000 home, a family's income must be at least \$100,000. Given the present market, there is no attainable housing in Bend.

## Higher density does not equal cheaper homes

Building to a higher density has not produced cheaper homes. Recently, 25 significant trees were lost to a ten-unit, .6-acre development on Roanoke Avenue; each unit costs \$798,500. A 22-unit cluster of cottages was built in 2019; one recently sold for \$340,000. Even in well-designed developments that emphasize higher density, the lowest-priced home costs \$380,000.

Absent proof that building to a higher density — with no other changes to the Bend code — will actually produce homes affordable by the middle-class, we should stop destroying our environment.

## Solution No. 1: Eliminate single-family detached houses

The 6-foot separation between single-family detached houses is a waste of space. Developers are building well-designed single-family attached homes that afford the same separation and privacy. A two-unit single-family attached building takes up 600 square feet less than detached and costs \$100,000 less per unit. A recent 15.6-acre development could have saved .6 acres for trees and green space by converting 51 single-family detached to attached units.

Presently, Bend requires half of the homes in a standard-density zoned

development to be multifamily. Instead, allowing only multifamily in medium-density and standard-density zones would free up acres of space for trees and green space.

## Solution No. 2: Adopt Portland's residential infill project

House Bill 2001 allows construction of multiunit buildings in RS zones but offers no incentive to encourage it. Portland's new code provides this incentive through the residential infill project, which restricts the size of a single family detached home to half the size of the lot.

Multidwelling homes are encouraged by limiting the size of the building and increasing the floor-to-area allowed for multiunits.

A study by Johnson Economics demonstrated this new code will actually encourage the construction of affordable family homes because multi-unit homes are cheaper to build. For example, if a single-family 3,000-square-foot home cost \$595,000, a 3,000-square-foot duplex will cost \$310,000, and a triplex \$245,000.

## Solution No. 3: Mandatory inclusionary requirements

Numerous jurisdictions have adopted mandatory "set-aside" formulas, which require developers to build a fixed percentage of affordable units in each development.

In short, Bend needs to consider what other cities are doing. Presently, we're destroying our environment without creating middle-income homes.

See [savebendtrees.com](http://savebendtrees.com) for a copy of this article with supporting sources.

■ Karon Johnson lives in Bend and is the land use chair for the Old Farm District Neighborhood Association.

## Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's signature, phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

## Guest columns

Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words; they must be signed; and they must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

## How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and mail, fax or email it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred.

Email: [letters@bendbulletin.com](mailto:letters@bendbulletin.com)

Write: My Nickel's Worth/Guest Column  
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## Trump is banned from Twitter forever; he is so lucky

BY ALYSSA ROSENBERG

The Washington Post

He certainly wouldn't think of it this way. But former president Donald Trump is lucky to have been kicked off Twitter.

Trump's exile from his favorite online platform was made permanent Wednesday — no matter the result of his impeachment trial or what he decides about running for president again. The service's initial decision to ban him in January accelerated a fraught debate over what people can say online and whether the services they use have an obligation to monitor their speech. These are important conversations. But they often proceed as if another question has already been asked and answered: Should we be spending so much time on social media, given what it appears to be doing to our brains? Maybe this is a futile consideration: The internet horse is so far out of the

barn that it has joined a herd of wild mustangs. Still, those of us who haven't been forced to stop posting might reassess our habits nonetheless.

It's easy to flatter ourselves that we'd never behave like the former president online, spewing bile and imbibing brain-degrading conspiracy theories. But two new novels make a convincing case that even more anodyne ways of being Extremely Online aren't so good for us.

In Patricia Lockwood's "No One Is Talking About This" and Lauren Oyler's "Fake Accounts," the internet is predictable and homogenizing, even — and maybe especially — in its strangeness.

The right positions on everything from politics to guacamole are obvious — or at least, many people behave as if they were. A distinct language takes over, studded with absurd words such as "binch" and "stonks" and sen-

tences structured according to the cadence of memes. One can hate the way Trump spoke on the internet and still end up saying "SAD!" and "fake news!" with a layer of irony that only underscores his influence.

There's no question that social media can give ordinary people power they might not have access to otherwise. The #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo movements helped millions see how ubiquitous racist polling and sexual violence are. Campaigns such as #EndSars and #FarmersProtest have amplified the voices of Nigerians and Indians on an international scale. But this megaphone is also a neutral one; it can be picked up by malevolent actors as well as benevolent ones.

And for all the revolutions and revelations social media makes possible, as Oyler's protagonist reflects, it also "devours importance." The speed of social media and the internet, and the

enthusiasms they inspire, lead users into contradictions: Lockwood's main character reflects on the rise of #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter and observes, "We wanted every last one of those bastards in jail! But more than that, we wanted the carceral state to be abolished and replaced with one of those islands where a witch turned men to pigs." Social media's lack of proportion means, Oyler writes, that everything "was meaningless and impermanent as well as potentially hugely significant. ... you were both neurotically tetchy and quietly demoralized all the time."

And all so Twitter, Facebook and other companies can keep us anesthetized as they mine our data and serve us ever-more-targeted ads. Given the way social media chews up time and spits out triviality, the companies have achieved something remarkable: hooking users on the process of turning themselves into commodities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has, at least, reintroduced the concept of discretion as a virtue by altering the risk-reward calculus for sharing every detail of one's life with what has the potential to be the whole world. But with much of real life suspended, social media gives users a way to give themselves the illusion of informing themselves or engaging with others. "Spending three hours on Twitter does not feel like three hours," Oyler writes. "That's the danger and the appeal."

Trump, alas, doesn't appear to realize that the time Twitter gave him by banning him from the service is a gift. As the Daily Beast's Asawin Suebsaeng and Sam Brodey reported last week, Trump "has resorted to suggesting put-downs for others to use or post to their own Twitter." The rest of us don't have to make the same mistake.

■ Alyssa Rosenberg writes for The Washington Post's Opinions section.