



# Meeting Minutes

## BMPO Policy Board

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

Date: February 13, 2026

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Prepared by: ABC Transcription Services, LLC.

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## In Attendance

### Members

1. Chair Ariel “Ari” Méndez, Bend City Councilor
2. Vice Chair Phil Chang, Deschutes County Commissioner
3. Mike Riley, Bend City Councilor
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. Matt Kittelson, Kittelson and Associates
5. Miranda Barrus, Kittelson and Associates
6. Chris Doty, Deschutes County
7. James Dorofi, BMPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) member
8. Nick Fortey, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

## Notes

### 1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Méndez called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m. with a quorum established.

### 2. Hybrid Meeting Guidelines

Manager Deke reviewed the meeting guidelines.

### 3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

#### 4. Bend Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP) Update

Materials referenced: Tech Memo #1 – Regulations and Plans Review (Attachment A in agenda packet).

Tech Memo #2 – Safety Analysis Framework (Attachment B in agenda packet).

Public Engagement Plan (Attachment C in agenda packet).

A link was provided to the **2019 Bend TSAP**.

Matt Kittelson stated the Bend TSAP Update was funded through a federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) and would evaluate crash trends, identify strategies to reduce fatalities and injuries, create policy decision-making framework, and increase BMPO eligibility for state and federal funding. He shared crash data maps, noting an average of three to five roadway fatalities in Bend per year. Bend's TSAP was last updated in 2019 and new data from 2019 – 2023 was now available for all roads in the BMPO boundary area, including Tumalo and Deschutes River Woods (DRW). He described SS4A program objectives, noting grant funding was available for projects outside of road design, such as sensors to monitor striping and signage and emergency equipment for Police vehicles. Crash data for the highway system and Bend's local roadways would be considered independently to avoid overlooking local issues due to the volume of highway traffic. The TSAP update timeline would include three Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings and two rounds of public engagement with completion anticipated within 12 to 18 months.

Questions and comments were addressed about car accident injury classifications ranging from property damage only to fatal injury; analyzing crash data with crashes of different injury types weighted according to severity; reducing property damage only crashes, potentially through low-cost quick-build projects; mitigating known risk factors such as low lighting or limited signage to prevent accidents; the significant percentage of car accidents going unreported due to Oregon's self-reporting policy; Jefferson County's recent \$8 million SS4A grant to fund high priority projects identified in its TSAP; taking a jurisdictionally blind approach to identify safety strategies on all roads in the BMPO boundary before sharing strategies with private street owners; including accidents or fatalities that occurred in parking lots or on private streets in the TSAP data; and sharing the final TSAP document with Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation (COACT) and ODOT to help inform area funding priorities.

Matt Kittelson outlined the Policy Board's role to steer TSAP development by reviewing draft documents and providing written comments, attending public engagement opportunities, and supporting TSAP implementation and monitoring. Zan Associates was helping to implement the community engagement plan, and he described the engagement plan goals, priority audiences, and strategies. The tentative schedule for community engagement opportunities was shared.

Questions were addressed about working with Communications to engage target demographic audiences through community events and outreach to representative groups; BMPO Staff taking the lead in one-on-one engagement with community members; working with Zan Associates to develop outreach questions; the status of outreach to the Human Rights and Equity Commission (HREC) and the City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee (COBAAC); and involving and informing the community early in the process to prevent frustration.

Discussion ensued about whether outreach was needed for the unhoused population at the temporary safe stay area (TSSA) at Juniper Ridge on US-97. While the TSSA was outside the BMPO Boundary and the Bend TSAP study area, there had been some fatalities in the area from people entering or exiting US-97 in inappropriate ways or trying to cross the highway. The County's TSAP had not addressed the TSSA because the older data used for the County TSAP did not reflect current conditions, no county roads were connected to the highway near the TSSA, and data not directly affecting the county road network may have been filtered. Board members stated it would be helpful to have more data about crashes on US-97 to inform discussions around the TSSA.

Miranda Barrus offered to pull pedestrian-related crashes from the data to help identify which crashes were related to the TSSA rather than car traffic. The whole corridor along US-97 between Bend and Redmond had extreme issues, and crashes were not concentrated on the road segment by the TSSA. She noted recent crash data was available for fatal crashes only.

Matt Kittelson confirmed crash data was often delayed by two to three years. The data being analyzed for the Bend TSAP Update was taken between January 2019 and December 31, 2023. Recently completed safety investments on US-97 would not be reflected in the data. The County TSAP had utilized data from 2018 – 2022. He described analyzing recent fatal crash data to see whether it confirmed the current data analysis or pointed to new trends. He noted the Homeless Leadership Coalition was on the outreach list.

Matt Kittelson said state and federal regulations, the 2019 Bend TSAP, Council Goals, and other existing safety plans would be reviewed to identify goals and policies to incorporate in the TSAP update. Work completed for the TSAP update would inform Bend's future Transportation System Plan (TSP) update. He shared the safety analysis framework and next steps.

Questions and comments were addressed about reviewing progress to see if safety investments were effective and to consider solutions for identified high-crash intersections that did not receive attention; investments made during the analysis period not being reflected in the data; one TSAP update cycle being not enough time to fully understand data trends; the data-driven approach using performance measures, crash modification factors, and proven effective countermeasures; including law enforcement and emergency responders in the PAC to provide input about local safety issues and potential solutions; and possibly requesting informal feedback from Police and Engineering a year or two implementing City projects.

The Board, Staff, and consultants discussed including per capita metrics for fatal or serious injury crashes as well as the required vehicle miles traveled (VMT) metric; returning with safety metrics used by other jurisdictions for the Board's consideration; getting more information on speed-related crashes, potentially from DKS and Associates who was helping with the crash pattern analysis; Bend's successful roundabout policy which had been recommended to other cities for use in a TSAP; considering posting lower speeds across the City; comparing speed-related crashes on arterial and collector roads versus residential roads; the difficulty identifying crashes related to distracted driving, and the link between distracted and impaired driving; overlap between the County and Bend TSAPs being cooperative rather than contradictory; and

using various community lenses to identify area priorities and facilitate discussion about solutions, similar to work done by Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation.

## **5. Other Business**

Phil Chang announced he would not be able to attend the upcoming Policy Board meeting as he would be joining the Transportation Committee of the National Association of County Organizations in Washington D.C. He welcomed Board members' input regarding the upcoming federal surface transportation package.

Manager Deke stated he would provide a brief update about the next multi-year transportation bill at the upcoming Policy Board meeting, if there was time.

Chris Doty would also be in Washington D.C. next week as an Oregon delegate for the County Engineers Association. He emphasized the importance of continuing a robust SS4A program. The BMPO was asked to provide a letter of support for the County's BUILD grant application for designing the DRW southern interchange on US-97, which was not completed despite being part of the County's TSP. The project asked for \$5.25 million to go from concept to thirty percent design, consider three alignment options, secure the necessary environmental clearances, and develop an interchange access management plan.

Chair Méndez questioned prioritizing access to DRW by advocating for a freeway interchange when DRW was not expected to grow and there currently was not enough money to serve DRW with transit.

Chris Doty stated DRW access was a priority due the facts that if it were a city, it would be the 75<sup>th</sup> largest city in Oregon by population, and that it has only one available route in the event of an emergency evacuation. The project was a good candidate for receiving a PROTECT Grant, intended to increase access and public safety in the event of a wildfire or similar threat. He clarified that the DRW interchange was separate from the planned paved path to the High Desert Museum along US-97 which would have its own undercrossing, though the DRW interchange would provide service to the High Desert Museum and ameliorate the dangerous left turns in and out of the museum.

Manager Deke confirmed the BMPO had written a previous letter of support for the DRW interchange project, though the project had changed somewhat since that time.

The next scheduled meeting of the Policy Board would be February 20, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. The meeting would be extended to two hours, and the agenda packet would be posted later today.

## **6. Public Comment**

James Dorofi encouraged City Councilors to reach out to neighborhood district representatives. The desire to participate in the TSAP update process had been expressed at a meeting held yesterday between Board Chairs and Land Use Chairs of 10 Bend neighborhood districts. He noted having Zan Associates in control of BMPO processes left a weird gap, and he recommended Zan Associates create a survey and use neighborhood districts to promote the survey to provide thousands of inputs for project outreach.

## 7. Adjourn

Chair Méndez adjourned the meeting at 12:02 p.m.

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