

US 97 Bend Parkway Corridor Vision Concept and Development Plan

Adopted December 18, 2018

Study Purpose and Context

The U.S. 97 Bend Parkway was constructed in phases between 1994 and 2002. At the time the region and the State intended that the Parkway serve through-traffic as a relatively free flowing bypass of the urban area. Certain Parkway design elements (such as right in, right out) were provided on an interim basis, with an intergovernmental agreement that stipulated that ODOT would close or restrict public road connections if they began to affect the safety or function of the Parkway.

The Parkway is a critical part of US 97, a major highway which serves as the most significant north-south route east of the Cascade Range in Oregon. All of US 97 is designated a Statewide Highway and Statewide Freight Route, and is a part of the National Highway System (NHS), providing both inter-urban and inter-regional mobility in support of many communities and interests. As a parallel route to I-5, it offers critical resiliency to Oregon's freight network and is designated a Tier 1/Phase 1 Lifeline Route in case of a major seismic event (e.g., Cascadia).

Since its construction, the Parkway has been an important and successful investment serving statewide, regional, and local interests.

Since the Parkway was completed, the population of Bend has nearly doubled and phase 1 of the Parkway Plan identified significant congestion, safety and reliability issues that are impacting local and regional travel. These challenges are expected to worsen over time as more people move into the region and State, placing more pressure on the US 97 corridor. Bend itself consistently ranks as one of the fastest growing cities in the country with a population that is expected to nearly triple by 2040.

To ensure that the Parkway is able to serve anticipated growth and fulfill its regional and statewide function, it is necessary to explore viable transportation solutions. As a basis for the solutions, the team will facilitate the community and decision makers in forming a **2040 Vision for the Bend Parkway**, compatible with the state's Vision for Highway 97 in Oregon.

Parkway Vision Purpose

The purpose of the Parkway Vision is to ground the exploration and selection of strategies and actions in a common understanding of the purpose and role of the Parkway and provide direction for future changes.

To develop a vision concept, the team reviewed the following materials and identified key themes that describe the nature of the facility and the corridor:

- U.S. 97 Parkway Plan Phase 1 adopted Goals and Objectives
- U.S. 97 Parkway Plan Phase 1 Stakeholder interviews
- Previous Parkway Plan TAC and Policy Board meetings
- Conceptual ODOT Vision for the Parkway developed for the Bend TSP
- Bend TSP Draft Goals

Below is a Vision Concept with potential Elements based on the above purpose, context and inputs, as a Working Vision that will guide the development of the Parkway Plan and will be refined through that planning process.

Vision Concept/Potential Elements

In 2040 the Parkway is a key part of the larger US 97 highway corridor, which has a primary function of providing safe and reliable travel between communities and connections to recreation areas and economic centers with minimal interruptions, including travel to and from Bend as a major regional destination given its many major employment and commercial areas. The Parkway continues to support statewide, regional, and local interests as a critical asset in support of communities and economies, relative to the hierarchy of US 97's national, statewide, and regional designations. Elements of this Vision include:

1. **U.S. 97 Bend Parkway is part of a significant *statewide* route:** U.S. 97 continues to serve as Oregon's primary north/south route east of the Cascades, moving goods and people from border to border and serving as the transportation backbone and economic artery for communities throughout Central Oregon. It is also Oregon's primary seismic lifeline route for interstate commerce and emergency services if I-5 is closed or restricted.
2. **U.S. 97 Bend Parkway is a significant *local* route:** The Parkway through Bend – Central Oregon's economic engine and urban hub – is still the most heavily used section of U.S. 97. In addition to its statewide function, it provides essential connections to the Bend metropolitan area, supporting a vibrant local economy.
3. **U.S. 97 Bend Parkway is facilitating through travel:** The Parkway continues to be designated as an expressway, with a primary function of allowing travel between communities, supporting the regional economy, and providing connections to recreation areas with minimal interruptions.
4. **The U.S. 97 Bend Parkway is fully integrated into the overall Bend multimodal transportation system with strategic on/off ramps, overcrossings/undercrossings, and a strong parallel system that accommodates the community's transportation needs:** The City, Metropolitan Planning Organization, and ODOT have worked with the community to strategically plan and support changes to the area's street network, including the Parkway, to provide for multimodal access to key destinations such as Downtown, area businesses and neighborhoods as part of a cohesive, integrated network.
5. **Local traffic growth is primarily accommodated on the local roadway system:** As Bend grows, the region's transportation authorities have provided the community with a multi-modal transportation system that meets local needs to get around and preserve the function of U.S. 97 and the Parkway.
6. **The U.S. 97 Bend Parkway Corridor is safer for all users and more efficient due to access changes** Crosswalks that are currently directly on the Parkway and some current signalized intersections have been strategically closed or upgraded to an overcrossing or undercrossing. Right-in/right-out local road accesses have been modified or closed for safety.

7. The U.S. 97 Bend Parkway Corridor is part of a transportation system that supports active transportation modes such as walking, biking and taking public transportation: The City, Metropolitan Planning Organization, public transportation providers and ODOT have planned and supported improvements that allow more people to walk, bike or take public transportation or other mobility devices efficiently and safely providing low stress, accessible facilities across and parallel to the Parkway. Safety improvements have been made at key locations to allow people to cross the Parkway safely and conveniently on bike, on foot or by other mobility devices.

Vision Development Plan

This concept will be developed through the following steps:

Process Step	Timeframe
<p>1. PMT (Review/Refine) The PMT discussed and refined the Vision Concept (the first draft of this document).</p>	<p><i>July 2018</i></p>
<p>2. Online Survey Gathered public input on the Vision Elements in the Vision Concept through an online survey.</p>	<p><i>Sept.-Oct. 2018</i></p>
<p>3. Sounding Board (Meeting #1/2 - Review) A Bend Parkway Sounding Board, comprised of a broad range of stakeholders was convened to provide input on the Vision Concept.</p>	<p><i>Oct. 2018</i></p>
<p>4. Policy Board/TAC Workshop (Meeting #1/4 - Review/Refine) A joint workshop with the MPO Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee will be held to develop guidance for the development of a <i>Draft Working Vision</i> based on the Vision Concept, stakeholder input (including the results of the online survey), and feedback from the Sounding Board.</p>	<p><i>Oct. 2018</i></p>
<p>5. PMT (Revises) The PMT will refine the Vision Concept into a <i>Draft Working Vision</i> based on the results of the joint Policy Board/TAC workshop.</p>	<p><i>Oct. 2018</i></p>
<p>6. Policy Board (Meeting #2/4 - Review/Adopt) The <i>Draft Working Vision</i> will be presented to the Policy Board for adoption.</p>	<p><i>Winter 2018</i></p>
<p>7. PMT (Revises as needed) Following the exploration and selection of transportation solutions, the team will review, and if necessary, suggest refinements to the Working Vision.</p>	<p><i>TBD</i></p>
<p>8. Policy Board (Meeting #3/4 – Adopts as needed) As part of the final plan, the Policy Board and ODOT will adopt the updated final U.S. 97 Bend Parkway Vision.</p>	<p><i>TBD</i></p>