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Subject: Re: Transportation Plan Bike/Ped/Complete Streets Policy Subcommittee

Good afternoon:

I am going to write my comments in a general terms and not go into the current detailed guidelines. I feel that there are four cities similar to Bend in many ways that we should use as models for our complete streets, pedestrian and bicycle systems. They are Eugene, Corvallis, Flagstaff and Boulder. I have reviewed all the policies that you attached Karen and they are excellent. We should plagiarize as many of the ideas as possible from those towns.

I like the direction Bend is going on complete streets as evidenced by 14th Street/Century. The design slows down traffic and allows for pedestrians to cross the road. I think if we put bike lanes in these streets we need to make them separated with barriers. We now know that 80% of the potential bicycle riders in Bend will not ride on high traffic busy streets. As evidenced by the committee's focus on a low stress network this high priority needs to be written in the guidelines.

Eugene and Corvallis have had a low stress bicycle complete networks since 1970's. I have ridden thousands of miles on their network. They are well signed, very low stress and are part of a complete network. Even with an outstanding system Eugene is still investing tens of millions of dollars in making their system better. They also don't make the mistake of putting bike lanes on high traffic streets. A good example is in their downtown. 6th and 7th streets are very high traffic roads but have no bike lanes. Instead they put their bike lane on 5th street. I don't remember a single bike route in Eugene that is on a four lane road.

I have been living in Bend for approximately 40 years. Except for recent work done by Robin Lewis Bend has not built any low stress bike routes and has never designed or built any type of bicycle network. Bend has totally lacked any type of vision. We have put in bike lanes and sidewalks in a random basis which in many cases do not connect to anything. Olney was one attempt to do a east/west bike corridor and although it improved access can it really be considered low stress? Bend has spent hundreds of thousands putting in bike lanes on 4 lane high traffic roads. For 80% of bicycle riders that has been a huge waste of money. Does anybody think it is safe to ride Greenwood, 27th, 3rd, Colorado and Arizona where it is 4 lanes. Is it realistic to think that any bike rider can cut in front of a car going 35 miles per hr to make a turn? Is Reed Market a low stress bike route? I think not.

I feel we need to totally focus on a low stress bicycle network and completely stop building bike lanes on 4 lane roads unless there is a physical separation between cars and bicyclists. We only have limited resources and it doesn't make sense to keep building bike lanes on streets that 80% of Bend residents won't ride on. I like Robin's work on a low stress network. I would suggest we totally gut our current regulations and move toward using ones by the cities I listed above. I would also use as many of Robin's ideas as possible.

We also need to improve partnerships with other government stakeholders. Bend Parks and Recreation has built two low stress bike routes which are Larkspur and the river trail. Unfortunately they are not signed and connected to any network. The City of Bend has refused to build a safe cross walk on the river trail intersection at Mt. Washington for the last 30 years. I wonder if it is going to take someone being killed there until something is done.

In regards to pedestrian policies Bend should focus on using Eugene, Corvallis, Flagstaff and Boulder's guidelines. Bend has often built sidewalks when a new house or subdivision is put in. There has been limited consideration that I can see to put together a pedestrian network. Sidewalks start and stop all the time. I worked on Brosterhous for years and even though it is a high stress road there were no sidewalks and extremely dangerous to try to walk even a block.. The transportation committee clearly wants a complete pedestrian network put in place. I love Eugene's policy to encourage walking as the most attractive mode of transportation for short trips within and to activity centers, downtown, key corridors, and major destinations, and as a means of accessing transit.

We only have limited resources so we need to write strong guidelines and have a vision and a plan on how to build a complete pedestrian network. Eugene and many other towns do a lot of shared paths where bikers, walkers, people with disabilities, skateboarders all the same path successfully on low stress trails. We need to put in many more crosswalks for pedestrians

We have a unique opportunity to substantially upgrade our pedestrian and bicycle policies and systems. We need to grab it. Even though Bend has many great opportunities for walking and biking outside the UGB the current bicycle system in city of Bend is not safe. I have many many friends who put their bikes on their cars and either drive east of Bend or go to Sunriver to ride on what they consider safe trails or roads. 80% of Bend's riders want safe trails and roads. For every person we can convince to walk, bike or use transit that is one less car causing congestion. Since we are growing so fast we need to put a massive effort in making Bend walking and bicycle safe. .

Glenn Van Cise