



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

DATE: May 16, 2022

SUBJECT: BPAC Annual Report

I. Overview

The mission of Deschutes County Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (BPAC) is to promote and encourage safe bicycling and walking as a significant means of transportation in Deschutes County.

The committee serves to advise Deschutes County, the cities of Bend, LaPine, Redmond, and Sisters, as well as the Oregon Department of Transportation. As a citizen committee, BPAC provides information on best practices for walking and bicycling infrastructure as well as on community needs and interests. The committee encourages bicycling, walking, and public transit as viable means of transportation in Deschutes County.

BPAC is comprised of 13 volunteer citizen members with regional representation from across Deschutes County. The committee holds monthly meetings to discuss current bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs, provide input, and advise local agencies concerning bicycling and walking interests and priorities. BPAC meetings are open to the public and include agency representatives as non-voting participants.

II. Accomplishments

Since our last annual report to the Board of County Commissioners BPAC has continued to leverage the expertise and enthusiasm of our members and our relationships with agencies and organizations across Deschutes County and Central Oregon to improve conditions for people who walk, ride bikes, and utilize transit.

Our continued work to understand the needs and possibilities for connections between communities and connecting existing trail systems provided a strong foundation for the committee's input to the county Transportation Systems Plan update that started last year. Our goal is for the revised TSP to adopt a strategic vision for the future of active transportation in the county, including a significant focus on bicycling and walking as key transportation options as well as recreational activities. Our TSP subcommittee, county transportation staff, and the county's consultant had several productive meetings in 2021 and continuing into this year, reviewing over 30 specific routes, connections, and infrastructure investments. We are

encouraged by the plan drafts we have seen so far and will continue to engage as the TSP is finalized.

We hope the commissioners will adopt a transportation system plan that highlights strong goals for walking and bicycling elements in the plan overview and includes the prioritized list of potential projects connecting communities and recreation areas in Deschutes County. We believe federal and state greenhouse gas reduction goals will continue to drive additional funding for active transportation projects and having these potential connections identified and prioritized in the transportation plan will position the county to leverage that funding.

BPAC has continued to monitor and provide input to the Bend GO bond implementation through our member who is also on the Transportation Bond Oversight Committee.

Deschutes County completed a Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP) in 2019 that identified both location-specific and countywide opportunities to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes for all transportation modes. There was some modest progress in responding to this plan in 2021 with ODOT and COIC forming a safety subcommittee as part of the Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation (COACT). While the focus of this subcommittee will be presenting transportation safety messages to the public, BPAC will continue to look for other opportunities to leverage the TSAP going forward. For example, while the TSAP identified driver behaviors as a significant cause of fatal and serious injury crashes we have not seen any discussion of enhanced enforcement.

III. BPAC Awards

Since 1996, BPAC has presented the Big Chaining Awards annually to honor individuals, businesses, and public agencies that have made significant contributions in the support of better bicycling and walking in Central Oregon. In addition, the Peter Hanson Memorial Award specifically recognizes individuals in the community who have provided outstanding voluntary contributions. In 2021 we did not receive any responses to our call for nominations.

Since 2006, the Safe Sidewalks Awards have recognized those businesses and property owners who not only fulfill, but also often exceed, the legal requirements to remove snow, ice and debris from sidewalks. Given the light snow year we did not open nominations for the winter of 2021-2022.

IV. Future Focus

This March the committee adopted a new set of key goals for 2022 and beyond:

1. **E-bikes:** Engage in on-going conversations about e-bike rules and use. BPAC does not currently have a position on e-bike regulation. We believe e-bikes are a game changer for bicycles as a transportation option, but their higher speeds can lead to conflicts with pedestrians and traditional bike riders. Currently the state, Forest Service, and BLM all have different rules on the use of e-bikes.

2. **Transportation project planning:** Improve our effectiveness at participating in planning of transportation infrastructure projects within the county:
 - a. **Engage early:** Engage in project planning early to ensure the project goals include bike and pedestrian transportation needs.
 - b. **Safety:** Ensure that bikes and pedestrians can safely travel along or cross any new or reconstructed routes. Safe crossings of Highways 97 and 20 are of particular concern.
 - c. **Connectivity:** Work to make sure that each project connects to the community around it, nearby bike and pedestrian routes, and that new projects lessen existing barriers and don't create new barriers to pedestrian and bike travel.

Brief the Board of County Commissioners and county staff on our findings and recommendations about ODOT projects within the county and help them influence ODOT's project selection for Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act spending.

3. **Community Outreach:** Increase our community outreach efforts by:
 - a. Maintain our role as a hub of information about bicycle and pedestrian transportation issues and projects between Deschutes County, the cities in the county, ODOT, Bend MPO, COACT, and others as appropriate.
 - b. Developing a community outreach program to understand community viewpoints from a variety of organizations such as neighborhood associations and road districts.
 - c. Re-establishing the Three-County Summit for bike and pedestrian transportation.
 - d. Working with organizations and agencies such as Commute Options, School Districts, Park and Recreation Districts, city BPACs, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Cascades East Transit, Deschutes County, and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department on topics such as safety, e-bikes, connectivity, and open street events.
4. **Bike Share:** Support any efforts to develop bike share programs in the county.

Attachments

1. BPAC 2021 Annual Report