

# Technical Memorandum

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Project# 29341

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RE: Bend MPO MTP Update Project Evaluation Framework

## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization (Bend MPO) is developing an update to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). This plan, last updated in 2019, is a multi-modal transportation plan designed to meet the anticipated 20-year transportation needs within the Bend MPO planning area boundary, which is slightly larger than the City of Bend Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and includes the unincorporated communities of Deschutes River Woods to the southwest and a portion of Tumalo to the north.

The 2019 MTP was developed in close coordination with an update to the City's Transportation System Plan (TSP), adopted in 2020. Critical data, such as recent population growth, new area planning, and completed projects, has been incorporated for this MTP update; however, the MTP update effort relies strongly on the robust public engagement process, goals and policies, projects and programs, and funding strategies identified in the 2020 Bend TSP. The collaborative process between the Bend TSP and Bend MTP:

- Addresses existing and future needs through capital investment projects that serve all users;
- Prioritizes programs that make regular investments in the transportation system, including maintenance of existing and newly constructed infrastructure;
- Establishes policies that guide future decision-making; and
- Identifies a flexible and implementable funding strategy that matches the planned level of improvements for the next 20 years.

Several other significant planning efforts have been completed by the Bend MPO, City of Bend, or other partner agencies since the adoption of the 2019 Bend MPO MTP or are currently nearing completion that should be considered for the Bend MPO MTP Update. These include the following:

- Bend Transportation Safety Action Plan
- Bend Transportation System Plan
- Bend Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan Update
- Bend Southeast Area Plan
- Bend Core Area Plan
- Stevens Road Tract Concept Plan
- Cascades East Transit Master Plan
- Cascades East Transit Mobility Hub Feasibility Study
- Deschutes County Intelligent Transportation System Plan
- Deschutes County Transportation System Plan
- Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan Update

- Tumalo Community Plan
- US 20 Bend Facility Plan
- US 97 Baker Road Interchange Area Management Plan
- US 97 North Interchange Study
- US 97 Parkway Plan
- Midtown Crossings Feasibility Study
- US 97 at Reed Market Road Operations and Safety Study
- Bend Pedestrian Network Implementation Plan

As a result of these planning efforts, the City of Bend, ODOT, and Deschutes County have recently made significant investments in the transportation infrastructure within the MPO area. Most notably, this includes a \$190 million General Obligation Bond (GO Bond) passed by Bend voters in November 2020. This GO Bond includes robust investment in transportation infrastructure, including:

- Intersection improvements to address capacity constraints,
- Walking and biking corridors to connect east-west and north-south travel,
- Access to Transit,
- Intelligent transportation systems (ITS) projects, and
- Partnerships funding for Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) projects.

In addition, since the adoption of the Bend TSP, the Bend area has been awarded \$20 million in funding from the federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program for the Hawthorne Overcrossing. This project, which was identified as a study in the Bend TSP, will connect downtown and the Bend Central District with a walking and bicycling bridge over Highway 97 and the railroad. The Oregon State legislature also allocated \$5 million for the Hawthorne Overcrossing as part of House Bill 5030, in which money is allocated to local priorities across Oregon.

The City of Bend is also pursuing an update to the Transportation System Development Charge (TSDC) methodology and a new Transportation Utility Fee (TUF). The combination of these new or revised funding sources creates significant and meaningful investment opportunities to both fund new infrastructure and ensure that ongoing maintenance needs are met.

The Bend MPO MTP will identify projects and programs needed to support growth over the next 20 years within the Bend MPO boundary through a combination of the foundation provided by the Bend TSP and the various planning efforts completed in recent years.

## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING GOALS & PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Bend MPO's MTP goals form the foundation for the MPO's transportation system. They reflect the community's desired outcomes now and in the future. The goals shape and guide development of the MTP's projects. The policies in the MTP provide a consistent course of action to move the MPO toward the goals of the MTP.

The goals in the MTP are based on the community outreach, committees, and direction from decision-makers from the Bend TSP/MTP planning effort, approved by the joint City of Bend/Bend MPO Steering Committee in 2018. The policies were updated by the BMPO Policy Board in 2020 to reflect the role and activities of an MPO. As part of the current MTP update, the policies were revisited with only minor edits on June 16, 2023.

The Bend MPO MTP update will utilize these goals and policies to guide project evaluation and differentiate, compare, and identify trade-offs associated with the projects and programs in MTP project list. A similar process was employed during the development of the plans listed above.

Table 1 shows the MTP project goals and their application to project prioritization criteria, based on goal policies.

**Table 1. Goal-Based Evaluation Criteria**

Goal	Application to Evaluation Criteria
<p><b>Increase System Capacity, Quality, and Connectivity for All Users (e.g., drivers, walkers, bicyclists, transit riders, mobility device users, commercial vehicles, and other forms of transportation)</b></p>	<p>Does the project or program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase route choices and connections for all users (roads, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, transit)</li> <li>• Use technology to enhance system performance, including accessible technology (i.e., audible signals)</li> <li>• Increase the number of people who walk, ride a bike and/or take transit</li> <li>• Provide reliable travel times for commuters, emergency vehicles, and commercial users</li> <li>• Minimize congestion</li> <li>• Reduce vehicle operating and maintenance costs due to poor pavement conditions</li> <li>• Emphasize asset management</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure Safety for All Users</b></p>	<p>Will the project or program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce serious injuries and fatalities</li> <li>• Maximize safe routes for vulnerable users within and between neighborhoods and throughout the community for all users</li> <li>• Design and build facilities and routes that maximize safety for all road users with an emphasis on bicyclists, pedestrians, and other road users</li> <li>• Ensure safe speeds</li> </ul>
<p><b>Facilitate Housing Supply, Job Creation, and Economic Development to Meet Demand/Growth</b></p>	<p>Does the project or program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build new transportation facilities and upgrade existing roads to serve areas targeted for growth (prioritized opportunity and expansion areas) and job creation</li> <li>• Provide access and connectivity to expanded housing supply</li> <li>• Improve connectivity and route choices for commercial users</li> </ul>

<p><b>Protect Livability and Ensure Equity and Access</b></p>	<p>Does the project or program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all users are accounted for, for all new road projects and road reconstruction</li> <li>• Increase Safe Routes to School programs and infrastructure for kids walking and rolling to school</li> <li>• Ensure that all populations, as identified in the Bend MPO Equity Mapping Tool and Title VI Plan, have access to transportation options, and ensure opportunities and encourage participation in public planning processes</li> <li>• Ensure opportunities to participate in public planning processes are available with respect to disability, age, income, race, color, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, and technology</li> <li>• Encourage the use of roads for their stated classification</li> <li>• Encourage through freight traffic to rely on ODOT facilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Steward the Environment and Support Climate Resiliency</b></p>	<p>Does the project or program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize the impacts of transportation system on natural features</li> <li>• Minimize the impacts of transportation system on air and water quality and noise</li> <li>• Reduce carbon emissions from transportation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Have a Regional Outlook and Future Focus</b></p>	<p>Does the project or program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate and partner with other public and private capital improvement projects and local/regional planning initiatives</li> <li>• Create a system that is designed to implement innovative and emerging transportation technologies</li> <li>• Encourage generational equity</li> </ul>

## USING THE PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation framework presented within this memorandum is based on the technical evaluation and prioritization that informed the City of Bend TSP. Many projects and programs that could be included in the Bend MPO MTP update have been previously evaluated. Because the Bend MPO MTP and the City of Bend TSP have large areas of geographic overlap and thus may include similar projects, the project team will utilize information from that prior evaluation where applicable to provide consistency between the plans.

Each of the identified Projects and Programs will be categorized into one of the phasing buckets based on the following set of questions:

- Which projects most meaningfully address the evaluation criteria listed in Table 1?
- What is the likely funding available for each of the buckets and how can the MPO match the project and program list to the feasible funding sources?

- What projects and programs build upon and/or rely on synergies provided by other capital improvements projects within each bucket?

The evaluation criteria will be used to differentiate, compare, and identify trade-offs associated with the projects and programs in the Project List. The criteria used for this analysis, listed in Table 1, are based directly on the Goals & Policies adopted by the MPO Policy Board. The prioritization criteria will be rated based on the scale shown in Table 2, using a “consumer reports” method of project rating.

**Table 2. Draft Evaluation Rating Scale**

Rating	Description
●	The project/program clearly supports the criterion and/or makes substantial improvements in the criteria category
◐	The project/program idea partially addresses the criterion and/or makes moderate improvements in the criteria category
○	The project/program idea does not support the intent of, provides minor or incidental benefit and/or negatively impacts the criteria category
N/A	The project/program idea neither meets nor does not meet intent of criterion. The project idea has no effect, or criterion does not apply

## PROJECT & PROGRAM PHASING

Once the projects are evaluated, as described above, the Bend MPO MTP update will organize projects and programs into phasing categories (herein referred to as “phasing buckets”) which describe the timeframe within which a project is most likely to be needed, based on modeling results. The phasing buckets are described below. It should be noted that these projects may be either financially constrained, in that feasible funding can be identified for the project; or aspirational, in that there is not a source of funding identified. These phasing buckets are:

- Near-term Priorities (Implementation Years 0-5):** This bucket addresses near term priorities that are either currently programmed for implementation (i.e., on an existing Capital Improvement Program [CIP], funded through a General Obligation Bond, etc.) or rated as a high priority through the updated prioritization evaluation.
- Mid-term Priorities (Implementation Years 6-10):** This bucket will include projects and programs that support project goals and are anticipated to be triggered by growth in the mid-term horizon.
- Long-term Priorities (Implementation Years 11-20):** This bucket will include projects and programs that are of lower priority for the community or are not likely triggered by growth or system needs until the long-term horizon. Even with that long-term frame of reference, these projects and programs help meet long-term transportation system needs and implement adopted Comprehensive Plans within the MPO boundary.
- Expansion Area Driven Projects:** The timing and need of projects within this bucket are expected to be driven primarily by the timing of significant development near the project or program location, as opposed to publicly initiated improvements of the transportation system. These projects may address important system needs, such as neighborhood streets needed to connect pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists in growth areas with the regional arterial and collector roadway system. They may also include “public” funding sources, such as Transportation System Development Charge (TSDC) funding, determined as part of development review, negotiated developer agreements, or an area-planning process. Specific timing for implementation is dependent on market conditions related to the pace of development in specific areas. These projects and programs contribute to the overall multimodal system and are an important component of the MTP.

Beyond phasing buckets, a key component of the Bend MPO MTP Update will be to identify committed and future funding available for projects and programs over the next 20 years, including further identifying which projects have committed funding today, which can be considered within a **financially constrained** plan, and which should be considered **aspirational** based on unidentified future funding sources.

The categorization of each project and program into the phasing bucket categories requires an iterative process to ensure each bucket is both effective at addressing MTP goals and fits within the funding strategy. This approach assumes that the project and programs that comprise the MTP's 'financially committed' list will be accompanied by a funding plan (identifying funding sources, amounts, timing). The 'aspirational' project lists will have more general funding strategies identified.