



# 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.

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## 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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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