

## Heat wave

**Continued from A1**

“As we head into the weekend, we are going to get a pretty good push of moisture into the area,” Evans said. “We will actually have a chance of showers and thunderstorms in Central Oregon over the weekend.”

The weather service issued a red flag warning Thursday for weather conditions that could lead to wildfires. After Thursday, the approaching storms are expected to bring enough

rainfall to lower the threat of wildfires, Evans said.

“The amount of rain associated with these storms is going to offset the lightning threat,” Evans said. “But with as much instability there is with these thunderstorms, there can always be enough lightning to cause some problems as far as wildfires.”

In preparation for this week’s heat wave, which will affect most of the state, the Oregon Office of Emergency Management released a report with

several recommendations for cities to avoid the deadly outcomes of last month’s heat wave.

Gov. Kate Brown directed the office to create the report after excessive heat June 25-30 led to 83 heat-related deaths across the state. The emergency management office is working with local and state agencies to implement its recommendations for the extreme heat.

Recommendations include ensuring the state is fully staffing its 211 hotline to connect

people with health and social service organizations and prioritize the importance of residents checking on their neighbors, relatives and coworkers.

Another recommendation is for public transit agencies to consider waiving fares during extreme heat events.

Derek Hofbauer, outreach and engagement administrator for Cascade East Transit in Bend, said most routes have already been offered for free to the public since April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those routes will likely continue to be free through the end of the year, Hofbauer said.

“Fares currently only exist for CET’s recreation shuttles such as Mt. Bachelor, Ride the River, and Lava Butte,” Hofbauer said.

During the heat wave in June, several social service organizations in Bend set up two large cooling tents on Hunnell Road for homeless people in the area. Volunteers handed out bottles of water and other cooling and health supplies.

David Notari, director of development at Shepherd’s House Ministries, a homeless shelter in Bend, said Thursday his shelter and other organizations are monitoring the heat and will consider offering another cooling shelter if needed.

“If things get into triple digits, we will likely do something,” Notari said. “We are going to play it on a day-by-day basis and make sure people are safe.”

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## Housing

**Continued from A1**

To address this issue, the city has proposed code changes and possible incentives to make this kind of housing more available. This week, the Bend Planning Commission unanimously approved code changes intended to allow more dense housing throughout the city. The changes were mandated by a state law passed in 2019 called House Bill 2001.

But some residents fear the city is moving too quickly with changes, and fear the public has not been involved enough in the process.

Here’s what you need to know about middle housing in Bend:

### Why is this an issue?

Like many cities across the country, Bend has not built enough housing to keep up with population growth. Between 2010 and 2016, Deschutes County underproduced by 150,000 homes, McConnell said.

In the last year, housing prices have gone up 40%.

Significant factors behind the housing shortage are restrictive zoning practices and NIMBYISM — an acronym that stands for “not in my backyard” and refers to people who fight development they do not like or find suitable for their neighborhood or town.

“Just because Bend looked a certain way when each of us moved here doesn’t mean that’s the way it should be, or that’s what is right,” McConnell said.

### What is House Bill 2001, and what does it do for middle housing?

House Bill 2001 requires cities with more than 25,000 people to allow duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes and other denser forms of housing anywhere where a single-family home can be built.

Since the bill passed, a local group has worked to develop and refine specific codes to help usher in more housing types around the city. The planning commission recommended these changes Monday night to the Bend City Council.

The proposed code includes several tweaks to the city’s development code, but one of the biggest changes would allow quadplexes in standard residential zones, which currently are not allowed, McConnell said.

Fewer parking spaces would be required for some

types of housing, as well. For example, a two-bedroom duplex built today would require a developer to provide two parking spaces. The proposed code would require none. A cottage cluster, which is when a group of homes is clustered around a common, shared space, currently would require at least 1.5 parking spaces for every two-bedroom home. The proposed code only requires one per unit.

The proposed changes also would make it so if someone owns a duplex or a triplex, only one of those units can be a short-term rental.

### Not everyone supports these changes. Why?

Several residents raised doubts Monday that more density in the city would actually lead to more affordable housing.

Lisa Mushel, the chair of the Century West Neighborhood Association, argued that unless there was a way to keep people from moving to Bend, housing will continue to just go to the highest bidder.

“We are in such high demand across the country,” Mushel said.

There are also concerns that not requiring parking will lead to more congested neighborhoods, and that Bend does not have a robust enough public transportation system to accommodate these changes.

Some also argue that the process in developing these code changes has been rushed.

Some are saying the city has not done enough to solicit input from the public.

“There’s no reason to expedite this process when we have until June 2022 for rules to be adopted,” Jennifer Eichhorn, a Bend resident, said on Monday.

### So does more housing necessarily mean it will be more affordable?

In general, yes, according to Josh Lehner, an economist with the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis.

But it is important to think of these changes not as a way to drive down existing prices, and rather as a way to slow the increase in prices, Lehner

said.

“Outright market rate decline is very, very unlikely, no matter what you build,” Lehner said. “But building some of these slightly more dense developments where you are putting up two or three townhomes instead of a single-family home will help market affordability.”

“We do know what happens if you don’t build,” Lehner added. “If you’re not continuing to build, we know the affordability will worsen over time and the prices will increase at a faster pace.”

Lehner also said it’s important to remember policies like the ones proposed in Bend will prompt modest change over a long period of time. Neighborhoods won’t be redeveloped overnight, but rather over decades as housing gets older and gets redeveloped.

“This is really a long term housing boost,” Lehner said.

### What else is being done to promote middle housing?

The city is also looking at ways to incentivize these kinds of housing developments.

Some incentives being considered by the Bend City Council include offering down-payment assistance to homebuyers, reducing regulatory costs and scaling system development charges — which is a fee the city charges developers to help pay for transportation infrastructure — by home size, according to McConnell, the city’s affordable housing manager.

Another idea is to support what is called naturally occurring affordable housing, which basically means the city invests in fixing up older buildings and selling or renting them for a price people in the middle-housing market can afford.

The city would be able to put a covenant on the property to ensure it could be rented by someone making “middle income” in Bend, she said.

The Bend City Council will likely take up this issue at a meeting in September, according to city staff.

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## Masks

**Continued from A1**

“The Redmond School District is waiting to review the Oregon Health Authority’s rule to determine when a K-12 mask mandate will go into effect and what it will entail,” Sheila Miller, a spokeswoman for the school district, said in an email. “When we have that information, we will make any necessary changes to our masking rules for the 2021-22 school year and/or summer school.”

Sara Johnson, Crook County School District’s superintendent, was more blunt. “I’m determined to retain local control and decision-making that’s in the best interest of our community and Crook County School District,” she said in a statement.

The governor’s move comes after the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Tuesday recommended that everyone, regardless of vaccination status, return to wearing masks indoors in parts of the country where the virus is surging.

Later on Tuesday, the Oregon Health Authority updated its guidance to recommend masks in public indoor settings.

“The science and data are clear: the Delta variant is in our communities, and it is more contagious,” the governor said in a statement Thursday. “My priority is to ensure our kids are able to safely re-

turn to full-time in-person learning this fall, five days per week and with minimal disruptions. With many children still ineligible to be vaccinated, masks are an effective way to help keep our kids safe in the classroom, the learning environment we know serves them best.”

“In the meantime, as we ask Oregonians statewide to mask up in public indoor spaces, we will continue working hard to vaccinate more people so we can finally beat this virus once and for all. Vaccines remain the most effective and best way to protect ourselves and our families.”

Brown’s announcement came as new cases continued to rise in Oregon. On Thursday, for the second time this week, more than 1,000 new cases were reported by state health officials.

The CDC advised people wear masks in public indoor spaces in parts of the country that have recorded more than 50 new infections per 100,000 residents over the previous week, or where there is a more than an 8% test positivity rate.

The health authority recorded 107 cases per 100,000 in Deschutes County between July 11 and July 24. Over 200 cases per 100,000 people were reported in Crook and Jefferson counties over the same period.

Bend-La Pine Schools, Central Oregon’s largest school district, was the only district that was planning on requiring

masks for some students.

“We are awaiting additional information from the Oregon Department of Education and Oregon Health Authority and will comply with the Governor’s new masking requirements,” Steve Cook, the school district’s new superintendent, said in a statement.

Peter Weber, executive director of the Oregon School Activities Association, felt the governor’s announcement was clear: When indoors, masks must be worn regardless of vaccination status.

Masks were worn throughout the high school season last year, but once athletes received their vaccines, they were able to take masks off while competing. Now they must put them back on for the time being.

Volleyball is the sport mostly impacted by Brown’s announcement because it is the only fall sport to be played indoors.

“The indoors are moving forward, but people will have to wear masks,” Weber said.

Traditional fall sports — football, soccer, cross-country and volleyball — are still set to start on Aug. 16, with competitions beginning Aug. 26, according to Weber.

“We are better than where we were last year when we weren’t able to play,” he said. “Indoors people need to wear masks, but that is better than not being able to play.”

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