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Sent: Wednesday, October 9, 2019 11:26 AM
To: GMDTransportationSystemPlan <tsp@bendoregon.gov>
Cc: Mike Riley <mike@envirocenter.org>
Subject: CTAC Public Comment: Project Funding Prioritization

Dear Bend Citywide Transportation Advisory Committee:

As you prioritize projects for Bend's Transportation System Plan (TSP) and identify "near-term projects," I request that you incorporate the following into your planning:

1. Investments in walking, biking, and transit should be uniformly prioritized over any vehicle-oriented investments.

—Vehicle-oriented investments exhibit damaging externality profiles, while ped/cycling/transit-oriented investments generate positive externalities. This means that putting money into vehicle-related investments harms Bend's residents, and investing in ped/cycling/transit-related projects enhances residents' well-being.

—Walking, biking, and transit investments are the most effective means by which Bend's transportation system can be improved in the near term with respect to considerations of public health, safety, traffic congestion, socioeconomic equity, environmental quality, economic efficiency, local retailer revenue growth, inclusive employment, outlay and maintenance expense, and long-run property value growth that supports municipal tax base increases.

—Vehicle-oriented investments, on the other hand, degrade public health, safety, socioeconomic equity, environmental quality, economic efficiency, local retailer viability, long-run traffic congestion, employment patterns, long-run property value growth, and municipal fiscal health. Empirical support for each of these claims may be found in earlier public comments I have submitted to this committee.

2. All bike and pedestrian Key Route investments should be placed into the near-term priorities list.

—This is a crucial step for enhancing Bend's transportation system. It represents a key lever for combating the transportation system's harmful carbon emissions and for making the transportation system more economically efficient and socially equitable across the demographic spectrum.

3. The following projects and programs should be included as near-term priorities:

—Program funding for the entire bike and pedestrian Low Stress Network and citywide sidewalk infill;

—Additional funding for transit support;

—27th Street and Butler Market Road complete streets corridor improvements;

—Core area intersection improvements (i.e., Olney, Greenwood, and Franklin at 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Streets); and

—Full funding for all three midtown bike and pedestrian connectivity projects (i.e., Greenwood, Hawthorne, and Franklin).

4. High-capacity transit along 3rd Street and Newport/Greenwood should be included in the near-term priorities list.

5. Full funding for mobility hubs should be prioritized.

6. Funding for the Drake Park pedestrian bridge across the Deschutes River should be prioritized.

7. Funding should be **withheld** from any project that adds lanes, widens vehicle roadways, or alters intersections to raise vehicle “level of service.”

—These are the sorts of projects most susceptible to induced traffic effects that offset or eliminate anticipated congestion-relief benefits. Induced traffic has been called “the fundamental law of road congestion” in the *American Economic Review* (Duranton, 2011), a premier peer-reviewed economics journal; it is neither controversial nor uncertain, but rather a direct result of vehicle-oriented investment. More roadways cause more traffic, and no amount of additional vehicle-oriented investment will ever ensure reduced traffic congestion.

—Unfortunately, standard traffic models dramatically underestimate induced traffic effects and thus present overly optimistic congestion-relief renderings associated with vehicle infrastructure development. Any such projects, if funded at all, should not be undertaken until **after** all pedestrian-, bike-, and transit-related projects and programs are fully funded and completed. Indeed, vehicle-oriented projects may prove superfluous after ped/bike/transit project investments generate the traffic congestion relief that they are empirically shown to do, thereby saving the City significant infrastructure costs.

If CTAC commits to a fact-based and empirically-supported analysis of transportation system improvements, rather than an exercise in political speculation (or undue reliance upon misleading and deeply biased “statistically valid” survey questions), the committee will naturally arrive at funding prioritization plans consistent with those outlined here.

Thank you for your consideration,

Steve Porter