



January 19, 2022

Oregon Transportation Commission
355 Capitol Street NE, MS #11
Salem, OR 97301-3871
Delivery via email

Dear Oregon Transportation Commissioners,

On behalf of the Bend Chamber of Commerce and our 1,200 business members in Central Oregon, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The Chamber has been actively engaged in the dialog surrounding infrastructure and transportation projects for many years, and is a key partner with the City of Bend on new initiatives.

I am writing to support the City's request for IIJA funds to construct priority projects that will significantly improve our aging and inefficient infrastructure. The projects being proposed will create a literal and figurative bridge to knit our community together, and ensure equitable access to all residents. The Midtown Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossings will not only improve safety and efficiency of mobility options, but moreover they will bind communities within our City that have been separated by US 97 and the BNSF railway. These new connection points will support multimodal transportation options and integrate downtown Bend with the Bend Central District (BCD) to provide true urban development within our growing community.

As you may know, citizens of Bend have already approved a General Obligation Bond in November 2020 and committed upwards of \$12 million towards the Midtown Crossing infrastructure. It is our understanding that the City has requested an additional \$15 million to fully complete these projects. We are fully supportive of this request, and feel that the City is well positioned to leverage IIJA funds with our existing local investments.

The Chamber's support for the Midtown Crossings is rooted in the larger effort to redevelop and grow the BCD into a thriving community within our city to create a much-needed wide range of housing for the workforce as well as a thriving, connected community. These projects are a critical component of the BCD vision that has attracted private investment and will serve as a catalyst to spur further investment in the area.

Creating an environment where businesses, their employees and our community excel together through collaboration, advocacy, resources and leadership to meet Bend's business challenges.

The Chamber is also supportive of the City's request for additional discretionary IJIA funds to complete the Murphy Road interchange in Southeast Bend. The project, while partially included in the 2020 GO Bond project list, is anticipated to need an additional \$5 million for completion. Southeast Bend is among the fastest growing areas of our City, with several thousand new homes in the construction pipeline that are desperately needed for our workforce. Efficient transportation options and complete connections for the Southeast part of the City are key to ensuring a mobile workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our organization's comments, and the OTC's consideration of the City of Bend's funding request.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katy Brooks", written in a cursive style.

Katy Brooks
President + CEO
Bend Chamber of Commerce

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