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**To:** GMDTransportationSystemPlan <[tsp@bendoregon.gov](mailto:tsp@bendoregon.gov)>

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**Subject:** Priorities for Bend's Transportation System Plan

Dear Bend Citywide Transportation Advisory Committee,

I am pleased to see that walking, bicycling, and transit modes are priority investments for Bend's future transportation system. As CTAC moves forward with finalizing its plans, I request that investments relating to these modes of transit take priority over **any** investments in further vehicle infrastructure.

***Walking, bicycling, and transit are the highest value transportation investments for the City of Bend*** because they offer greater benefits and lower costs than investments in vehicle infrastructure. Empirically proven benefits of pedestrian/cycling/transit investment include:

1. Increased access across all income levels;
2. Decreased congestion;
3. Reduced greenhouse gas emissions (a goal set forth by City Resolution No. 3044, Sec. 1.B is for fossil fuel reductions of 40% by 2030 and 70% by 2050);
4. Improved safety for all transportation system users;
5. Better public health and social wellbeing;
6. Enhanced local business performance;
7. Decreased crime;
8. Improved childhood education attainment;
9. Higher property values; and
10. Increased City tax revenue.

Evidence supporting these claims is set forth in the various earlier public comments submitted by me and Steve Porter to CTAC. There is no meaningful body of evidence refuting any of these claims.

***All bike and pedestrian Key Route investments should be moved to near-term priorities*** to complete the "Low Stress Network" and citywide sidewalk infill. First priority should be given to:

- Key Routes 1, 2, 3, 4 (Key Route 4, R4-B allows for critical pedestrian/bicycle connection for the West Hills and Awbrey Butte neighborhoods via NW 14th Street), 6 and 12;
- Core Area bike/pedestrian improvements including: Olney undercrossing, Greenwood undercrossing, Hawthorne overcrossing, and Franklin undercrossing;
- Drake Park pedestrian bridge improvement to allow bicycles to cross the Deschutes River; and
- Protected/buffered bike lanes, traffic calming, and improved pedestrian/bicycle safety on Portland Avenue, Galveston Avenue, O.B. Riley Road, and Franklin Avenue.

Safety investments including traffic lane narrowing, marked crosswalks with signs, protected bike lanes, decreased speed limits (e.g., 20 mph on local/residential roads), and other traffic calming measures should be near-term priorities to ensure the success of multimodal transportation in Bend. ***If bicycle and pedestrian routes are not made safe and well-connected, they will not be used, and their full benefits (including decreased congestion for drivers) will not be realized.***

Per conversations with the Bend Police Department and Bend Streets and Operations personnel, traffic speed is a top concern among residents. Therefore, ***traffic calming investments should be prioritized in conjunction with bike/ped investments.***

***No existing roads should be widened*** and any newly built roads should be 2-lanes. Empirical evidence shows wider roads decrease safety by encouraging higher traffic speeds. They also reduce bike/ped activity by making street crossing unsafe and difficult.

Finally, priority also should be given to:

- Transit funding, including high capacity transit along 3rd Street and Newport/Greenwood;

- Intersection improvements including: Bond Street/Industrial Way/Aune Road and Core Area Olney, Greenwood, and Franklin Avenues at 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Streets; and
- Mobility hubs.

Thank you for your consideration and work on the future of Bend's transportation system. This is one of the most important decisions Bend faces. Prioritization of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure investments will help Bend become a more vibrant and climate-resilient city; contrarily, emphasis on vehicle infrastructure will consign Bend to vehicle-dependency, social isolation, and poor health. Vehicle-oriented investment prioritization would ignore empirical truth in favor of short-sighted political calculation.

Michelle Porter