



Meeting Minutes

BMPO Policy Board

Location: Baney Conference Room (ODOT Region 4 Headquarters, Building M)
63055 N. Highway 97, Bend, Oregon

Date: February 20, 2026

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Prepared by: ABC Transcription Services, LLC.

In Attendance

Members

1. Chair Ariel “Ari” Méndez, Bend City Councilor
2. Mike Riley, Bend City Councilor, arrived at 12:30 p.m.
3. Emerald Shirley, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Interim Central Oregon and Lower John Day Area Manager

Non-voting Members

1. Bob Townsend, Cascades East Transit (CET) Director

Member Alternates

1. Tarik Rawlings, Deschutes County

BMPO Staff and Other Attendees

1. Tyler Deke, BMPO Manager
2. Kelli Kennedy, BMPO Program Coordinator
3. Kymala Lutz, City of Bend, left at 12:17 p.m.
4. David Abbas, City of Bend
5. Jovi Arellano, ODOT

Notes

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Méndez called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. with a quorum established.

2. Hybrid Meeting Guidelines

Manager Deke reviewed the meeting guidelines.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

The Board proceeded to Agenda Item 5 at this time.

4. Elect Chair and Vice Chair for 2026

This item was addressed directly following Agenda Item 8.

The Board briefly discussed Chair and Vice Chair nominations for 2026.

Motion 4: Mike Riley moved that Ariel Méndez serve as Chair and Mike Riley serve as Vice Chair of the BMPO Policy Board for 2026. Emerald Shirley seconded the motion which passed 3 to 0 to 1.

(Ayes: Méndez (City of Bend), Shirley (ODOT), Riley (City of Bend). Nays: None. Abstain: Rawlings (Deschutes County).)

The Board proceeded to Agenda Item 9 at this time.

5. Meeting Minutes

Materials referenced: January 16, 2026, BMPO Policy Board draft meeting minutes (Attachment A in agenda packet).

This item was addressed directly following Agenda Item 3.

Motion 1: Emerald Shirley moved approval of the January 16, 2026, Policy Board draft meeting minutes as presented. Ariel Méndez seconded the motion which passed 3 to 0.

(Ayes: Méndez (City of Bend), Shirley (ODOT), Rawlings (Deschutes County). Nays: None.)

6. Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Annual Financial Report

Materials referenced: A link was provided to the **BMPO Work Program & Budget webpage**

Kymala Lutz provided a brief overview of the audited financial statements for the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2025. The audit, performed by Baker Tilly under contract with the City of Bend, returned unmodified with no issues noted. She encouraged Board members to read the Management Discussion and Analysis portion of the audit report. Due to structural changes at ODOT, the BMPO would maintain a positive net position for the foreseeable future.

Staff confirmed remaining COVID funds would be expended before the deadline in 2029.

Motion 2: Emerald Shirley moved to accept the fiscal year 2024 – 2025 BMPO Annual Financial Report. Ariel Méndez seconded the motion which passed 3 to 0.

(Ayes: Méndez (City of Bend), Shirley (ODOT), Rawlings (Deschutes County). Nays: None.)

7. 2024 – 2027 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) Amendment

Materials referenced: A link was provided to the **Transportation News Release**. The full 2024 – 2027 MTIP document was available on the **BMPO MTIP webpage**.

Kelli Kennedy presented a proposed 2024 – 2027 MTIP amendment which would advance delivery of the preliminary engineering phase of ODOT's US-97 Corridor Phase 2 project from 2027 to 2026. No comments were received during the public comment period.

Emerald Shirley explained the project would address as many poor and failing culverts along the US-97 corridor as possible with the available funding.

Motion 3: Emerald Shirley moved to approve the proposed amendment to the 2024 – 2027 MTIP, as presented. Ariel Méndez seconded the motion which passed 3 to 0. (Ayes: Méndez (City of Bend), Shirley (ODOT), Rawlings (Deschutes County). Nays: None.)

8. 2027 – 2030 MTIP – Draft Review

Materials referenced: Links were provided to the **Draft 2027 - 2030 MTIP** and the **BMPO MTIP webpage**.

Manager Deke presented an overview of the draft 2027 – 2030 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) document which identified transportation projects and programs scheduled in the BMPO area over the next four years. He shared a project summary list and confirmed all the City’s listed projects had construction funding identified except the Big Sky Trail planning study. He shared a table of total draft funding amounts, outlined the MTIP adoption timeline and requested that two Board members volunteer to review the full 2027 – 2030 MTIP document.

Emerald Shirley explained the project summary list only included ODOT’s 2027 projects. ODOT had changed to adopting projects year-by-year and planned to present an amendment each year to add more projects or project phases to the MTIP. Some projects or project phases were fully funded but would not be programmed into the MTIP until later. For example, funding was shown for the Knott Rd project phase that would occur in 2027, but construction funds were being held until the construction phase, which would be added to the MTIP in 2028. She shared a scoping exhibit of the Knott Rd multiuse path and noted ODOT was working with Bend Parks and Recreation to consider potentially connecting to the Lava Butte multiuse path along US-97.

Discussion ensued over the potential for the City to cohesively address the entire Knott Rd corridor in conjunction with ODOT’s work on the multiuse path at Knott Rd, and the possibility to connect to other paths to avoid leaving gaps. Staff would return with more information about the future plans for the Knott Rd corridor.

Questions were addressed about seeking locations in Bend for two Mobility Points, which were funded through the Carbon Reduction Program, in addition to the Mobility Hubs funded through the GO Bond, and the split between federal transit funding and other federal funding passed through local entities like CET or Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC), which often served as the required match funds for receiving federal dollars.

Chair Méndez and Mike Riley volunteered to review the full draft 2027 – 2030 MTIP document. All Board members were encouraged to review the draft MTIP document, or sections of interest, and provide comments to Staff by March 3, 2026.

The Board returned to Agenda Item 4 at this time.

9. Federal Safety Targets

Materials referenced: Safety Targets Memo (Attachment B in agenda packet).

This item was addressed directly following Agenda Item 4.

Manager Deke reviewed federal safety performance measures that the BMPO was federally required to monitor and report. ODOT was required to establish safety performance measure targets yearly, and the BMPO could support ODOT's safety performance measure targets or create its own targets by the end of February. Staff recommended adopting ODOT's targets and applying them to Bend's Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP) Update data in the future to create local safety performance measure targets.

Questions were addressed about the goal to develop local safety performance measure targets in 2027 based on Bend's TSAP data; ODOT's safety performance measure targets currently being reviewed during the statewide TSAP update; anticipated crash trends based on the existing statewide TSAP; safety targets being set initially in the statewide TSAP and reviewed by ODOT yearly; the applicability of ODOT's safety target methodology to the local area; the City's recent safety investments making crash reductions potentially achievable; and ODOT's safety targets being unrealistic due to the inability to invest in large safety improvement projects.

Motion 5: Mike Riley moved to support the adopted ODOT safety performance measure targets. Emerald Shirley seconded the motion which passed 4 to 0.

(Ayes: Méndez (City of Bend), Shirley (ODOT), Riley (City of Bend), Rawlings (Deschutes County)
Nays: None.)

10. State Legislative Bill Letter of Support

Materials referenced: Senate Bill 1544 draft letter of support (Attachment C in agenda packet).

Manager Deke provided an overview of SB 1544 which would modify the list of qualified entities eligible to receive and distribute Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) revenues to include intergovernmental entities such as COIC. If approved, COIC could directly manage regional STIF dollars which could potentially reduce administrative costs, streamline decision-making, and unify the regional approach between jurisdictions, though other sections of the bill had concerning language. The letter of support was worded to focus specifically on the language regarding qualified entities.

Mike Riley had testified to the Senate Transportation Committee on behalf of the City of Bend regarding SB 1544 and he reported the Committee had recommended passing the bill. He had emailed a copy of amendment package five to Policy Board members. There had been some resistance to SB 1544, and concern had been expressed about changing language in the bill from "county" to "counties" to ensure multiple counties would be served. Legal advice was being sought, and there would probably be a final amendment at some point. He supported advocating for SB 1544 amendment package five, despite problems in the rest of the bill.

Bob Townsend described how ambiguity in the amendment language could impact funding for counties and local tribes. He stated Senate President Wagner had sent SB 1544 to Ways and Means, which could potentially delay or derail the bill.

The Board agreed on reflecting the BMPO's support for Amendment Package 5 by referring to "SB 1544-5" in subject lines and throughout the letter, adding a sentence to clarify that the ODOT representative on the Policy Board abstained, and adding the title "MPO Chair".

Motion 6: Mike Riley moved approval of the letter of support for the Senate Bill 1544-5 Qualified Entities, as amended. Ariel Méndez seconded the motion which passed 3 to 0 to 1. (Ayes: Méndez (City of Bend), Riley (City of Bend), Rawlings (Deschutes County) Nays: None. Abstain: Shirley (ODOT).)

11. Deschutes County & ODOT BUILD Applications – BMPO Letters of Support

Materials referenced: Deschutes County project flyer (Attachment D in agenda packet).

Deschutes County BUILD application draft letter of support (Attachment E in agenda packet).

ODOT BUILD application draft letter of support (Attachment F in agenda packet).

Manager Deke stated the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant program provided funding for surface transportation infrastructure projects with significant local or regional impact. Deschutes County would be submitting a planning grant application for the proposed US-97 Deschutes River Woods (DRW) interchange to conduct planning, complete preliminary design, and obtain environmental clearances. ODOT would submit a grant application to construct safety improvements on US-97 between Terrebonne and Madras.

Chair Méndez supported wildfire planning and egress for DRW but questioned applying for a \$43 million grant to put a freeway interchange in a rural community neighborhood without sidewalks or urban street standards, potentially increasing VMTs and undermining safety and carbon reduction goals; however, he would support the letter based on previous discussions.

Emerald Shirley shared a scope exhibit of ODOT's US-97 safety improvement project which would install a barrier and widen the road shoulder on US-97 along Juniper Butte just south of Madras, as identified in a recent safety study. She confirmed the project had received support from Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation (COACT).

Motion 7: Mike Riley moved approval of the letters of support for the Deschutes County and ODOT BUILD grant applications. Emerald Shirley seconded the motion which passed 4 to 0. (Ayes: Méndez (City of Bend), Shirley (ODOT), Riley (City of Bend), Rawlings (Deschutes County) Nays: None.)

12. Federal Fiscal Year 2025 (FFY25) Annual Obligation Report

Materials referenced: A link was provided to the **FFY25 Annual Obligation Report**

Kelli Kennedy provided an overview of the FFY25 Annual Obligation Report, which was required for all BMPO area projects and programs that received federal transportation funding obligations between October 1, 2024, and September 30, 2025. She reviewed FFY25 obligations funding sources and projects.

13. Other Business

Federal surface transportation legislation update: Manager Deke stated current federal surface transportation legislation would expire at the end of September 2026 and Congress was beginning to build the next multi-year transportation bill. The Association of MPOs, National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, and other agencies were collaborating to influence the developing legislation and had created a toolkit to help MPOs easily provide input or draft letters of support. A draft piece of legislation called the Basics Act was introduced in the last week with a focus on maintenance and preserving infrastructure, streamlining grant programs, and completing safety projects. House and Senate leadership were showing interest in moving forward due to anticipating changes after the November election.

Emerald Shirley confirmed ODOT did not want to cancel projects due to federal funding obligations. ODOT was already reducing urbanization type capital projects in the future. She stated the Basics Act would amend the formula to make it easier to support local, rural, and regional planning directly.

Oregon legislative session update: Manager Deke did not believe ODOT's funding issues were being addressed in a meaningful way. Emerald Shirley expected there would be a budget bill rather than a transportation funding bill. Chair Méndez described political tactics being used such as denying quorum.

Policy Board member agenda item requests:

Staff would return with more information about draft letters for providing input on federal transportation legislation at an upcoming Policy Board meeting.

The next scheduled meeting of the Policy Board would be March 31, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. Potential topics for the next meeting were reviewed. The BMPO Budget Committee was scheduled to meet March 17, 2026 at 12:30 p.m. at City Hall.

14. Public Comment

There was none.

15. Adjourn

Chair Méndez adjourned the meeting at 1:46 p.m.



Accommodation Information for People with Disabilities & Language Assistance Services

You can obtain this information in alternate formats such as Braille, electronic format, etc. Free language assistance services are also available. Please email accessibility@bendoregon.gov or call 541-693-2198. Relay Users Dial 7-1-1. All requests are subject to vendor processing times and should be submitted 48-72 hours in advance of events.

Servicios de asistencia lingüística e información sobre alojamiento para personas con discapacidad

Puede obtener esta información en formatos alternativos como Braille, formato electrónico, etc. También disponemos de servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Póngase en contacto en correo electrónico accessibility@bendoregon.gov o número de teléfono 541-693-2198. Los usuarios del servicio de retransmisión deben marcar el 7-1-1. Por favor, envíe sus solicitudes con 48-72 horas de antelación al evento; todas las solicitudes están sujetas a los tiempos de procesamiento del proveedor.