

Hi Karen,

This is a fantastic document and clearly reflects the hard work that you, your team and the CTAC group have put into it.

I wanted to provide a very brief comment to this draft regarding the Hawthorne Transit Center. As you're likely aware, there have been a number of stakeholders who have expressed concerns regarding inadequate services and design issues with the center. In particular, there are two issues that I believe merit inclusion in this document:

- While buses run through the transit center beyond 7:30 PM, restroom facilities close at 5 PM. Particularly for longer routes, this is a major concern for riders. Lack of adequate evening facilities impacts ease of use for riders and shifts burden for providing services to neighboring businesses.
- The transit center itself is poorly designed and located. It occupies a narrow side street (Hawthorne between 3rd and 4th) that is shared by consistent freight traffic serving the adjacent Safeway, Ace Hardware and liquor store. This forces heavy car, bike and pedestrian volume to compete for space on the narrow street with many large buses and freight trucks. This dynamic creates numerous blind spots and a dangerous situation for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists alike.

I've attached testimony submitted to the city on behalf of my client, Bend Towne Center, as well as a letter to CTAC from Sen. Tim Knopp. I understand there have been additional communications of this nature as well.

Would it be possible to incorporate these items into a revision?

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Bend City Council
710 Wall Street
Bend, OR 97703

Dear Mayor Roats and Councilors,

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver this testimony on behalf of the Bend Towne Center 3rd street shopping center and its tenants. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you our desire for a robust transit system in the Bend Central District, as well as our concerns regarding the inadequate and unsafe conditions present today at the Hawthorne Transit Center.

We strongly support the vision and goals of the Bend Central District and the opportunities it will create for expanded affordable and market rate housing options, retail and commerce. To accomplish those goals, the BCD needs a thoughtful, well-designed system of transit, with stops located near housing and connected to pedestrian and bike spaces.

The current Hawthorne Transit Center is inadequate to meet the needs of the BCD vision and Bend's overall anticipated growth. In fact, it is inadequate to serve the area in its current form.

The only restrooms available at the transit center are located inside the COIC administrative building, which is locked after business hours beginning at 5pm. This means that riders – especially regional transit riders who have had long bus rides – have no access to available public restrooms after 5pm, forcing them to seek those services at nearby businesses.

The transit center also lacks basic modern technologies such as real-time electronic reader boards with rider information and other tools that help make transit accessible for all Bend residents.

Neighbors to the transit center have also voiced concerns about safety for riders, bus drivers, and other vehicles on the narrow Hawthorne Avenue where the transit center is located. As buses pull on and off the street, pedestrians cross the street to access the bus stops and local traffic moves through the street to get to the neighboring businesses and homes. The chaos and confusion in such a tight space makes it dangerous for everyone.

Safety concerns are not limited to pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. The placement of the transit station between 3rd and 4th street means that buses are sharing space and lanes with freight transit frequently serving the Safeway, Ace Hardware and liquor store. This frequently results in confusion and conflict between drivers, makes it unnecessarily difficult for local businesses to move goods in and out, and poses a significant safety risk for riders exiting buses that may not see large trucks moving by them. Modern, well-designed transit centers have dedicated lanes to ensure safety for riders, bus drivers, freight and motorists alike and prevent this type of scenario.

We believe strongly that this type of central transit center is best located where there is a high-density market rate and affordable housing – an area like the neighborhood identified as part of the Bend Central District (potential) Urban Renewal District. Transit is among the most important amenities that a renewed Bend Central District could have, providing opportunities for improved and expanded public transit.

We envision a future where Bend has fewer pedestrian fatalities, a lower carbon footprint and a safe, robust transit system that allows people to get from point A to point B without having to own or get into a vehicle. We truly believe that this is not only possible, but something that Bend would benefit from immensely as our population continues to grow at the rate we've seen over the last few years. We are quickly becoming a city that matches Salem or Eugene in population and regional influence, and our citizens deserve a transit center consistent with infrastructure provided by those cities. However, as you can see from the photos included with this written testimony, our current transit center barely qualifies as a bus stop compared to the main transit stations in Eugene and Salem.

As we continue to develop the Bend Central District, it is vital that we provide the people of Bend a safe, modern transit center that can meet the growing needs of the City of Bend and the greater Central Oregon region.

Sincerely,

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