

Agenda

BMPO Policy Board

February 20, 2026

Hybrid Meeting

Location

Baney Conference Room (ODOT Region 4 Headquarters, Building M)
63055 N. Highway 97, Bend, Oregon

Zoom webinar

Webinar ID: 826 0538 3847

Passcode: bmpo

Phone: 1-888-788-0099

YouTube livestream

12:00 p.m. Policy Board Meeting

Start Time	Item	Information	Presenters
12:00	1. Call to Order & Introductions		Chair Méndez
12:04	2. Hybrid Meeting Guidelines		Tyler Deke, BMPO
12:06	3. Public Comment		Chair Méndez
12:10	4. Elect Chair and Vice Chair for 2026	<p>Background The Policy Board Bylaws state that the Policy Board shall elect the Chair and Vice Chair at the second meeting of the calendar year. The positions will be effective from the time of approval until the next annual election of the Chair and Vice Chair.</p> <p>Attachments/Links None.</p> <p>Action Requested Elect a Chair and Vice Chair for calendar year 2026.</p>	Chair Méndez

Start Time	Item	Information	Presenters
		Recommended language for motion: <i>I move that [name] serve as Chair and [name] serve as Vice Chair of the BMPO Policy Board for 2026.</i>	
12:18	5. Meeting Minutes	<p>Attachments/Links Attachment A: Policy Board draft meeting minutes.</p> <p>Action Requested Review and approve the draft meeting minutes.</p> <p>Recommended language for motion: <i>I move approval of the January 16, 2026, Policy Board draft meeting minutes, as presented.</i></p>	Chair
12:20	6. Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Annual Financial Report	<p>Background An audit of the BMPO's governmental activities and major funds is prepared each year. The audit of the year ending June 30, 2025, was recently completed. Staff will provide an overview of the audit.</p> <p>Attachments Link to the BMPO Work Program & Budget webpage, where the report is posted.</p> <p>Action Requested Review and accept the FY25 Annual Financial Report.</p> <p>Recommended language for motion: <i>I move to accept the fiscal year 2024-2025 BMPO Annual Financial Report.</i></p>	Kymala Lutz, City of Bend
12:30	7. 2024-2027 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) Amendment	<p>Background One amendment to the 2024-2027 MTIP is proposed. It involves advancing delivery of the Preliminary Engineering phase of an ODOT project from federal fiscal year 2027 to 2026. Public notice of the proposed amendment was provided online and via email notification to media and BMPO interest groups.</p> <p>Attachments/Links Link to the Transportation News Release for the proposed amendment.</p> <p>Action Requested Review and consider approval of the proposed amendment.</p>	Kelli Kennedy, BMPO

Start Time	Item	Information	Presenters
		Recommended language for motion: <i>I move approval of the proposed amendment to the 2024-2027 MTIP, as presented.</i>	
12:40	8. 2027-2030 MTIP – Draft Review	<p>Background The MTIP identifies transportation projects and programs scheduled for delivery in the BMPO area in the near-term. The next MTIP period covers federal fiscal years 2027 through 2030. The BMPO Policy Board will be asked to adopt the 2027-2030 MTIP in April. Prior to adoption, BMPO staff and committees will review the draft MTIP, and a public process will be conducted.</p> <p>Attachments/Links Link to the Draft 2027-2030 MTIP document (updated draft will be posted prior to meeting). Link to BMPO MTIP webpage.</p> <p>Action Requested Identify a subgroup of board members that will complete a review of the draft 2027-2030 MTIP and provide comments to BMPO staff by March 3. All board members are encouraged to review the draft document (or sections of interest) and provide comments to BMPO staff by March 3.</p>	Tyler Deke
12:55	9. Federal Safety Targets	<p>Background Federal transportation legislation established performance requirements for state DOTs and MPOs. Staff will provide an overview of the safety performance requirements and options for addressing the requirements. Staff recommend the Policy Board support the ODOT safety performance targets and consider development of locally specific safety targets through the Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP) Update process.</p> <p>Attachments Attachment B: Resolution 2026-01. Attachment C: Safety Targets Memo.</p> <p>Action Requested Support the adopted ODOT safety performance targets.</p>	Tyler Deke

Start Time	Item	Information	Presenters
		Recommended language for motion: <i>I move to support the adopted ODOT safety performance measure targets by way of Resolution 2026-01.</i>	
1:10	10. Deschutes County & ODOT BUILD Applications – BMPO Letters of Support	<p>Background The Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant program provides funding for surface transportation infrastructure projects with significant local or regional impact. Deschutes County will submit a planning grant application for the proposed US97/Deschutes River Woods interchange to conduct planning, complete preliminary design, and obtain environmental clearances. ODOT will submit a grant application to construct safety improvements on a section of US97.</p> <p>Attachments Attachment D: Deschutes County project flyer. Attachment E: Deschutes County BUILD application draft letter of support. Attachment F: ODOT BUILD application draft letter of support.</p> <p>Action Requested Approve letters of support for the Deschutes County and ODOT BUILD grant applications. Recommended language for motion: <i>I move approval of the letters of support for the Deschutes County and ODOT BUILD grant applications.</i></p>	Tyler Deke
1:20	11. State Legislative Bill Letter of Support	<p>Background Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) revenues support public transportation services throughout Oregon. The Oregon Legislature is considering a bill (Senate Bill 1544-2) to modify the list of qualified entities eligible to receive and distribute STIF funds. Staff will review the proposed change and potential local impacts.</p> <p>Attachments Attachment G: Senate Bill 1544 draft letter of support (will be attached prior to the meeting).</p> <p>Action Requested</p>	Tyler Deke Bob Townsend, CET

Start Time	Item	Information	Presenters
		Approve letter of support for Senate Bill 1544. Recommended language for motion: <i>I move approval of the letter of support for Senate Bill 1544.</i>	
1:30	12. Federal Fiscal Year 2025 (FFY25) Annual Obligation Report	<p>Background Each year, the BMPO is required to publish a listing, or Annual Obligation Report, of all BMPO area projects and programs that received federal transportation funding obligations within the preceding federal fiscal year. Staff will provide an overview of the FFY25 report.</p> <p>Attachments/Links Link to FFY25 Annual Obligation Report.</p> <p>Action Requested None. Information item.</p>	Kelli Kennedy
1:40	13. Other Business	<p>Member Updates/Requests Time for board members to provide updates on current projects and planning efforts and request future meeting topics.</p> <p>Staff Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal surface transportation legislation update • Oregon legislative session update <p>Upcoming Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BMPO Budget Committee meeting is scheduled for March 17, 2026, at 12:30 p.m. • The next meeting of the BMPO Policy Board is scheduled for April 3, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. 	Chair & Staff
1:50	14. Public Comment		Chair
1:55	15. Adjourn		Chair



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Meeting Minutes

BMPO Policy Board

Location: Baney Conference Room (ODOT Region 4 Headquarters, Building M)
63055 N. Highway 97, Bend, Oregon

Date: January 16, 2026

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Prepared by: ABC Transcription Services, LLC.

In Attendance

Voting Members

1. Chair Ariel "Ari" Méndez, Bend City Councilor
2. Vice Chair Phil Chang, Deschutes County Commissioner
3. Mike Riley, Bend City Councilor, joined at 12:05 p.m.
4. Emerald Shirley, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Interim Central Oregon and Lower John Day Area Manager

Non-Voting Members

1. Bob Townsend, Cascades East Transit (CET) Director

BMPO Staff and Other Attendees

1. Tyler Deke, BMPO Manager
2. Andrea Napoli, BMPO Senior Planner
3. Kelli Kennedy, BMPO Program Coordinator
4. Doug Pigman, Bend La-Pine Schools (BLS), left at 12:57 p.m.
5. David Abbas, City of Bend
6. Brian Potwin, Commute Options, left at 1:39 p.m.
7. Chi Mai, ODOT
8. Greg Bryant, Deschutes River Woods resident
9. Griffin Gilbert, Rooted Homes
10. Chris Doty, Deschutes County
11. Ben Chaney, ODOT, joined at 12:05 p.m.

Notes

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Méndez called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. with a quorum established.

2. Hybrid Meeting Guidelines

Manager Deke reviewed the meeting guidelines.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

4. Meeting Minutes

Materials referenced: December 19, 2025, BMPO Policy Board draft meeting minutes (Attachment A in agenda packet).

Motion 1: Emerald Shirley moved approval of the December 19, 2025, Policy Board draft meeting minutes, as presented. Phil Chang seconded the motion which passed 3 to 0. (Ayes: Méndez (City of Bend), Chang (Deschutes County), Shirley (ODOT). Nays: None.)

5. 2026 Policy Board Meeting Schedule Confirmation

Materials referenced: Proposed 2026 meeting dates (Attachment B in agenda packet).

Manager Deke presented the proposed 2026 meeting schedule. Board members consented to continue meeting on third Fridays of each month, but suggested rescheduling meeting dates in March and August due to schedule conflicts.

6. BMPO Discretionary Funds – Previously Funded Projects, Updates

Materials referenced: BMPO Discretionary Funds, Past Funded Project Updates memo (Attachment C in agenda packet).

Senior Planner Napoli stated brief status updates would be provided for active or recently completed projects that had been awarded COVID funds or State Highway Funds (SHF) during project solicitations that occurred between 2020 – 2024. Councilor Méndez requested that updates include more context regarding the project's contribution to transportation work being done by each agency or organization, especially any metrics used to measure success.

David Abbas, City of Bend, provided updates on equipment purchased by the City to increase the level of service being offered for bicycle and pedestrian facility maintenance; coordinating the construction timeline with BNSF Railroad to complete a sidewalk infill project at NE Cooley Rd and increase area connectivity; road maintenance treatments completed by the Street Preservation Program with the goal to maintain or improve Bend's pavement condition index; developing safety improvement concepts in the Colorado Avenue Corridor Planning Study; design work underway for the upcoming Downtown Signal Upgrades and Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements project; and bicycle/pedestrian improvements and traffic calming measures for Low Stress Network implementation to reduce vehicle trips and congestion.

Questions were addressed about previous analysis work regarding Colorado Avenue, which had not resulted in any safety improvements being constructed. An update would be given at the next Council meeting regarding potential impacts of the ODOT-approved closure of Hawthorne Ave access to Hwy 97 and designing the bridge landing at Hawthorne Ave and Hill St to facilitate safe bicycle/pedestrian connectivity.

Doug Pigman, BLS, provided an overview of the planning work being done with Parametrix on a proposed alignment for a shared-use path near High Desert Middle School. The path's goal was

to improve student safety and school access, and ideally create connection between Caldera High School, High Desert Middle School, and the future Library. He described efforts to resolve school circulation and congestion issues and noted the difficulty planning the shared-use path's alignment due to nearby development schedules and the uncertain future alignment of adjacent Caldera Drive. BLS did not have a plan to use the allotted BMPO funds for path construction until the path alignment was certain. He stated BLS could wait to coordinate path alignment with developers, use the funds to improve existing school route paths elsewhere in Bend, or return the BMPO funds.

The Board discussed the need for infrastructure safety and connectivity improvements around High Desert Middle School, noting COVID funding for this project must be spent by September 2029. Approximately \$35,000 had been spent on path design efforts, leaving \$15,000 for planning and \$75,000 for project construction. Upcoming City Council meetings would discuss System Development Charges (SDCs), which could potentially be used to make some transportation improvements to this area. The Board ultimately chose to defer temporarily and recommended that BLS wait to confirm road alignments in the area and return to the BMPO no later than March 2026 with a proposal to move forward with the shared use path or other viable project alternatives.

The Board requested more information from City Staff at a future meeting regarding road finalization plans in Bend.

Griffin Gilbert, Rooted Homes, provided an update on the Simpson Avenue Affordable Housing Project and shared before and after pictures of asphalt, curbing, and sidewalk improvements spanning the full length of the project site along Simpson Ave and 18th Ave.

Questions and comments were addressed about potential to slow traffic on Simpson Ave; increased bicycle and e-bike usage in the neighborhood, partly due to a separate grant that provided e-bikes to Rooted Homes residents; currently having 16 of the 40 affordable housing units occupied, with a goal to complete the project by April or May 2026; and the plan to remove weeds and put in hydroseed in the area north of the multiuse path along Simpson Ave in spring 2026.

Brian Potwin, Commute Options, provided an update on the Safe Routes to School program, noting BMPO funds increased the level of service provided and allowed for local program expansion. He talked about bicycle and pedestrian safety education opportunities provided by local schools, including the annual Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, the Learn to Ride program, and the separate grant providing free helmets to students. He described community encouragement events, volunteer program opportunities, and school route mapping projects.

Councilor Méndez noted that a volunteer crossing guard at Bear Creek Elementary School had shared with City Council that he had observed an increase in the number of students walking and biking to school in Bend over the last few years, necessitating a new bicycle rack at the school. He requested more positive stories and observations about students walking and biking in Bend.

Bob Townsend, CET, provided an update on bus stop improvements including updated signs and schedule holders at all 286 bus stops in Bend, and installation of around 40 new benches and seven shelters. Of the \$405,000 in COVID funds awarded to CET, \$150,000 remained to be allocated. The next project phase would include using BMPO funds to purchase 50 additional benches and eight shelters and GO Bond funds from the City to install the benches and shelters and construct sidewalk improvements. Not all bus stops would be receiving benches and shelters, but CET was making consistent efforts to improve and upgrade the bus system infrastructure. CET had experienced a ninety percent reduction in customer service calls regarding bus routes and schedules after posting the updated schedules at bus stops, and ridership was increasing significantly. He confirmed bus stop schedules displayed website links and barcodes for the payment app and a bus app that allowed riders to track the bus location on their mobile device in real time.

7. 2024 Statewide Congestion Overview

Materials referenced: A link was provided to the [2024 Statewide Congestion Report](#).

Chi Mai presented the 2024 Statewide Congestion Report. She described the need for decision makers to have reliable data to lay the foundation for policies that accommodate household, commercial, and freight travel needs, support economic growth, and meet mobility-related performance measures amidst the recent increases in population, employment, and vehicle miles traveled (VMTs) in Bend. She shared transportation system use data tables and maps detailing levels of congestion and system reliability in Bend and statewide, noting congestion in Bend was caused primarily by signal operations.

She encouraged Staff members to reach out for access to transportation data on the RITIS platform used by ODOT, which was available to local governments and consultants fulfilling government contracts. The 2026 Statewide Congestion Overview would be available by early 2027.

Questions and comments were addressed about comparing State, County, and City funding split percentages with the percentages of State, County, and City road lane miles owned and vehicle miles traveled (VMTs); the State owning less lane miles of road, but carrying more freight, commercial, and interregional travel; the ability for cities to use funding mechanisms not available to counties, such as property taxes, franchise fees, utility fees, and tax increment financing through urban renewal; considering how to allocate the burden of paying for improvements on rural roads; data from 2023 being collected prior to completing the north Hwy 97 Corridor project and improvements to Hwy 20; statewide policy efforts to promote alternative transportation modes and reduce congestion; methods used by ODOT to collect transportation data; improving traffic signal sensors and communication along corridors to reduce congestion and adapt to real conditions; and congestion patterns falling under the “unclassified” category if not connected specifically to one of several common causes of congestion.

Ben Chaney, ODOT, talked about the need to analyze individual corridors with an engineering perspective to identify strategies to reduce congestion or signal delays at a given location. He

noted there were quirks in the congestion data due to bulk data collection methods and broad classifications used to simplify statewide travel patterns.

Manager Deke confirmed the 2026 Statewide Congestion Report would be presented to the Board upon its completion in spring 2027.

8. Other Business

Manager Deke stated that the City of Bend would be rolling out a new website at the end of the month, and the City's Communications Department was developing messaging to display on each of the City Department webpages. Manager Deke would send the draft messaging language for the BMPO webpage to Board members via email.

A special meeting of the BMPO Policy Board would be held on February 13, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. to discuss the Bend Transportation Safety Action Plan Update. The next regular scheduled meeting of the Policy Board would be February 20, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.

9. Public Comment

There was none.

10. Adjourn

Chair Méndez adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.



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Resolution Number 2026-01
Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board

For the Purpose of Adopting Safety Performance Measure Targets

WHEREAS, the Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMPO) has been designated by the Governor of the State of Oregon as the Metropolitan Planning Organization responsible, together with the State, for the comprehensive, continuing, and cooperative transportation planning process for the Bend urbanized area; and

WHEREAS, the Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR Part 490) require States to set targets for several performance measures including safety; and

WHEREAS, MPO's may establish safety targets by agreeing to plan and program projects that contribute toward the accomplishment of the State targets or establish their own targets within 180 days of the State establishing and reporting its targets.

WHEREAS, BMPO developed local safety targets using ODOT's targets methodology.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the BMPO adopts local safety performance targets for 2026.

Adopted by the Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization the 20th day of February 2026.

Yes: _____ No: _____ Abstain: _____

Authenticated by the Chair this 20th day of February 2026.

Ariel Mendez, BMPO Chair

Attest:

Tyler Deke, BMPO Manager



MEMO

To: BMPO Policy Board

From: Andrea Napoli

Date: 2/12/2026

Re: Safety Performance Measure Targets

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to provide background on federal safety performance measures and targets, explain why they are required, and outline the MPO's responsibility to re-establish safety targets annually.

Background on Federal Safety Performance Measures

The federal transportation performance management framework was established under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and continued under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. This framework requires state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to monitor and report on progress toward national transportation goals, including safety.

For safety, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has defined five required performance measures:

- 1. Number of fatalities**
- 2. Rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT)**
- 3. Number of serious injuries**
- 4. Rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT**
- 5. Number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries**

These measures are based on a rolling five-year average and are intended to support the national goal of reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.

Safety Target Requirements

Each year, state DOTs must establish statewide safety performance measure targets, and MPOs are required to either:

- **Support the state's targets, or**
- **Set their own MPO-specific targets for each of the five measures.**

This requirement ensures that MPO planning and programming decisions—particularly those involving federal transportation funds—are aligned with broader safety goals and contribute to reducing deaths and serious injuries on the transportation system.

Federal regulations specify that MPOs must act within 180 days of the state DOT's adoption of its annual safety performance measure targets, which means that the **BMPO must re-establish its targets by the end of February.**

This annual action is required to maintain compliance with federal performance management rules and to ensure continued eligibility for federal transportation funding.

Supporting ODOT's Safety Targets

The 2025 ODOT-established safety targets (2026 for BMPO) are based on the 5-year rolling average with base year 2020. Table 1, below, applies the same methodology to BMPO's safety data to develop the proposed 2026 BMPO safety targets, which continue to support ODOT's safety targets.

TABLE 1: FEDERAL SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND PROPOSED 2026 TARGETS FOR BMPO

Safety Performance Measures	2024 BMPO Crash Data	2026 Target
Number of Fatalities	6	4.8
Fatality Rate (per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT))	0.86	0.79
Number of Serious Injuries	64	23.0
Serious Injury Rate (per 100 million VMT)	9.13	3.81
Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries	11	4.0

Next Steps

The Board will be asked to consider adopting a resolution supporting the proposed 2026 BMPO safety targets, thereby supporting ODOT's safety targets.

U.S. 97 AT DESCHUTES RIVER WOODS SOUTH INTERCHANGE PROJECT

Application for Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program FY 2026

DESCRIPTION OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The BUILD Grant Program funds projects that will have a significant local or regional impact, focusing on projects which will modernize transportation infrastructure systems to improve safety and efficiency for the traveling public in the United States.

PROJECT LOCATION



STATEMENT OF NEED

The U.S. Highway 97 corridor is a principal freight route in the state of Oregon, facilitating regional commerce between Oregon and neighboring states. This route also serves as the primary access to rural communities in south Deschutes County, including the Deschutes River Woods community, which is constrained by limited access for its nearly 5,500 residents. The highway segment also bisects the Deschutes National Forest, and is identified as a Tier 1 Resilience corridor by the Oregon Department of Transportation due to wildfire risk.

The U.S. 97 at Deschutes River Woods South Interchange will secure an important freight route while providing safe and reliable access for rural communities, encouraging economic development and improving quality-of-life for residents of Deschutes County and beyond.

PROJECT PURPOSE

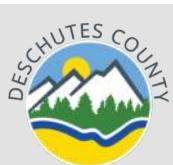
Apply for funding under a Planning grant to develop an Interchange Area Management Plan (IAMP), perform preliminary engineering design and obtain necessary environmental clearances to facilitate the project.

This Planning grant is eligible for 100% Federal funding.

PROJECT GOALS

- Improve the safety and connectivity of rural communities to the U.S. 97 corridor
- Provide an additional point of ingress and egress to the Deschutes River Woods subdivision and the High Desert Museum
- Foster economic growth and competitiveness for American companies and workers by improving an important freight corridor
- Fulfill goals of Deschutes County's 2020-2040 Transportation System Plan & ODOT's Resilience Improvement Plan.

CONCEPTUAL RENDERING



ROAD
DEPARTMENT





February 20, 2026

LOCATION

710 NW Wall Street
Downtown Bend

MAILING ADDRESS

PO Box 431
Bend, OR 97709

PHONE

(541) 693-2113
Relay Users Dial 7-1-1

WEB

bendoregon.gov/mpo

BMPO POLICY BOARD

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City of Bend, Councilor

Phil Chang, Vice-Chair
Deschutes County, Commissioner

Mike Riley
City of Bend, Councilor

Emerald Shirley
ODOT, Interim Central Oregon and Lower John Day Area Manager

Bob Townsend
Cascades East Transit, Director

BMPO STAFF

Tyler Deke, AICP
Manager

Andrea Napoli, AICP
Senior Planner

Kelli Kennedy
Program Coordinator

The Honorable Sean Duffy, Secretary
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Letter of Support – US 97/Deschutes River Woods interchange

Dear Secretary Duffy and BUILD Grant Review Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Bend MPO Policy Board to express our support for Deschutes County's BUILD grant application. I serve on the Bend City Council and Chair the Bend MPO and know that a robust transportation system is essential to create a safe and livable community.

The Deschutes River Woods community south of Bend is home to more than 2,100 residences and 5,500 residents. It is located within a moderate to high-risk area for wildfire. Safety within the community is further compromised by limited transportation access and egress routes.

A new interchange with access to US97 at the south end of Deschutes River Woods is identified in the Deschutes County Transportation System Plan and the MPO's 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Constructing a new interchange will significantly improve access and evacuation capabilities for one of the largest rural residential subdivisions in the state of Oregon.

Through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant program provides funding to, among other criteria, improve safety, quality of life, mobility and community connectivity.

Deschutes County's BUILD Grant application seeks funding under the Planning Category to support the development of an Interchange Area Management Plan, perform engineering design and obtain necessary environmental clearances. This initial phase will identify the alignment and connection point of the new southerly access to Deschutes River Woods.

We support this project and the BUILD Grant application for this much needed investment in community safety and resiliency. Thank you for your consideration of this grant request. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ariel Mendez
Bend City Councilor
amendez@bendoregon.gov

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February 20, 2026

LOCATION

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Downtown Bend

MAILING ADDRESS

PO Box 431
Bend, OR 97709

PHONE

(541) 693-2113
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WEB

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Manager

Andrea Napoli, AICP
Senior Planner

Kelli Kennedy
Program Coordinator

The Honorable Sean Duffy, Secretary
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Letter of Support – US97 Juniper Butte Safety Improvements (Central Oregon)

Dear Secretary Duffy and BUILD Grant Review Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Bend MPO Policy Board to express our support for the Oregon Department of Transportation BUILD grant application for safety improvements to US97. I serve on the Bend City Council and Chair the Bend MPO and know that a safe transportation system is essential to create a livable community.

U.S. Highway 97 is the primary north-south transportation and freight corridor serving Central Oregon and a vital rural highway connecting communities, supporting regional commerce, and providing access for emergency services. The Juniper Butte segment has a documented history of fatal and serious injury crashes, including head-on and weather-related collisions that frequently result in full roadway closures. When closures occur, there are no viable truck detours, severely disrupting freight movement and regional mobility.

The proposed project directly addresses these safety challenges through proven countermeasures, including median barrier installation, intelligent transportation system (ITS) improvements, shoulder widening, and extended truck scale merge lanes. These improvements will significantly reduce the risk of fatal and serious injury crashes, particularly crossover collisions, while improving driver awareness during sudden winter weather and icy conditions common at higher elevations.

This project strongly advances the BUILD program's safety and economic competitiveness priorities by improving rural highway safety and ensuring reliable freight mobility into and through Central Oregon. Reducing severe crashes and unplanned closures on US 97 will enhance supply chain reliability for agricultural, industrial, and commercial freight while improving travel reliability for residents and visitors alike.

The US 97 Juniper Butte Safety Improvements project is well-supported, ready to advance, and identified as a priority through the US 97 High Bridge to

Madras Safety Study and regional transportation partners. Its location, safety-driven scope, and clear regional benefits make it a strong candidate for BUILD investment.

We support this project and the BUILD Grant application for this much needed investment in regional safety and resiliency. Thank you for your consideration of this grant request. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ariel Mendez
Bend City Councilor
amendez@bendoregon.gov

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Puede obtener esta información en formatos alternativos como Braille, formato electrónico, etc. También disponemos de servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Póngase en contacto con Kelli Kennedy en kkennedy@bendoregon.gov o 541-693-2122. Los usuarios del servicio de retransmisión deben marcar el 7-1-1.