

Hawthorne Avenue Neighbors

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April 24, 2019

Citywide Transportation Advisory Committee
c/o Co-Chair Karna Gustafson
c/o Co-Chair Steve Hultberg
c/o Co-Chair Mike Riley
c/o Co-Chair Ruth Williamson
710 Wall Street
Bend, OR 97703

Dear Committee Co-Chairs and Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver this testimony on behalf of a growing coalition of Hawthorne Avenue neighbors, including business owners, residents, and transit advocates who are urging you to pursue within your work on this committee a solution to the inadequate and unsafe conditions at Hawthorne Station, located between NE Third and Fourth Streets.

When this site was first identified and funded through a Connect Oregon grant in 2008, this location was identified because there were no other viable locations or revenue streams available. Now, 11 years later, this cluster of bus stops located on narrow, high-use streets is unable to sustain the growth we must achieve in our transit system to reduce congestion, support economic development, support higher education facilities, keep impacts of tourism low and promote equity for seniors, those with disabilities, or people without vehicles.

This facility is also extremely unsafe. Because of limited capacity, buses disobey traffic laws, including parking in front of alley entrances and directly in front of stop signs, blocking site lines to oncoming traffic. People on foot or using bikes, wheelchairs and cars weave in and out of buses all along Hawthorne Avenue. Neighbors have had vehicles sideswiped by buses on narrow nearby residential blocks. Others report that buses navigate residential alleyways when travel is blocked by other routes. We say with confidence and without hyperbole that it is very likely someone will be seriously injured or possibly killed due to the unsafe conditions at this site.

The Hawthorne Avenue Neighbors are desperately seeking leadership from the City of Bend, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, and CTAC to take action now during your major transportation planning processes to address the inability of this location to support transit and community safety needs going forward.

It is our observation and fear that because COIC is a year behind on its 2040 Master Transit Plan work that a window is being missed to coordinate long-term transit planning and facility needs with the priorities of CTAC and the City of Bend through the TSP update.

So far, CTAC has included in its Draft Foundational Projects the concept of mobility hubs, and the need for rapid bus lines on Third Street and Greenwood. You have also identified the need for a pedestrian bridge over Highway 97.

But how do these projects intersect with COIC planning? Is Hawthorne Station viable going forward or must we find the resources to build a modern transit station elsewhere? What additional expenditures

and facilities may be needed to support mobility hubs or rapid transit lines? Are there any conversations CTAC members are being invited to join where real co-planning between the City and COIC is occurring?

At a meeting on Friday, April 19 between members of the Hawthorne Avenue Neighbors, COIC representatives, and a member of the City of Bend's growth management team constituents were told that it is perfectly normal for planning processes to be out of sync. ***But what do we stand to lose because of the slowness between COIC and the City of Bend to coordinate when so many funding priorities are being determined now?***

For instance, the City of Bend will soon begin testing projects and revenue streams with the public in preparation for a transportation bond. If the City and COIC were tracking together, we may have the chance to address our inadequate transit infrastructure within this bond. Other funding opportunities might also be on the table, including urban renewal, possible state grants, earmarked Congressional funding and more. But without a vision or plan how can we access these opportunities and demonstrate value to potential partners?

COIC has told the Hawthorne Avenue Neighbors that it intends to begin a long-range planning process very soon, though no dates for visioning workshops, public engagement opportunities or joint planning meetings with CTAC have been determined. It is the hope of COIC staff that they will complete the intensive visioning and planning work to determine long-term transit facilities needs by August "just in time" to line up with CTAC and the City of Bend's work to hone-in on projects and funding sources ahead of TSP adoption and a referral of a bond to the ballot.

We respectfully request that CTAC do all that it can to speed this process so that meaningful coordination can occur. Missing this opportunity to work together will most certainly put us years behind what could and should be achieved. In the meantime, we risk failing to prepare Bend and our region for the essential growth of transit, as we continue to center this entire system around a dismally inadequate and unsafe facility.

Sincerely,

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Submitted on behalf of the Hawthorne Avenue Neighbors:

Danielle Baptist, Edward Jones
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Bob Bobosky, Bend Towne Center
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Tad Burzynski, Denture In
Julia Carda, Everyday Brain Fitness
Andrew Deenik, New York City Sub Shop Inc.
Sandra Dickinson, Pizazz Hairstyling
Stacie Erhardt, disability rights advocate
Ashley Evert, Bend Three Sisters Inn and Suites
Carol Fulkerson, Central Oregon Coalition for Access
Ken Fuller and Kristine Senkier, Hawthorne Avenue residents

Kym Garrett, Kym Garrett Acupuncture
Emden Griffin, Bend Community Acupuncture
Dusty Harris, Ace Hardware
Brad Hester, Bend Family Dentistry
Karen Joss, Joss Property Services
Suzy Landan, Edward Jones
Jim Lewis, Hutch's Bicycles
Mark Merrick, 3rd Street Beverage
Rob Mills, Bend Community Acupuncture
Bill More, Hawthorne Avenue resident
Jordan Ohlde, disability rights advocate
Stacey Sabin, Bend Family Dentistry
Petie Thom, Hutch's Bicycles
Paula Van Vleck, Coldwell Banker
Jerry Williams, The UPS Store

