



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

**DATE:** May 10, 2023

**SUBJECT:** BPAC Annual Report

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### 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.

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. Safe Sidewalk Awards

BPAC created the Safe Sidewalks Awards in 2006 to recognize those businesses and property owners who go beyond the legal requirements to remove snow, ice and debris from sidewalks. This year we received numerous submissions in response to our call for nominations and are honored to present Safe Sidewalks Awards to the following individuals and organizations:

- Owen Brand, Bend
- Newport Ave Market , Bend
- Brian See, Bend
- Stahancyk, Kent & Hook Family Law, Bend
- Joseph Therrien, Bend
- Technology Design Associates, Bend
- Nate Lund, Bend
- Thomas Stewart, Redmond
- Joanne Bulley, Bend



### **III. Committee Focus Areas**

#### **DESCHUTES COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN (TSP) UPDATE**

Our TSP subcommittee has been working with county staff and their TSP update consultant since the project started in 2021. 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.

A prioritized list of over 20 regional connections and recreational connections was included in the county's online TSP open house last December. The core of these projects is to connect all the cities and smaller communities in the county with paths that allow people to bike safely between them. Locations like state parks and other recreation areas would also be connected in this network.

We hope the commissioners will adopt a transportation system plan in 2023 that highlights strong goals for walking and bicycling elements in the plan overview and includes the prioritized list of regional and recreational connections. We believe federal and state greenhouse gas reduction goals will continue to drive additional funding for active transportation projects and having these connections identified and prioritized in the transportation plan will position the county to leverage that funding.

#### **CENTRAL OREGON BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUMMIT**

Last September BPAC held our first Bicycle and Pedestrian Summit since 2019. The event in Redmond drew over 30 attendees from around the region as well as members of the Oregon State Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and media representatives.

Topics discussed included Active Transportation and Health, e-Bikes: Opportunities and Challenges, Safe Routes to Schools, Equity in Transportation, and Active Transportation Planning. We also had a roundtable with representatives from Central Oregon communities sharing information on bicycle and pedestrian improvements in their areas.

We plan to present the 10th edition of the Summit in September.

#### **E-BIKE OPPORTUNITIES AND ISSUES**

The rules and laws for e-bikes are confusing: Thirty-seven states and the federal government have adopted a 3-class system for e-bikes while Oregon has not. E-bikes can be ridden anywhere on Oregon's roads, streets, and paths that a bike can be ridden except sidewalks but riders must be 16 years old. Every land management agency in our area has different rules for where e-bikes can be ridden.

So even though there is no agreement about exactly what e-bikes are, who can ride them, and where they can be ridden, the use of e-bikes is exploding and the state and some cities are providing rebates to encourage their use. At the same time, they provide a new and exciting form of inexpensive and low-impact transportation. We can expect growing use and continued confusion.

## **TRANSIT HUBS AND MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIVITY**

Cascades East Transit (CET) is the regional public transportation provider for Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson counties as well as the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. Services include fixed routes within the City of Bend, Community Connector routes with connect cities throughout the service area, and Dial-A-Ride services throughout six cities. These services allow riders to easily transition between bicycling and walking to utilizing transit in order to make those longer trips. Over the past year, CET has focused on making new and improved connections as well as planning for multi-modal mobility hubs.

One such connection was the addition of a new route, Route 25, which connects residents of Crooked River Ranch to medical, shopping, and employment opportunities in Redmond. This route has proven to be crucial to many senior residents who rely on the service to do their shopping and get to medical appointments. Another improved connection was the relocation of the Deschutes River Woods stop to a more centralized and safer location that has seen higher ridership and satisfaction with the stop.

Mobility hubs will be strategically planned locations where all modes of transportation can come together to ensure individuals traveling without a car have a means of completing their trips. These hubs would include bus stops for multiple routes, shared and public bike parking, ride share parking, and wayfinding as well as other amenities. These hubs will facilitate connections for transit riders to other modes of transportation for their first or last mile and serve as centers for mobility.

## **BIKE SHARE**

Bend began an e-bike share agreement with Bird Bikes in 2022. They have 250 bikes in the program with about 150 bikes in operation on any given day. With almost 26,000 trips averaging 1.34 miles, this program has avoided the release of 3.6 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. Bike rental cost is about \$27/hour which makes it much more expensive than bike rentals at local bike shops so it serves a different type of customer. About 11% of rides are daily commutes—people who ride every day, at the same time, using the same route. Discounts are given to people with low incomes and that program is growing. The Bird Bikes will be back on the street on May 12 this spring.

Bend is working with local businesses to identify the best bike parking areas and ;has installed 120 public bike racks. In 2023 credits for parking bikes in designated areas should help keep bikes corralled. For 2024, they are applying for a carbon reduction grant which will be used to add Mobility Points/Hubs close to affordable housing and to add city-owned e-cargo bikes.

Redmond is starting discussions with Bird Bikes about an e-scooter share program. It is still too early to tell if they will start such a program.

## **ODOT US97 NORTH CORRIDOR PROJECT**

BPAC has been engaged with ODOT and the city of Bend since this project was kicked off in 2019 with receipt of a \$60 million federal INFRA grant. Unfortunately the scope of the project was constrained by the 2014 Environmental Impact Statement that did not adequately

anticipate bicycle and pedestrian connectivity requirements. ODOT and the city have worked within those constraints to improve the bike/ped components where feasible but there are still significant gaps in direct connections from the project area to the surrounding community. The city explored the possibility of a connection across the new section of parkway and the railroad but decided it was not viable.

BPAC will continue to engage as the project moves through the design/build stages this year and next.

#### **ODOT US20 TUMALO - OLD BEND REDMOND PROJECT**

BPAC has also been engaged on this project since the original stakeholders meetings that recommended a roundabout at US20 & Cook / O.B. Riley coupled with a grade-separated bike/ped crossing. This became part of the U.S. 20: Tumalo-Cooley Road project which also includes a multi-use path on U.S. 20 between Cooley Road and Old Bend-Redmond Highway. While the original budget did not include the under crossing ODOT and the county eventually identified funds to include it. This project is under construction and will greatly improve safety and connectivity for all modes.

#### **BEND - LAVA BUTTE AND SUNRIVER - LA PINE TRAIL PROJECTS**

ODOT received a Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) grant to construct a multi-use path from the Baker / Knott Road interchange to the Lava Butte visitor center, connecting to the High Desert Museum. ODOT and the USFS selected a preferred route over a year ago, but from BPAC's perspective the project schedule seems to be slipping due to zoning challenges. The ODOT project page currently shows construction not starting until Fall 2024.

This is a key project and part of the connectivity plan BPAC is supporting in the county TSP update. We hope the issues can be resolved quickly so this connection can be completed in a timely fashion.

ODOT has also received a FLAP grant to develop a plan to extend the multi-use path from Lava Butte to La Pine. This project kicked off recently and BPAC has a representative on the stakeholder committee.

#### **LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS**

In 2022 BPAC provided letters of support for these grant applications:

- The City of Sisters applied for a grant from the Oregon State Parks Local Government Grant program to build a multi-use path from Village Green park to the Peterson Ridge trailhead. This project was not selected for funding.
- The City of Sisters applied for a grant from US 20/Locust Ave roundabout from the FY23 Congressionally Directed Spending program to fund the US20 / Locust Avenue roundabout. This project was funded from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program instead.
- Bend Parks and Recreation Department applied for a FLAP grant to build a trailhead at the north end of the to-be-built Baker / Knott to Lava Butte multi-use path. This project was not selected for funding.

#### Attachments

1. BPAC 2022 Annual Report