

# Meeting Minutes

## Bend Economic Development Advisory Board (BEDAB)

Location: Council Chambers, City of Bend, 710 NW Wall Street

Date: October 6, 2025

Time: 12 p.m. – 2 p.m.

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Called to order at: 12:03p.m.

**Roll Call:** Gary North- Chair, DaWayne Judd- Vice Chair, Briana Manfrass, Mark Kroncke (online), Jillian Taylor, Jenn Lynch, Tierney Booker (online), Chad Schlottmann (online), John Evons

Chad Young, Sara Odendahl, Jennifer Gould, Nate Wyeth, Don Myll, Mike Richards- Ex Officios

Mayor Pro Tem Perkins-Council Liaison

### 1. Public Comment – no PC

### 2. Approval of meeting minutes August 19

Member Lynch moved to approve the August 19, 2025 BEDAB Meeting Minutes. Member Taylor seconded the motion.

The voice vote passed 9-0:

Yes: North, Judd, Manfrass, Kroncke, Taylor, Lynch, Schlottman, Evons, Booker

No: none

### 3. Council Liaison Report | Mayor Pro Tem Megan Perkins

Update on Midtown Crossings: City will potentially close Franklin but with the least amount of disruption possible. Data from Greenwood survey not necessarily statistically sound but showed that people in cars are not in favor of construction there. Agreed to leave Greenwood where it is while Council figures out the rest of the relevant package.

The next Council work session will focus on the larger transportation picture, including Reed and Bond, other priorities for the CIP and what can the City wait on.

After the Midtown Crossings discussion, relevant information was sent to the Core Area Advisory Board and the Transportation Bond Committee for their suggestions which the Council will need to consider.

The schedule for Franklin depends on what the City decides to do; potential to fully close for 3-6 months. This would mitigate the flooding with storm water.

Member Lynch asked if there is a way the City can be more confident in survey results? Mayor Pro Tem Perkins responded that there is a lack of information on the impact on businesses and is interested in the issues the public is experiencing now.

There will be an Economic Development Update from City Staff on October 15, 2025 at 4:00p.m.

The League of Oregon Cities conference took place in Portland. Pro Tem Perkins met with other city officials regarding electrification.

After the Council work session the Professional Development Business Group, a Portland based non-profit that connects minority-owned contractors with steady bids and RFPs, creating accessibility and connections, will host a mixer.

Ex-officio Don Myll put tours together for Councilors to visit and learn about businesses

#### **4. Neighborhood Commercial Code Amendments | Cyrus Mooney (20 minutes)**

Mooney provided a brief background explaining that the materials he sent BEDAB from LandWatch including feedback from the development community relevant to proposed code changes. This discussion will focus on providing clarity regarding the status and process.

Urban Renewal Manager Johnathan Taylor noted that the discussion topic is part of Council's 2025-2027 goal of using the Bend Urban Renewal Investment Strategy to expand neighborhood commercial. Accordingly, the City will conduct a retail and leakage assessment for the Core Area in Q1 or Q2 to determine where the actual retail need is. Meanwhile, the City will balance the climate related goal. Taylor noted that for the next 9-12 months the focus will be to revitalize the core area in Murphy's Crossing retail establishments and identify where the need is in relation to the climate-friendly area's goal of growth management.

Vice Chair Judd asked how the community understands the need and Taylor responded that part of the overall process will be a partnership with planning and growth management and there will be broad community conversations, including neighborhood roundtables.

#### **5. Invest Bend Update: State of the Housing & Economy, Draft Goals and Best Practices | Katy Brooks, Jonathan Taylor, Cyrus Mooney (60 minutes)**

Taylor presented an update on the overall approach, noting the City is now completing the stakeholder focus group and will launch the annual business survey the following week. He spoke to the comprehensive purpose of the Invest Bend plan, saying it is to provide an action plan with goals and strategies. This document will build the foundation of what economic development will look like in Bend. Taylor gave an overview of the draft structure of the strategic plan, including goals and relative analyses.

Taylor provided an overview of the State of City, noting that Bend and Central Oregon are the population growth engine of Oregon, that Bend's economy is one of the fastest growing in the State, and that the business climate in Bend is low.

Member Taylor asked for more information regarding the business climate and the response was that this rating mostly came from stakeholder interviews where participants gave their opinions. Staff also noted there are outside influences that may contribute to this perception including State policies regarding business development.

Taylor notes that opportunities include the fact that Bend has the talent to grow and the City needs to take steps to encourage businesses to stay; COCC and OSU – Cascades are power anchors; and Bend has a strong foundation but needs a bolder story to compete on a larger scale.

The draft strategy includes five potential goals which are: Building a more business friendly

environment; competing through our economic advantages; cultivating the entrepreneurial spirit; supporting opportunities that open doors for all residents; and ensuring all neighborhoods are vibrant and resilient. Taylor also noted that this will be a flexible plan with periodic check-ins and a mid-plan check-in to adjust as needed.

Taylor also noted that for each goal the strategy will cover details such as why the goal is important and how the City will measure progress.

The group had a discussion regarding affordable housing and wage increases and Taylor notes that while Bend's wages have increased over the last five years, it has not been enough to mitigate housing costs, and this is impacting attraction and retention of new businesses. He also noted that the City will approach this through an internally coordinated effort.

Mooney also noted that transportation and distribution can be an issue and presents an opportunity for improvement.

Member Lynch asked about the timeline for the draft strategy and the response was that the Board should see a draft for review in late October and that BEDAB can use the November 3 meeting to discuss it.

Brooks reiterated that this strategy is a starting point, not an end point and can be flexible depending on what is working and what needs adjustment, as well as depending on the economy. She noted that the City would like to check in with BEDAB before and during strategy implementation.

Mooney then noted that this will also need to create alignment with BEDAB's workplan as those things should be correlated.

Brooks mentioned that during the strategy development process, a notable aspect has been the importance of retention and would like to speak more with BEDAB about that.

Manfrass weighed in saying that a focus on local business is what makes Bend unique and that should be a significant part of the growth plan.

Chair North brought up the option of having an additional BEDAB meeting to have sufficient time to absorb and discuss aspects of the potential strategy. This would be necessary to make informed decisions and recommendations.

Brooks stated that it would be acceptable if DEBAB understood the draft nature of where the document would be at that time. She noted that her office will go before Council on December 3 with a more final plan which has been reviewed and vetted.

Manfrass asked what BEDAB can best help with, and Brooks responded that BEDAB brings different perspectives and can also give recommendations to Council and therefore a draft is suitable. Lynch noted that she thinks BEDAB's value and expertise can be in feedback on the plan's goals.

Taylor noted to BEDAB that in February and again in May, the group adopted a framework which required a review of available data, draft goals and a draft strategy by November 2025. BEDAB requested to have three members on the relevant steering committee to provide

regular feedback to the full board.

Manfrass clarified that the three BEDAB members do not seem to have time carved out to report back from the steering committee and agreed that an extra meeting could be helpful.

Mooney suggested that BEDAB have an extra meeting on October 20 and if necessary, November 17, 2025 in order to have sufficient time. Lynch mentioned that having more time for conversation in BEDAB meetings would also allow the board to add value and expertise.

Evons asked what the implications of an approved plan are, to understand the weight of their decisions. He asked which areas of the plan and funding are still in play to know where to focus. Brooks responded that the budget is already established for the biennium, and the plan will help the City focus on opportunities, see the challenges, and develop some strategies based on those things. Over the next couple of years, the City and BEDAB will determine which strategies should be implemented and funded. She noted that BURA is different as they have their own source of funding.

Judd expressed concern about BEDAB having sufficient time to absorb the Economic Development Plan and suggested more than one meeting may be needed. He also expressed interest in the level of resources available to execute on any plan items BEDAB supports. Brooks responded that there will be some, but limited resources, including a contract with EDCO for recruitment and Move, Start, Grow, a pilot grant program related to recruitment, and some sponsorship funds, noting that the City will supply staff time and resources as well.

Mooney noted that the Environment and Climate Committee follows a community action plan with over 100 actions and the Committee itself provides recommendations for prioritizing short-, medium-, and long-term actions and noted the City would value BEDAB's insights on where to focus staff time on InvestBend.

The group has a discussion on BEDAB's credibility and the need to understand what the plan entails and available funds and overall resources to be most effective and agreed on additional meetings. BEDAB discussed seeing a goal or method via which the City generates funds to implement projects. They also discussed the need to maintain public meetings law.

## **6. Preview of Small Business Assistance Grants | Cyrus Mooney (30 minutes)**

Brooks stated that this topic is closely related to retention, that Bend is a great start up City but businesses are built with an exit plan. The City wants to focus on keeping businesses here and Brooks notes that BEDAB will be tapped to help with that, including who would qualify for these grants and what the City is trying to achieve with them.

Member Taylor asked about the status of small fund the group earlier this year and Mooney responded that it has gone to a centralized sponsorship with City staff but that it makes sense to have BEDAB provide recommendations on monetary investments in some way.

Member Schlottman asked if the City is referencing the COBID, Business Oregon website in terms of how they are approaching emerging small businesses and diverse businesses for certification, grant funding and related items. Brooks responded that it is a good resource and Bend, there is the opportunity to be local and specific. Mooney added that related to the COBID certification, the City, with the PDBG group, is looking at different certifications to use through procurement, as well as hosting COBIS training courses.

## 7. Roundtable and Future Topics | Group

Chair North and Mooney will schedule additional meetings.

Chair North and Member Lynch talked about BEDAB drafting a letter to Council regarding recommendations on the on-going electrification policy discussions, focusing on BEDAB's stance, which they proceeded to define as being opposed to a fee.

Mooney also clarified that Council has directed staff to evaluate what a fee would look like, and no decisions have been made in that regard yet.

Member Lynch voiced concern about a fee impacting affordable housing and Mooney reiterated that this is a good time to provide that feedback.

Regarding the content of the potential letter to Council, Evons noted that BEDAB can reiterate the lack of a proven model of any fee having created the intended outcome in any other municipality to date and expressed concern about the focus on residential vs. commercial application.

Discussion topics also included capacity and potential future capacity of the power system, coordination with Bend's utility providers, relevant data available, construction cost of the potential policy, the necessity of an impact study, the adjustment in Council priorities towards electrification, the relative newness of this type of initiative in the United States and what that means for relevant data, and the consensus that BEDAB does not support fees as the first avenue to accomplish the goal and that in the letter to Council, include several reasons why they do not.

The group determined that Chair North and Mooney can draft a letter, Mooney will send that to the Board, gather individual comments, and bring the final letter to the next BEDAB meeting.

## 8. Adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

### Upcoming Meetings:

**October 8:** Bend City Council Work Session | Council Chambers, 4 pm



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