

# Blue River Complete Community Plan Alternatives Memo

Blue River Complete Community Plan  
October 26, 2023

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# 0.0 Setting the Stage

## 0.1 Project Background

The Blue River Complete Community Plan (Community Plan) is supported by a Transportation and Growth Management Program (TGM) grant from the State of Oregon. The Community Plan is expected to ultimately be adopted by Lane County and aims to create amendments to the Rural Comprehensive Plan and the Lane Code to implement Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 660, Division 22, also known as the "Oregon Unincorporated Communities Rule" for the Blue River Community. The project will amend the County's base zones, add new zones, and/or add overlays in the project area as needed to meet the Community's vision and project objectives. The Blue River Complete Community Plan and implementing measures can serve as a model for other unincorporated communities in Lane County.

### Blue River

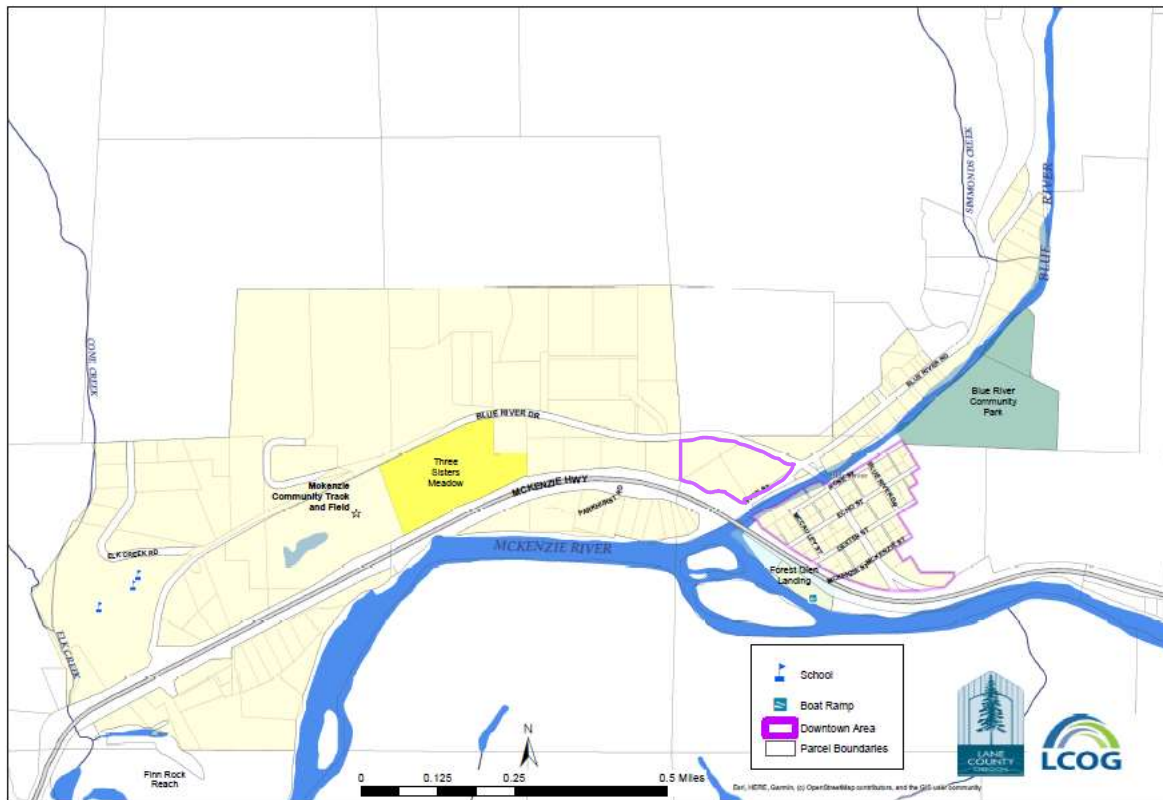


Figure 1. Blue River Complete Community Plan Community Boundary

The project area is the area within the boundary of the Unincorporated Community of Blue River (See **Figure 1**), and Blue River Community Park which is currently outside of the community boundary. The project will work to promote mixed-use, compact, small-town development patterns, with a particular emphasis on walking, biking, and transit.

## 0.2 Blue River Community Context

In 1984, Lane County designated Blue River as a “Rural Community” (Ordinance No. PA 884). The definition of a “Rural Community” is an “unincorporated community which consists primarily of permanent residential dwellings but also has at least two other land uses that provide commercial, industrial, or public uses (including but not limited to schools, churches, grange halls, post offices) to the community, the surrounding rural area, or to persons traveling through the area.” (OAR 660-022-0010(7)). As a rural unincorporated community, Blue River is subject to the State’s “Unincorporated Communities Rule” (OAR 660-022).

According to the Blue River Wastewater and Redevelopment Road Map (2015-2016); “while agriculture and the area’s recognition as a resort and fishing destination contributed to growth and stability throughout the 20th Century the timber industry acted as the leading economic driver for Blue River and the McKenzie River Valley. Since the precipitous drop in the timber industry during the 1980s, the McKenzie River Valley has relied on recreation, travel, and natural resource management for economic stability.” During the stakeholder interviews conducted during the Community Plan outreach efforts, longstanding members of the community have spoken to witnessing the drop in timber industry as well as to pride in the area’s natural beauty and recreational opportunities.

In September 2020, the Holiday Farm Fire swept through the McKenzie River Valley, where it caused significant destruction to homes, businesses, civic institutions, and surrounding forests. The community of Blue River, especially the downtown area, was greatly affected by the fire. Before the fire, the community had a post-office, a library, a convenience store, a resort, and a handful of other local businesses. The McKenzie River Community School, a K-12 school that serves the greater McKenzie River area, survived the fire. Many members of the community, as well as local business owners were forced to relocate temporarily or permanently. Many have chosen to stay and be a part of Blue River’s rebuild efforts. Although immense losses were felt by the communities of the McKenzie River Valley, many opportunities for rebuilding and revitalizing have come in the form of state and federal emergency funds, as well as rapid policy updates at the State and County level.

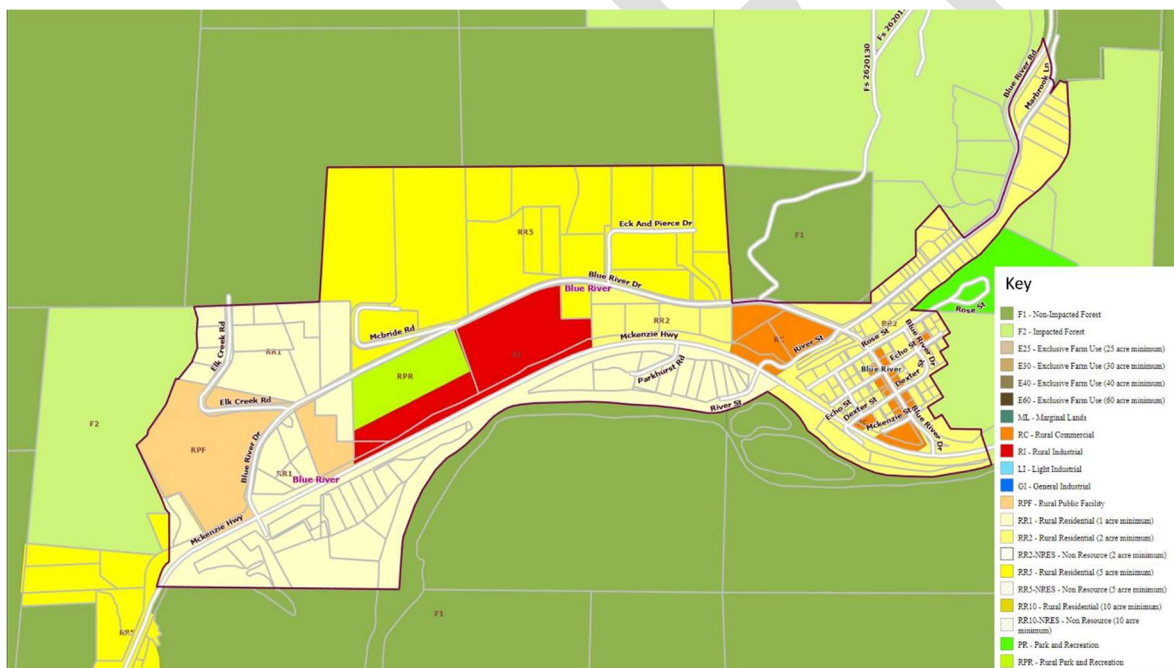
## 0.3 Purpose of Complete Community Plan Alternatives

This memo presents three Blue River Complete Community Plan Alternatives. The alternatives are intended to be descriptive in nature by generally describing each zone that would be a change from current zoning, including the purpose, densities, allowed uses, and development standards. Specific proposed plan or code language will be developed during subsequent phases of this project; after the community has provided feedback into the direction the alternatives should take.

The alternatives also reflect existing conditions that place parameters around the direction the alternatives may take including, but not limited to, soil types, slopes, wastewater drainfield regulations, and state land use regulations. While these existing conditions are not able to be changed, the alternatives presented in this memo are and are intended to open a discussion about how Blue River develops. Subsequent sections of this memo offer detail into each alternative, including new zoning, densities, allowed uses, and development standards. While purely concept at this project phase, these details will evolve based on community feedback and direction. Hearing from the community at this project phase is critical.

The alternatives will be presented to the Blue River Community through the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), an in-person community workshop, and a virtual public workshop. Based on direction emerging through this outreach effort, the Lane County Planning Commission will select the preferred alternative.

For reference, Blue River’s current zoning is shown in the graphic below:



## 0.4 Basis for Plan Alternatives

The three alternatives evolved out of stakeholder feedback, analysis of existing conditions and limitations, TGM objectives, and recommendations of the Evaluation Memorandum and Density Feasibility Memorandum. This section intends to provide an overview of stakeholder

feedback, existing conditions, and TGM objectives. The Evaluation Memorandum and Density Feasibility Memorandum are available [online](#)<sup>1</sup> for reference.

## Stakeholder Feedback

Key takeaways from stakeholder interviews conducted in January and February 2023 were:

<p><b>Vision/Hope</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A community that reflects people’s existing pride.</li> <li>• Welcoming, inviting, clean, safe.</li> <li>• Allow people displaced from the fire to return.</li> <li>• Be a home for an economically diverse community (affordable housing included).</li> <li>• Dense and identifiable downtown.</li> <li>• More conveniences needed (groceries, restaurant, etc.).</li> <li>• Attract cars and bikes from Highway 126.</li> <li>• Harness local recreation industry and scenic beauty.</li> <li>• Community agreement based on compromised shared vision.</li> <li>• Slow traffic infrastructure.</li> <li>• New tools created for unincorporated communities; economic sustainability, natural disaster recovery, new design standards.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue River is so small and had low traffic volumes, people walked relatively safely.</li> <li>• LTD Bus to and from Eugene.</li> <li>• Beautiful location, scenic rivers, recreational opportunities.</li> <li>• Sense of identity &amp; community.</li> <li>• Community resilience.</li> <li>• Densely platted downtown.</li> </ul> <p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development opportunities needed.</li> <li>• Bike &amp; running trail from downtown to river trail.</li> <li>• Connect Blue River to local hiking and biking trails.</li> <li>• Parking for businesses.</li> <li>• A toolkit for implementation.</li> <li>• Work with partners on implementation and for support.</li> <li>• A trail along Rose Street to the park.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance between a tourist-oriented town that draws customers versus the fear of losing affordable housing and a sense of quiet rural family life.</li> <li>• Parking vs. sidewalk concerns.</li> <li>• Rural equity disparities may result in squeezing lower income folks out.</li> <li>• Making sure the community feels heard.</li> <li>• Water/sewer is necessary.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Specific Zoning/Code Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setbacks.</li> <li>• Right-of-way.</li> <li>• Water/sewer.</li> <li>• Uncertainty and length of permitting commercial.</li> <li>• Density.</li> <li>• Restrictive uses.</li> <li>• Zone amendments are daunting.</li> <li>• Local Access Road complexities.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>

[https://www.lanecounty.org/government/county\\_departments/public\\_works/land\\_management\\_division/land\\_use\\_planning\\_\\_\\_zoning/blue\\_river\\_complete\\_community\\_plan\\_project](https://www.lanecounty.org/government/county_departments/public_works/land_management_division/land_use_planning___zoning/blue_river_complete_community_plan_project)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intimidating &amp; expensive permitting process.</li> <li>• Community exhaustion from recovery efforts.</li> <li>• Timing, folks trying to rebuild (like the library) need to know the requirements and what they will be responsible for.</li> <li>• Coordinating broadband, utility burying, water/sewer, surveying, the ROW reduction, and many other efforts at the same time.</li> <li>• Road width issue of Blue River Drive &amp; future design efforts (curbs, gutters, trees, etc.?).</li> <li>• Uncertain what the economy will look like after loss of a third of the population.</li> <li>• What comes first, the residents or the jobs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permit fees.</li> <li>• Need more commercial zoning available &amp; flexibility. Mixed-use.</li> <li>• Streamlined process.</li> </ul> <p><b>Contexts to Consider</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development.</li> <li>• Environmental (river health).</li> <li>• Recreation.</li> <li>• Long-term sustainability of efforts.</li> <li>• Diverse community.</li> <li>• Historical (native land, varying industries, etc.).</li> <li>• Fire recovery (specifically displaced folks that weren't property owners having a voice).</li> </ul>
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### Wastewater Treatment

Development and redevelopment in Blue River are perhaps most strongly influenced by how wastewater is treated – onsite via septic systems, via shared “cluster” septic systems, or via community drainfield. The size required for a drainfield for onsite treatment places a limitation on the size of development that can occur and is particularly impactful on smaller sized lots. The feasibility of a community drainfield has additional factors and requirements, including proximity to waterways, connections to aquifers, soil type, and slope. Two sites are currently being evaluated for capacity to support a community wastewater drainfield: Blue River Park and Three Sisters Meadow (See **Figure 2**). Site evaluation must consider physical characteristics including, but not limited to, soil type, slope, and discharge within the McKenzie River basin under the Three Basin Rule<sup>2</sup>.

Initial analysis indicates that Blue River Park can accommodate a drainfield sized to treat 2,500 gallons per day (GPD); or about eight two-bedroom residential dwellings. A drainfield on Blue River Park would primarily serve the downtown area and properties adjacent to Blue River Drive. The majority of the Park’s space that is vacant would have to be devoted to a drainfield. Dwellings and structures would require some level of infrastructure improvements to connect and deliver wastewater to the drainfield in Blue River Park.

<sup>2</sup> The Department of Environmental Quality’s Three Basin Rule regulates onsite septic and wastewater treatment systems to protect the drinking water, recreational uses, aquatic life, and high-quality sources of the North Santiam, Clackamas, and McKenzie Rivers. The Three Basin Rule limits discharge quantity and treatment quality to standards set by Oregon Administrative Rule 340-041-0350.

The second site identified is the currently vacant mill site, commonly known as the Three Sisters Meadow site. Initial analysis also indicates that the Three Sisters Meadow site can accommodate a drainfield sized to treat 2,500 GPD. Further evaluation is underway to determine if a larger drainfield is feasible. The drainfield at Three Sisters Meadow would likely solely serve development located on the site itself.



**Figure 2. Identified potential wastewater drainfield sites. Blue River Park denoted by red star. Three Sisters Meadow site denoted by blue star.**

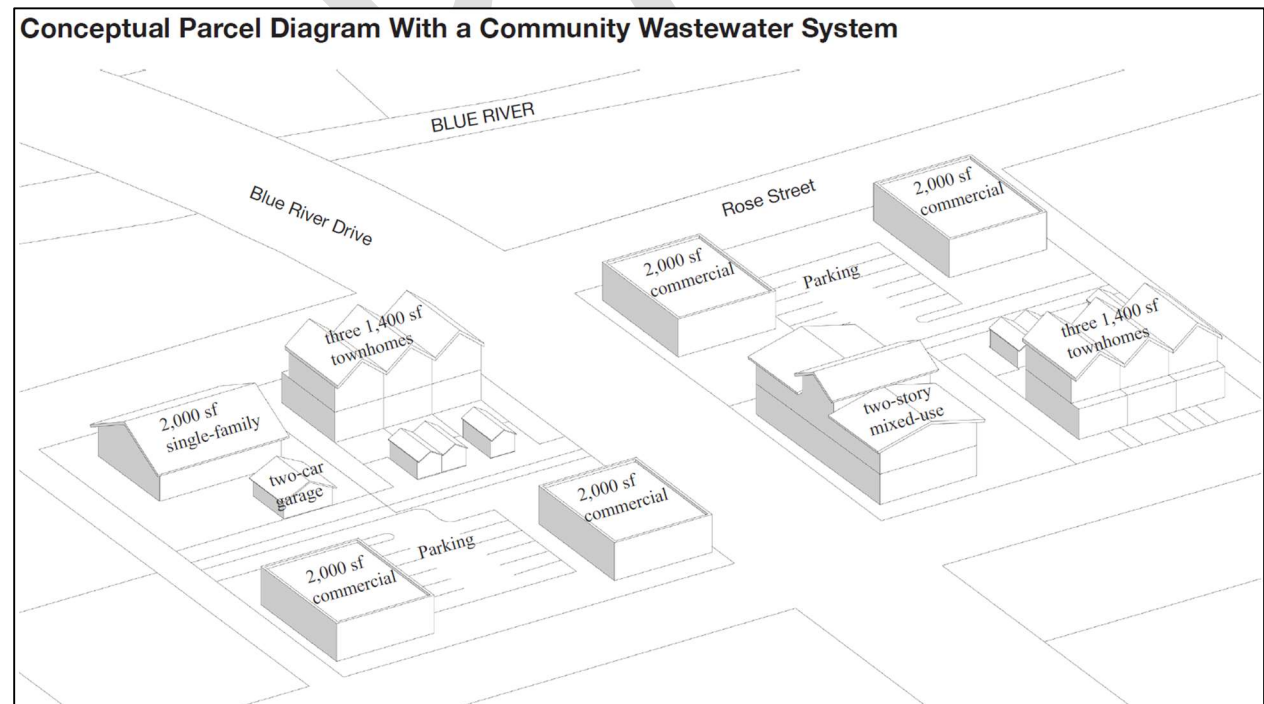
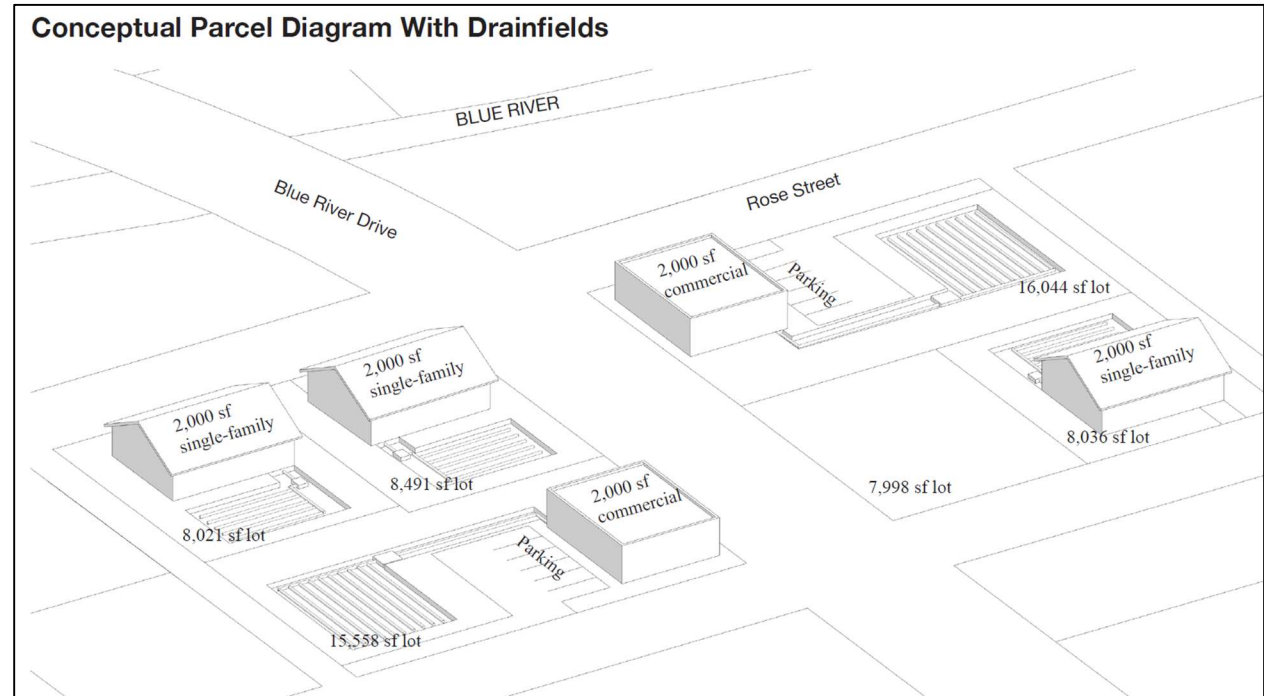
In the absence of a community wastewater drainfield, re-development can still occur in Blue River. Two options are available:

1. Individual on-site septic tanks and subsurface disposal fields. This is the status quo and how wastewater has been treated historically in Blue River.
2. Cluster systems. Owners of properties adjacent to one another could choose to utilize a shared septic system. A shared subsurface septic system increases the development potential for properties because the space required for a subsurface septic system is spread amongst several properties.

More research on the feasibility of drainfields at both sites, the costs associated, and the community's desire to take on these improvements is being done concurrently with the Complete Community Plan project and will influence its outcomes.

## Concept Diagrams: Parcels Developed Individual Drainfields and Parcels Developed with Community Wastewater System

The two diagrams below are intended to help visualize how a block of parcels may be developed with the two options, 1) individual on-site septic tanks and subsurface disposal fields, and 2) community wastewater system:





## TGM Project Objectives

The following TGM project objectives have been integrated with the community's input and vision to inform the community plan alternatives. The TGM project objectives must be met when the Complete Community Plan is adopted and implemented.

- a. Update or create new residential, commercial, industrial, mixed-use, and other zoning district standards; including new zones, or overlay zones, and zoning map amendments as needed; to implement and comply with the "unincorporated communities rule" (OAR 660-022) for Blue River;
- b. Be based on the TGM's smart development objectives and the concept of a "complete community" that meets residents' daily needs, thus reducing the need for motorized travel;
- c. Evaluate the Blue River Community Park for appropriateness to include with an amended Blue River Community boundary, based on its likely ability to be used for wastewater treatment, as determined by available County, EPA, and DEQ studies; and if found appropriate, prepare any necessary findings for boundary change and Goal Exceptions;
- d. Create a zoning and design concept for downtown core, recognizing the importance of the downtown as Blue River's commercial center;
- e. Amend Lane Code Chapter 15 (Roads) to create street standards for small unincorporated communities to ensure safe, comfortable transportation conditions for all modes;
- f. Update the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation System Plan ("TSP") to reflect and support the new zoning maps, districts, boundary, and standards in Blue River;
- g. Expand housing options, avoid discretionary permit reviews, and increase residential development efficiencies, while recognizing water, sewer, and stormwater limitations, to enable more people to live near businesses, services, and the school;
- h. Create standards that will automatically become effective and enable greater development density to occur through infill if, in the future, a community water and sewer system is built;
- i. Create land development and roadway standards for walkability and bikeability throughout the community, including on rural roads (e.g., Blue River Loop Road) and in mixed-use centers;
- j. Integrate resilience to natural hazards (especially fire and flood) and any County, State, or federal requirements, throughout all aspects of the Blue River Complete Community Plan and amendments; and
- k. Include Lane Code standards that have streamlined processes to the extent feasible, are easy to implement and navigate, and have user-friendly format and language.

## 0.5 Introduction of Complete Community Plan Alternatives

This section introduces the three Complete Community Plan alternatives. Each alternative is discussed in detail throughout the remainder of this memo.

### **Community Plan Alternative 1 – Downtown Flex**

Alternative 1 maintains status quo for wastewater treatment. It assumes an individual on-site septic tank and subsurface disposal field will serve each property. Alternative 1 proposes a re-zone of all properties in downtown Blue River to Flex-Use, including the three RC zoned properties to the west of the river. The Flex-Use zone intent is for Blue River Drive to be the hub of activity in Blue River by creating an active and inviting, pedestrian-friendly realm, complete with sidewalks, and storefronts facing the street. A Flex-Use zoning allows flexible use commercial and residential development types, while achieving a consistent design by managing building standards. However, a reality of Alternative 1 is that development intensity beyond what existed prior to the Holiday Farm Fire in 2020, will be a challenge due to limited wastewater capacity. A main factor limiting development is the space required for in-ground septic systems, including the drainfield and back-up drainfield areas that are compliant with current regulatory requirements. The current spatial requirements for drainfields are greater today than they were when the dense “downtown” area was originally platted.

### **Community Plan Alternative 2 – Blue River Drive Flex**

Alternative 2 presents Blue River Park being used as a drainfield and community wastewater system for a limited number of properties to meet their drainfield requirements for development and promote a greater level of development density along Blue River Drive. Alternative 2 proposes a Flex-Use zone for downtown properties, but for properties fronting Blue River Drive there will be an overlay zone. The overlay zone will manage building and locational standards to achieve a greater level of density and make Blue River Drive the hub of activity, consistent with the community vision. The Flex-Use zone will also extend to commercially-zoned properties outside of the downtown area. Because Alternative 2 permits for a greater level of development density, amendments to Lane Code and re-zoning would be centered on permitting flexible uses downtown, with a particular emphasis on the development standards of Blue River Drive in the form of an overlay zone. Alternative 2 introduces the Flex-Use zone for the Three Sisters Meadow site.

### **Community Plan Alternative 3 – Downtown Commercial**

Alternative 3 keeps the focus on downtown Blue River and Blue River Drive, but with an emphasis on commercial development. In Alternative 3, residential uses would be conditionally permitted along Blue River Drive. The intent of Alternative 3 is to make residential development secondary to commercial development. Alternative 3 implores a flex-use zone with a required commercial use. In Alternative 3, the community drainfield would still be in Blue River Park, as

envisioned in Alternative 2. The flex-use zone would also extend to commercially-zoned properties outside of the downtown area as in Alternative 2. Furthermore, Alternative 3 leaves open the possibility for a community drainfield at the Three Sisters Meadow site. However, a drainfield located on the Three Sisters Meadow site would likely only serve development on that site. Alternative 3 maintains the Flex-Use zone on the Three Sisters Meadow site and also indicates where a community drainfield may be located.

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# 1.0 Community Plan Alternative 1 – Downtown Flex

## 1.1 Description

Alternative 1 assumes the community would continue to rely on individual septic systems rather than building a new community drainfield or sewer system that could serve higher development capacities. However, even while continuing with the wastewater status-quo the community could see demonstrable changes in zoning, especially in the downtown area. Alternative 1 includes amendments to Lane Code to implement two new zoning districts: Community Flex-Use and Community Residential. See Section 1.2 for a description of these two new proposed zoning districts.

Feedback from community stakeholders identified several visions and hopes for the future of Blue River that Alternative 1 strives to accomplish. After the Holiday Farm Fire, displaced residents need an affordable, convenient, and identifiable place to return to. By changing the zoning of the entire downtown area to a flexible zoning type that reduces setbacks and allows for residential, commercial, or public facility uses, the residents of Blue River would have greater flexibility in rebuilding. Commercial uses would be allowed on the blocks surrounding Blue River Drive, which could increase the likelihood of commercial conveniences coming to the community. Alternative 1 also includes the possibility of adding signage along Highway 126 and supporting improvements to Blue River Drive like lighting and landscaping.

Stakeholders described experiencing roadblocks with the County code as one reason that business owners have experienced challenges bringing commercial uses to Blue River. This Alternative is intended to remove some of these roadblocks by creating new zoning districts for flexibility and a variety of uses, decreasing minimum lot sizes for existing residential zones, and modifying parking and setback requirements in some areas. Besides creating new zoning districts for residential/commercial flexibility, pedestrian infrastructure will be considered in the downtown area and beyond.

Both the project objectives and discussions with community members reveal a need to emphasize multi-modal transportation within Blue River. Alternative 1 prioritizes multi-modal transportation by introducing various pathways to connect Blue River west to east, and the downtown area and to Blue River Park along Blue River.

Affordable housing resonated as a theme during the stakeholder interviews. Providing more flexibility in the development standards and streamlining the land use application process may help reduce development costs, which in turn may allow for more affordable housing to be built. In addition, allowing higher densities within the community may mean smaller and more affordable units such as apartments, duplexes, cottage clusters and apartments on the second floor of a commercial use. Presently, the majority of the properties along Blue River Drive in

downtown Blue River are zoned Rural Commercial (Lane Code 16.291), which has no minimum lot area established, except what is necessary to accommodate any necessary sewerage and potable water concerns. However, the Rural Residential Zone (Lane Code 16.290) contains a minimum lot area of one acre. With Alternative 1, the minimum lot sizes for both commercial and residential uses will be adjusted to accommodate the varying needs of the property owners and their wastewater constraints.

## 1.2 Alternative 1 Characteristics

Alternative 1 is characterized by new and updated zoning districts, upgrading multi-modal transportation, and community signage.

The changes discussed above would largely be implemented as amendments to Lane Code that would make development more compact, pedestrian-friendly, encourage a mix of uses in the downtown area and change the zoning designation of a swath of properties. This alternative will ensure many of the non-conforming lot sizes (residential properties under one acre) become conforming.

Alternative 1 presents two new zoning districts:

1. *Community Flex-Use Zone (CF-U)* – A new district to allow flexibility in residential and commercial uses in denser neighborhoods than typically allowed in Lane County.
2. *Community Residential Zone (CR)* – A new district to exhibit the allowance of one (1) acre lots on the rest of the Rural Residentially zoned properties. It could also be used to find opportunities to reduce residential development standards (e.g. setbacks) compared to the RR code.

Alternative 1 may still preclude apartments, multiple-family dwellings, or accessory dwelling units (ADUs) because of the size limitations of properties and their ability to accommodate a permitted on-site drain field. That is not to say higher density development cannot occur, it may just take the form of small units that have a limited number of bedrooms and are sited in such a way that accommodates an appropriately sized drainfield, or through lot consolidations. Per state law, ADUs may not be located on properties less than two acres, even if on-site septic capability exists. A hotel development would not be allowed in Alternative 1 because state law requires hotels to be connected to a community sewer system.

### **Community Boundary**

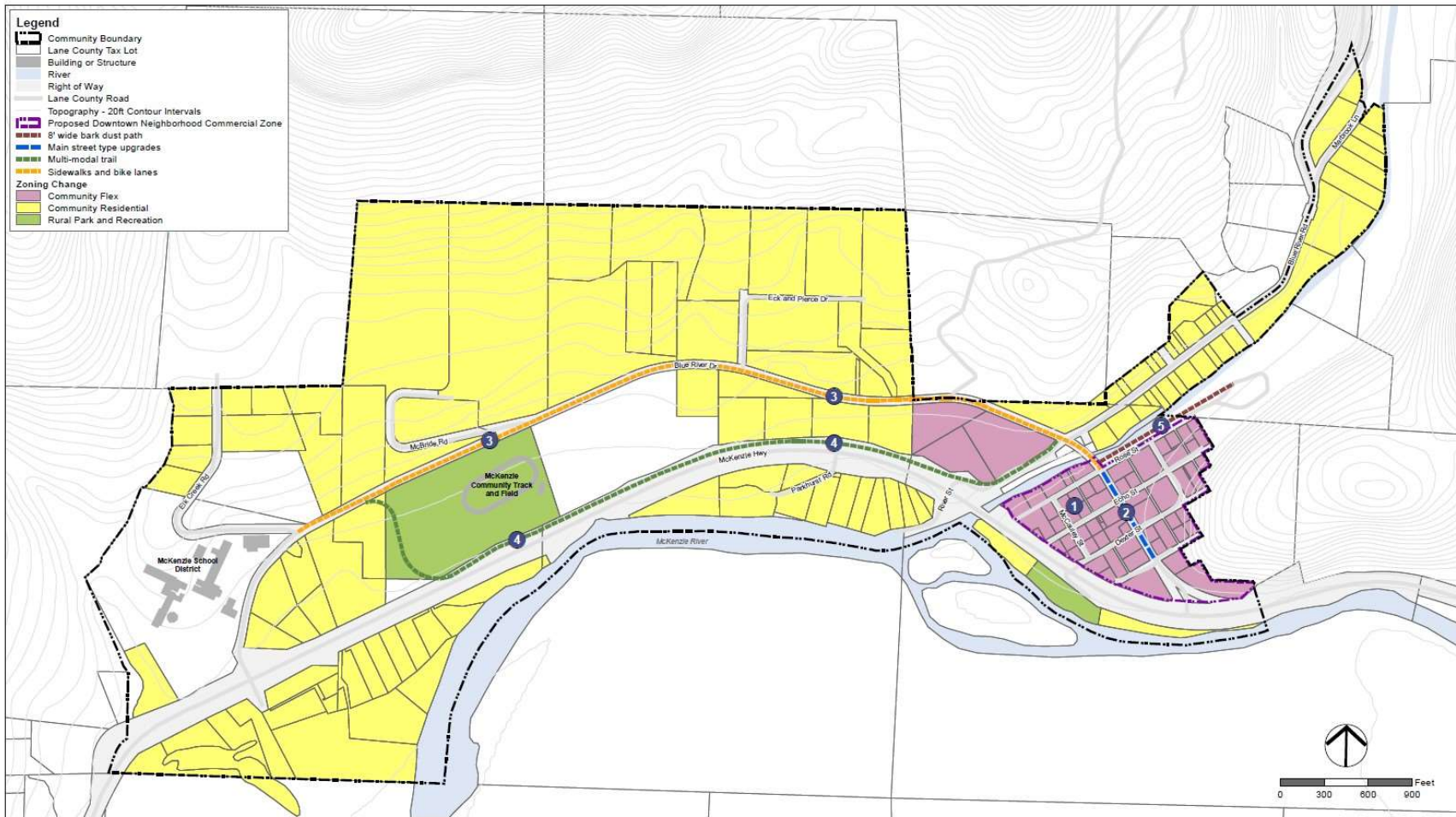
There are no proposed changes to the community boundary in Alternative 1.

The table below shows the proposed zoning designation, its purpose, densities permitted, allowed uses, and development standards.

## Complete Community Plan Alternative 1 – Downtown Flex

Zone/Overlay	Area	Purpose	Density	Allowed Uses	Development Standards
<b>Community Flex-Use Zone (CF-U)</b>	Downtown Blue River and additional properties across Blue River	To allow for flexibility in community design in the existing Downtown	8,000 square foot minimum lot size	Single-Family Residential Community Commercial Pedestrian Paths and Public Facilities Bike Parking Shared Vehicle Parking Community Spaces Multi-modal paths Home Occupations and Home Businesses Multi-unit Housing or Planned Unit Developments of Smaller Residential Lots With Duplexes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced setbacks, 5' on side streets</li> <li>• Flexibility for Home Occupations and Home Businesses.</li> <li>• No off-street parking minimums for commercial. If off-street parking proposed, shall not be placed between front façade of building and street.</li> </ul>

<b>Community Residential (CR)</b>	All other currently residentially zoned properties within the community boundary	To make the allowance for one-acre properties obvious within the Unincorporated Community	One (1) acre minimum	Single-family Residential and Accessory Uses  ADUs Allowed on Two-acre Properties as Existing Rural Residential Allows  Home Businesses More Flexible and Continued Allowance of Home Occupations  Public and Semi-public Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See standards of Rural Residential (Lane Code 16.290)</li> </ul>
<b>Other Concept Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue River Drive improvements west of the bridge.</li> <li>• Community signage along Highway 126.</li> <li>• Community bike parking and repair station.</li> <li>• Shared off-street parking location.</li> <li>• Multi-modal trail from downtown to school</li> <li>• Bark dust path from downtown to Blue River Park</li> <li>• Remove industrial zoning from community altogether.</li> <li>• Rezone Forest Glen Wayside and remainder of McKenzie Track property to Rural Park and Recreation (RPR).</li> <li>• Zero minimum parking requirements (this is an exemption from Lane County Code).</li> <li>• Sidewalks on Blue River Drive.</li> <li>• Street improvements (lighting, landscaping, etc.).</li> </ul>				



## Community Plan Alternative 1

No change to existing wastewater systems.

- 1 - Designate as Downtown Neighborhood Commercial Area
  - 2 - Blue River Drive upgrades (Downtown only)
  - 3 - Blue River Drive upgrades (not in Downtown)
  - 4 - Conceptual multi-modal trail
  - 5 - Conceptual bark dust path from downtown area to Blue River Park
- Note: Tax lots with color have been re-zoned



## 2.0 Community Plan Alternative 2 – Blue River Drive Flex

### 2.1 Description

Alternative 2 presents a concept with additional wastewater capacity in the form of a community drainfield sited on the Blue River Park property. The park is currently not within the Community Boundary but would be brought into the boundary under this Alternative. The potential drainfield is currently estimated to be able to treat 2,500 GPD. At this size, it is estimated that the community drainfield could serve about eight two-bedroom single family dwellings, or a scale of commercial development.

Residents of Blue River want to maintain a sense of identity and pride in the scenic river valley location. In Alternative 2, this desire is addressed by adding an overlay for development standards along Blue River Drive to create a space where businesses and residences can become the face of the community. Lane County is currently processing land use applications and building permits for a library, medical clinic, and general store along Blue River Drive in downtown. Blue River Drive is the main road through the downtown, and adding requirements for new buildings to engage with the street may create a more centered, identifiable downtown Blue River.

Alternative 2 starts with the same flexible use zoning concept in downtown Blue River as Alternative 1 and then builds on it further with Blue River Drive-oriented development and additional wastewater capacity from a drainfield on Blue River Park. In Alternative 2 the community drainfield would serve a mix of downtown uses. Also in Alternative 2 the Three Sisters Meadow park is presented as a Community Flex-Use zone and informational signage discussing connecting Blue River to its long historic past is included.

Alternative 2 continues to place an emphasis on the downtown area, allowing flexibility in the permitted uses and encouraging street-facing commercial along Blue River Drive. It also continues to emphasize safe multi-modal transportation and recreation opportunities connecting Blue River west to east. Alternative 2 may change the intensity of uses allowed in the Blue River Park if much of the area needs to be dedicated to the drainfield because the land over the drainfield may not be penetrated. However, drainfield siting may further aid in redevelopment along Blue River Drive in the downtown area.

### 2.2 Alternative 2 Characteristics

Alternative 2 proposes Community Flex-Use zoning on the entire 16-acre Three Sisters Meadow property in addition to the downtown area. Multi-modal recreation paths are still envisioned to connect the school to the downtown through the parks and light residential areas in between.

Alternative 2 includes an option for commemorative plaques or signage to acknowledge the impact that the Holiday Farm Fire of 2020 had on this resilient community. Finally, an Alternative 2 proposes recreational trails along the McKenzie River, which is across the Highway 126 from the community but capitalizes on the County-owned and maintained boat launch directly across from one of the community's entrances. The extent to which future development occurs at this site will be guided by Lane County Parks department.

Alternative 2 will require the same regulatory changes identified in Alternative 1, with additional development standards along Blue River Drive. The overlay for commercial development would require businesses to face the street, relax setbacks, require any off-street parking to be placed behind the building and include bike parking. Alternative 2 also proposes a desire for sidewalks along Blue River Drive.

In summary Alternative 2 will require incorporation of the Blue River Park into the community boundary, a rezone of the Three Sisters Meadow property to Community Flex-Use, signage that pays tribute to the Holiday Farm Fire, and utilization of the existing Lane County-owned boat launch across Highway 126 from Blue River's downtown.

The proposed changes would still largely be implemented as amendments to Lane Code as two new zoning districts and a new overlay:

1. *Community Commercial Zone (CC)* – A new district to allow buildings closer to the property line along Blue River Drive, allow for ground-floor commercial uses and second and third floor residential, and require parking in the back and the buildings to face the street and with no off-street parking minimums. If off-street parking is provided it shall not be placed in between the front façade of the building and the street. **Additional code language may be added regarding what is further allowed if connected to the community drainfield for commercial uses in this district.**
2. *Community Flex-Use Zone (CF-U)* – A new district to allow flexibility in residential and commercial uses in denser neighborhoods than typically allowed in Lane County.
3. *Community Residential Zone (CR)* – A new district to exhibit the allowance of one (1) acre lots on the rest of the Rural Residentially zoned properties. It could also be used to find opportunities to reduce residential development standards (e.g. setbacks) compared to the RR code.

Alternative 2 would also include amendments to the existing Park and Recreation zone (Lane Code 16.215) in order to ensure that community drainfields are allowed and to consider what uses may be designated on top of the drainfield. The biggest regulatory change associated with this alternative is incorporating the Blue River Park into the community boundary, and then amending the zoning to allow for community drainfields that serve the unincorporated

community. The Blue River Park remains an asset to the people of Blue River and this community concept does not intend to take away recreational opportunities that the people already appreciate. However, if the park were to be used for a community drainfield, a portion of the space could not be developed upon.

### **Community Boundary**

Alternative 2 would require a change in the Unincorporated Community’s boundary. The goal of the boundary adjustment would be to enable a community drainfield on the Blue River Park site by amending the Park and Recreation Zone to include such an allowance.

The table below shows the proposed zoning designation, its purpose, densities permitted, allowed uses, and development standards. *Green bolded text* signifies a variation from the Conceptual Development Alternative 1 Matrix.

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## Community Plan Alternative 2 – Blue River Drive Flex Matrix

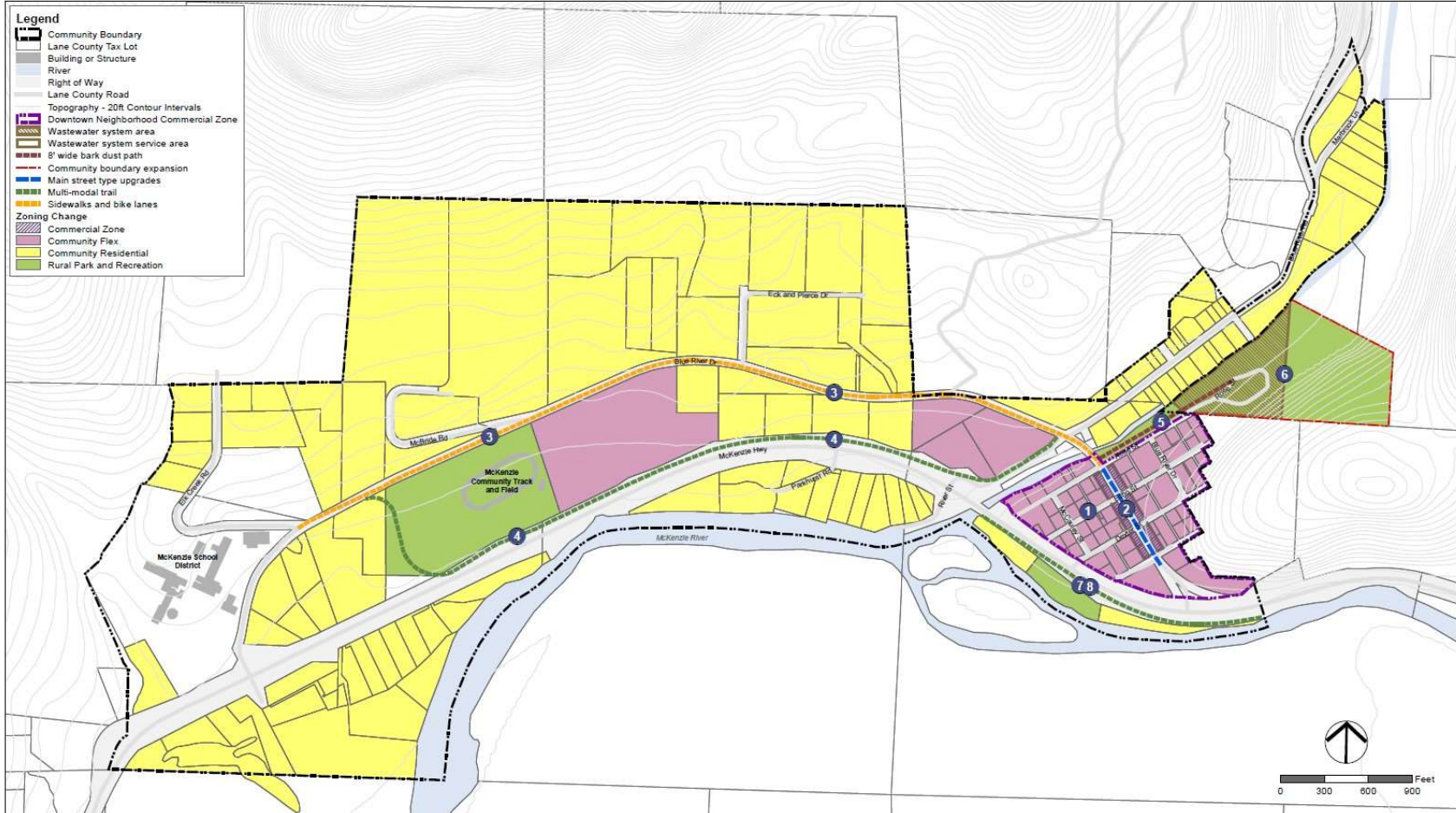
Zone/Overlay	Area	Purpose	Density	Allowed Uses	Development Standards
<b>Blue River Drive Overlay</b>	Properties along Blue River Drive in Downtown Blue River	To create a central community identity along the main road in the Downtown area of Blue River	Base zone density applies (Community Flex-Use)	Base zone uses apply (Community Flex-Use)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalks on Blue River Drive.</li> <li>• Street-facing entrances to homes and businesses.</li> <li>• Reduced setbacks on Blue River Drive: 0-10' minimum (flexible to allow pedestrian scale amenities on sidewalks).</li> <li>• Reduced side yard setbacks: 0' for attached units; 5' for detached units.</li> <li>• No off-street parking minimums. If off-street parking proposed, shall not be located between front façade of building and street.</li> <li>• Bike parking requirements for commercial uses.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Flex-Use Zone (CF-U)</b>	Downtown Blue River, additional properties across Blue River, and Three Sisters Meadow Site	To allow for flexibility in community design in the existing Downtown	8,000 square foot minimum lot size downtown  <i>Minimum lot size based on typical minimum lot size that will</i>	Single-Family Residential  Community Commercial  Pedestrian Paths and Public Facilities  Bike Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced setbacks, 5' on side streets.</li> <li>• Flexibility for Home Occupations and Home Businesses.</li> <li>• No off-street parking minimums for commercial. If off-street parking proposed, shall not be placed between</li> </ul>

			<i>fit a septic system outside of downtown</i>	<p>Shared Vehicle Parking</p> <p>Community Spaces</p> <p>Multi-modal paths</p> <p>Home Occupations and Home Businesses</p> <p>Multi-unit Housing or Planned Unit Developments of Smaller Residential Lots with Duplexes</p> <p>Public and Semi-public Buildings</p>	front façade of building and street.
<b>Parks and Recreation (Enhanced Existing Lane Code 16.215)</b>	<b><i>Blue River Park Property</i></b>	To update the existing Blue River Park zoning to better suit the community needs	No minimum lot size	<p>Public Facilities <i>to include Community Drainfield</i></p> <p>Community Spaces (gardens, compost, playgrounds)</p> <p>Parks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See existing park zoning Rural Park and Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Park uses as a Type II land use application.</li> <li>○ Uses shall minimize adverse effects on abutting uses.</li> <li>○ Uses shall not exceed the carrying capacity of the soil.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public and semi-public structures don't clearly include community drainfield language, add code to make it clear.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Residential</b>	All other currently residentially zoned properties within the community boundary	To make the allowance for one-acre properties obvious within the Unincorporated Community	One (1) acre minimum	<p>Single-family Residential and Accessory Uses</p> <p>ADUs Allowed on Two-acre Properties as Existing Rural Residential Allows</p> <p>Home Businesses more flexible and Continued Allowance of Home Occupations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See standards of Rural Residential (Lane Code 16.290)</li> </ul>
<b>Other Concept Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blue River Drive improvements west of the bridge.</li> <li>Community signage along Highway 126.</li> <li>Community bike parking and repair station.</li> <li>Shared off-street parking location.</li> <li>Multi-modal trail from downtown to the school.</li> <li>Bark dust path from downtown area to Blue River Park.</li> <li>Remove all Industrial Zoning from the community.</li> <li>Rezone Forest Glen Wayside and remainder of McKenzie Track property to Rural Park and Recreation (RPR).</li> <li><b><i>Incorporate Blue River Park into Community boundary.</i></b></li> <li><b><i>Holiday Farm Fire commemoration plaque or other community-identifying art/information.</i></b></li> </ul>				

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|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Recreation trails at Lane County's boat launch across from the Dexter Street -Highway 126 west connection.</i></li></ul> |
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## Community Plan Alternative 2

Potential wastewater system with drainfield at Blue River Park servicing commercial uses in the Downtown area along Blue River Drive. Capacity is 2,500 gallons per day. All other development is on individual septic systems.

- 1 - Designate as Downtown Neighborhood Commercial Area
  - 2 - Blue River Drive upgrades (Downtown only)
  - 3 - Blue River Drive upgrades (not in Downtown)
  - 4 - Conceptual multi-modal trail
  - 5 - Conceptual bark dust path from downtown area to Blue River Park
  - 6 - Incorporate Blue River Park
  - 7 - Parking on river side of Highway 126
  - 8 - Conceptual recreation trail
- Note: Tax lots with color have been re-zoned



## 3.0 Community Plan Alternative 3 – Downtown Commercial

### 3.1 Description

Alternative 3 builds off of the flexibility of Alternative 1 and the Blue River Park drainfield as well as downtown development standards of Alternative 2, but with the addition of a drainfield on the Three Sisters Meadow property to serve a mix of a flexible uses, and a new zoning along Blue River Drive that incentivizes ground-floor commercial uses. The wastewater infrastructure in this Alternative is intended for a scale of commercial uses along Blue River Drive to implement the vision of more dense, multi-story, mixed use development. At this time the community drainfield on the Three Sisters Meadow site is estimated to have a capacity of 5,000 gallons per day, which is twice the capacity of the potential Blue River Park community drainfield. Further analysis is underway and will determine actual capacity.

Like Alternatives 1 and 2, the basis of Alternative 3 is to promote a stronger community identity as well as an emphasis on flexibility, multi-modal transportation and recreation that increases community connectivity, and slightly higher density within the community boundary. The main difference is the emphasis on commercial uses along Blue River Drive. In the new Community Commercial zoning district (further discussed below), ground-floor commercial uses are allowed outright in the blocks on either side of Blue River Drive, while stand-alone residential uses are allowed conditionally. Mixed-uses are encouraged and a residential use in conjunction with a primary commercial use would be allowed outright as well. Similar development standards that are seen in the Blue River Drive Overlay of Alternative 2 are carried forward in order to continue a street-facing engagement with the main road through town. In this concept, Blue River Drive continues to be seen as a walkable hub of activity for the community with businesses to visit. Denser development within this zone is more likely to be feasible with the ability to connect to the Blue River Park community drainfield, which is also carried forward from Alternative 2.

This community plan alternative also presents the Three Sisters Meadow property as Community Flex-Use, with the potential for a drainfield to serve uses ultimately planned on the property. The site is currently owned by McKenzie River Trust and was dedicated to serve the public, the future of this property will be dependent upon the public feedback that private developers receive.

### 3.2 Alternative 3 Characteristics

The main difference in the characteristics of Alternative 3 is increased emphasis on commercial and mixed uses along Blue River Drive, and additional development standards within the

Community Flex-Use zone that would apply to the Three Sisters Meadow property if a community drainfield allows for some form of planned higher-density development.

The proposed zoning on the Three Sisters Meadow site is *Community Flex-Use (CF-U)*, as in Alternative 2, but with additional development standards for road network connectivity, street grids, block lengths, park and open space requirements, parking location and more. This may also require updates to Lane Code Chapter 15 Roads. This alternative continues to incorporate multi-modal transportation connectivity through Blue River Drive updates and recreational trails throughout.

The maximum area for the community drainfield is shown on the east side of the site.

The changes would still largely be attributed to amendments to Lane Code. Changes from Alternative 1 are bolded below:

1. *Community Commercial Zone (CC)* – A new district to allow buildings closer to the property line along Blue River Drive, allow for ground-floor commercial uses with second and third floor residential, buildings that face Blue River Drive, and place any provided off-street parking away from the Blue River Drive frontage with no off-street parking minimums. Additional code language will be added regarding what is further allowed if connected to the community drainfield for commercial uses in this district.
2. *Community Flex-Use Zone (CF-U)* – A new district to allow flexibility in residential and commercial uses in denser neighborhoods than typically allowed in Lane County. **Additional code language will be added to include development standards for neighborhoods connected to the community drainfield.**
3. *Community Residential Zone (CR)* – A new district to exhibit the allowance of one (1) acre lots on the rest of the Rural Residentially zoned properties. It could also be used to find opportunities to reduce residential development standards (e.g. setbacks) compared to the RR code.

Alternative 3 would also include amendments to the existing Park and Recreation zone (Lane Code 16.215) in order to ensure that community drainfields are allowed and to consider what uses may be designated on top of the drainfield. The biggest regulatory change associated with this alternative is incorporating the Blue River Park into the community boundary, and then amending the zoning to allow for community drainfields that serve the unincorporated community. The Blue River Park remains an asset to the people of Blue River and this community concept does not intend to take away recreational opportunities that the people already appreciate. However, if the park were to be used for a community drainfield, a portion of the space could not be developed upon.

Besides providing for flexibility with specific design standards for the Three Sisters Meadow property, this alternative contemplates additional community signage to commemorate the McKenzie River Trust.

### **Community Boundary**

Alternative 3 would require a change in the Unincorporated Community's boundary. The goal of the boundary adjustment would be to enable a community drainfield on the Blue River Park site by amending the Park and Recreation Zone to include such an allowance.

The table below shows the proposed zoning designation, its purpose, densities permitted, allowed uses, and development standards. **Blue bolded text** signifies a variation from the Conceptual Development Alternative 1 Matrix.

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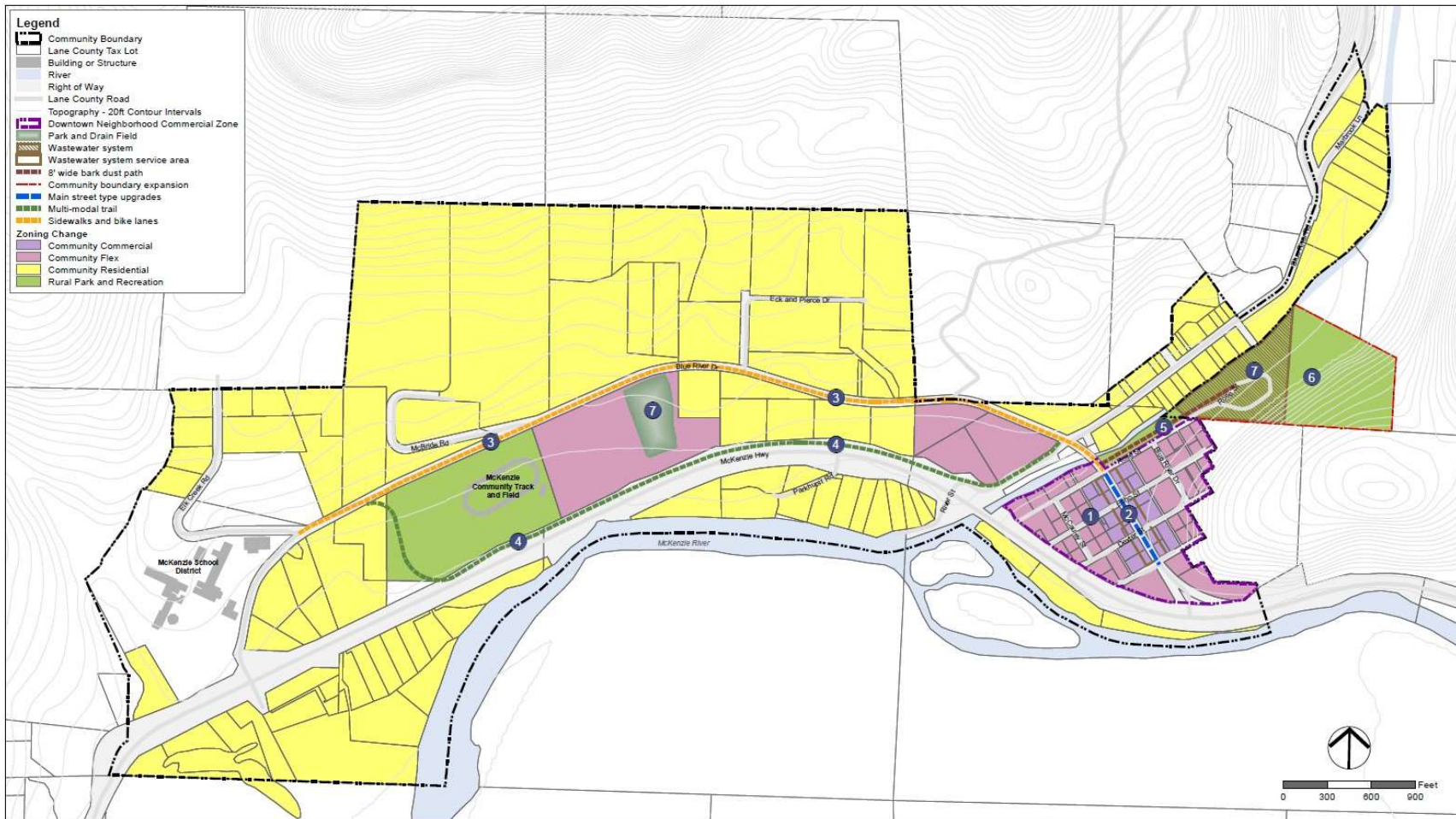
## Community Plan Alternative 3 – Downtown Commercial Matrix

Zone/Overlay	Area	Purpose	Density	Allowed Uses	Development Standards
<b>Community Commercial</b>	Along Blue River Drive in Downtown Blue River	To create a central community identity along the main road in the Downtown area of Blue River <i>and encourage commercial development through community drainfield connection</i>	Commercial and residential uses limited by wastewater capacity	Community Commercial Mixed-Uses; Ground Floor Commercial and Second Story Residential Home Occupations and Businesses Single and Multi-family Residential as Conditional Uses Public Facilities (to include vehicle parking, bike parking and pedestrian paths)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian Infrastructure on Blue River Drive.</li> <li>• Street-facing business entrances.</li> <li>• Reduced setbacks on Blue River Drive: 0-10' maximum (flexible to allow pedestrian scale amenities on sidewalks).</li> <li>• Reduced side yard setbacks: 0' for attached units; 5' for detached units.</li> <li>• No off-street parking minimums. If off-street parking proposed shall not be located between front facing façade of building and street. Parking and accessory buildings required to be located in the rear.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Flex-Use Zone (CF-U)</b>	The rest of "Downtown" Blue River,	To allow for flexibility in community	8,000 Square Foot	Single-Family Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced setbacks, 5' on side streets.</li> <li>• Bike parking requirements</li> </ul>

	<p>additional properties across Blue River, <i>and the Three Sisters Meadow property</i></p>	<p>design in the existing “downtown area,” including the three properties west of the river, <i>and new development on the Three Sisters Meadow property</i></p>	<p>Minimum Lot Size</p> <p><i>All residential densities allowed on Three Sisters Meadow property</i></p>	<p>Community Commercial</p> <p>Pedestrian Paths and Public Facilities</p> <p>Bike Parking</p> <p>Shared Vehicle Parking</p> <p>Community Spaces</p> <p>Multi-modal Paths</p> <p>Home Occupations and Home Businesses</p> <p>Multi-unit Housing or Planned Unit Developments of Smaller Residential Lots with Duplexes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility for Home Occupations and Home Businesses.</li> <li>• Multi-unit housing or Planned Unit Development of smaller residential lots with duplexes <i>with community drainfield access.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Transportation connectivity required.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Street grids and pedestrian-friendly block lengths required.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Pedestrian friendly street cross-section. Consideration of surrounding uses when orienting residential uses and other uses.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Flexible mixed-use allowance (commercial and high-density residential).</i></li> <li>○ <i>Park and open space standards.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Recreation trail connectivity to surrounding uses and community centers (i.e. school, track, downtown).</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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				Public and Semi-public Buildings	
<b>Parks and Recreation (Enhanced Existing Lane Code 16.215)</b>	<b>Blue River Park Property</b>	To update the existing Blue River Park zoning to better suit the community needs	No minimum lot size	Public Facilities <b>to include Community Drainfield</b>  Community Spaces (gardens, compost, playgrounds)  Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See existing park zoning Rural Park and Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Park uses as a Type II land use application.</li> <li>○ Uses shall minimize adverse effects on abutting uses.</li> <li>○ Uses shall not exceed the carrying capacity of the soil.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Public and semi-public structures don't clearly include community drainfield language, add code to make it clear.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Residential</b>	All other currently residentially zoned properties within the community boundary	To make the allowance for one-acre properties obvious within the Unincorporated Community	One (1) acre minimum	Single-family Residential and Accessory Uses  ADUs Allowed on Two-acre Properties as Existing Rural Residential Allows  Home Businesses more flexible and Continued Allowance of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See standards of Rural Residential (Lane Code 16.290)</li> </ul>

				Home Occupations	
<b>Other Concept Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue River Drive improvements west of the bridge.</li> <li>• Signage along Highway 126.</li> <li>• Community bike parking and repair station.</li> <li>• Shared off-street parking location.</li> <li>• Multi-modal trail from downtown to the school.</li> <li>• Bark dust path from downtown area to Blue River Park.</li> <li>• Remove all Industrial Zoning from the community.</li> <li>• Rezone Forest Glen Wayside and remainder of McKenzie Track property to Rural Park and Recreation (RPR).</li> <li>• <i>Street improvements (lighting, landscaping, etc.).</i></li> <li>• <i>McKenzie River Trust memorial plaque.</i></li> </ul>				



## Community Plan Alternative 3

Potential for wastewater system with drainfield at Three Sisters Meadow site servicing new commercial and residential development at Three Sisters Meadow site. Additional community wastewater system with drainfield at Blue River Park servicing commercial uses in the Downtown area along Blue River Drive. All other development is on individual septic systems.

- 1 - Designate as Downtown Neighborhood Commercial Area
- 2 - Blue River Drive upgrades (Downtown only)
- 3 - Blue River Drive upgrades (not in Downtown)
- 4 - Conceptual multi-modal trail
- 5 - Conceptual bark dust path from downtown area to Blue River Park
- 6 - Incorporate Blue River Park

- 7 - Approved community drainfield locations
- Note: Tax lots with color have a been re-zoned



## 4.0 Summary & Comparison

The three Community Plan Alternatives offers options for envisioning the future of the Blue River community and are intended to provide some more concrete ideas to compare, discuss, change, or support. This is the first time in this project's timeline that the gap between ideas and implementation is starting to be bridged. The drafting of these alternatives will be collaborative and iterative and will thus provide a solid basis for the composition of the Blue River Complete Community Plan. The Alternatives present a variety of concepts that support a greater theme for each alternative, but no one theme must be chosen for the Complete Community Plan. The concepts and the tools proposed within Alternatives (zones, uses, development standards, other features, etc.) can be mixed and matched. Separate aspects of each Alternative will be discussed, and ultimately it is likely that the Complete Community plan will be a combination of the attributes of each Alternative that are of most interest to the community.

### **In summary:**

- Alternative 1 proposes code changes that would allow for flexibility in redeveloping residential and commercial uses downtown, promote opportunities for recreation and multi-modal trail connectivity, as well as zoning flexibility and streamlined development opportunities while maintaining individual septic systems.
- Alternative 2 is the concept based on a community drainfield being built on the Blue River Park property and centering the downtown area along Blue River Drive. This concept extends the flexible zoning type to the Three Sisters Meadow property. It would require a change to the community boundary in order to bring the Park site into the community.
- Alternative 3 is the concept based on an increased emphasis around commercial uses along Blue River Drive. It also considers additional impact of a community drainfield being built on the Three Sisters Meadow property, which would come with some specific development standards and a discretionary approval process to achieve outcomes in line with the project objectives. It more heavily emphasizes commercial and mixed uses downtown.
- A custom alternative that blends elements from each alternative is also a possibility and may be selected as the preferred alternative.

Each of the alternatives incorporates a new Community Flex-Use zone to a varying degree. Alternative 1 relies heavily on this new zone, and an additional Community Residential zone for the properties outside of the downtown area. Alternative 2 is similar but incorporates a new Blue River Drive overlay and incorporates the Blue River Park into the community boundary in

order to accommodate a community drainfield. Alternative 3 swaps out the Blue River Drive Overlay of Alternative 2 with a more commercial oriented new zoning district, Community Commercial zone. The existing Lane County Park and Recreation zone may be enhanced to add uses such as a sports complex, trails, or a community drainfield if need be. These zones will all focus on residential, light commercial and community/recreational uses. They do not propose major changes in the character of the community beyond varying densities of the aforementioned uses. The Alternatives reflect both project objectives and community feedback to create several scenarios for what the future of Blue River might look like. One full of pride, resilience and intentional incorporation of the natural beauty and recreational opportunities that make the community unique.

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