

TRANSIT FACILITIES MATTER

HAWTHORNE STATION ISN'T MEETING OUR NEEDS



LACK OF ROOM TO GROW

We need more transit services to support our growing region, but the small site at Hawthorne Station is already struggling to serve our current hub and spoke system. Adjacent to a single-family neighborhood and shoehorned onto a small lot bordered by narrow streets, Hawthorne Station's operations already spill over. This station is inadequate to move our region's workforce, support activities on our higher ed campuses and attract choice riders and visitors whose use of transit will reduce congestion.

SAFETY CONCERNS

The lack of nearby sidewalk network makes it difficult to safely access the station, and the tight quarters at Hawthorne Station mean buses, pedestrians, cars, delivery trucks and bicyclists all try to jockey for safe space on the same tight streets. Collisions are narrowly avoided every day.

NOT FAIR

Hawthorne Station puts a great burden on its neighbors. Very little on-site parking for riders or buses, frequent blockages of nearby parking lots, a non-smoking campus and closed bathrooms at night all mean that nearby residents and businesses are frequently asked to provide shelter and facilities to support the transit station in ways that aren't fair.

THE SOLUTIONS



Salem Transit Center



Eugene Transit Center



SUSTAIN GROWTH BY BUILDING A MODERN STATION AT A NEW LOCATION

- ◆ Similarly sized communities in Oregon have already invested in facilities that allow their systems to grow and attract choice riders. Room for a large park and ride, dedicated space for buses, co-location with other transportation options, high-density housing and services: we can create the kind of facilities riders want to use.
- ◆ **Prioritize construction of a modern, high-quality transit station in the 2040 Transit Master Plan and fund it within 5 years.**

ABANDON HUB AND SPOKE FOR A VIBRANT NETWORK OF MOBILITY HUBS

- ◆ The hub and spoke system doesn't work when the hub is weak. But we can create a vibrant transit system that reduces congestion through a network of mobility hubs—small centers of transportation where different modes of travel like walking, biking, car shares and transit all converge. Mobility hubs are the perfect answer for supporting high-use employment and commercial centers, and complete neighborhoods throughout the region.
- ◆ **Design a network of mobility hubs in partnership with employers, government, developers and commercial centers and fund it within 2 years.**



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MEETING THE REGION'S NEEDS

RELIEVE PRESSURE ON ROADS

A whopping 20 new people move to Central Oregon every day. In Bend we expect a population of 120,000 by 2030. Growth puts new strain on already congested roads. We need high-quality transit facilities and services that attracts choice riders to help reduce congestion.¹

BUILD THE ECONOMY

Economists predict Central Oregon will lead the state in job growth over the next decade—with as much as 58 percent growth. To support economic development we will increasingly need transit that is capable of moving the workforce with speed and reliability.²

SUPPORT HIGHER EDUCATION

Most OSU-Cascades and COCC students live in the region and commute to class. Cost, congestion, and limited campus parking are top reasons students need transit. But for it to work, they need routes leading straight to campus, reducing transfer times.³

KEEP TOURISM IMPACTS LOW

Though most traffic is local⁴, we can reduce trips on our roads by providing real transit options for visitors. To make a difference our system must be networked so well with other transportation options and key commercial centers that visitors feel confident leaving their car at home.

PROMOTE EQUITY

Transit is an essential service for a large portion of our population: Seniors, low-income families, households without cars, and people with disabilities all need a system that keeps them on the go with accessible transit services in close proximity.⁵



¹According to Portland State University's Population Research Center
²According to data released in June 2018 by regional economist Damon Runberg and data reported by Sperling Best Places to live.
³According to OSU-Cascades and COCC enrollment data.
⁴According to ODOT traffic counts.
⁵According to Cascades East Transit ridership data.

Hawthorne Avenue Neighbors

P.O. Box 2221, Bend, Oregon 97709
hawthorneavenueighbors@gmail.com

Andrea Breault
Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council
334 NE Hawthorne Avenue
Bend, Oregon 97701

Jan. 22, 2018

Mike Landolt
Bend Police Department
555 NE 15TH St
Bend, OR 97701

CC: COIC executive director, COIC board of directors, COIC transportation staff, Bend City Council, Bend City Manager, Bend Police Chief, Bend Business Advocate, Bend Economic Development Advisory Board

Dear Ms. Breault and Mr. Landolt,

We, the Hawthorne Avenue Neighbors, write to you today to express our gratitude to Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council and the Bend Police Department for meeting with our group on Dec. 5, 2018. In this productive meeting, property owners, merchants and nearby residents were able to share their concerns related to traffic flow, crime and nuisance activity in the area of Hawthorne Avenue and Third and Fourth Streets and discuss possible short and long-term solutions. (These concerns and the solutions are attached at the end of this letter for reference.)

For many of us, this corner of Bend has been home to our businesses for twenty years or more—back when COIC's building was the Cascade Natural Gas building, and long before it was a transit station. Many of us remember hearing the news in 2006 that a transit station would be located adjacent to our businesses, and welcoming the idea. We knew then, just as we know now that transit means access and opportunity that can change lives. We thought this station could mean positive change for our businesses, too, by bringing more customers to our neighborhood, and giving our employees and residential neighbors more transportation choices.

This station has changed our lives, but now, 12 years on, we feel that for the most part, the change has not been for the better. Instead the location of the station has become a deterrent for customers and over time crime and nuisance behaviors have increased dramatically, causing safety and security concerns for our employees and residential neighbors. This is why we are so deeply grateful to COIC and the Bend Police Department for meeting with us and being willing to create new action plans to address traffic flow, safety and security issues in our neighborhood.

An underlying issue to many of the problems, is that Hawthorne Station is not adequate to accommodate the activities that must naturally occur there. We know that transit services must keep expanding to support our growing city, but already the uses at this station spill over onto our properties in ways that are not fair or safe. We thank Andrea for sharing that COIC is aware that this site is not ideal and that a new station likely must be secured within the next decade. We want to do our best to urge COIC and the City of Bend to work hard to provide our community—as soon as possible—with a transit station that supports the exciting developments in our town, such as the new university, more vibrant urban centers and increasing employment opportunities. Bend deserves to have the kind of modern transit stations that other Oregon cities our size, such as Salem or Eugene have already achieved.

In the meantime, here are a few of the specific reasons that the Hawthorne Avenue Neighbors feel that Bend's current transit station creates unfair and unsafe conditions. For starters, until recently,

Hawthorne Station's bathrooms did not remain open for all transit operation hours, forcing people to use the facilities at our businesses. And, unfortunately, we have heard recent reports that the bathrooms are, again, sometimes being locked in the evenings. The station is a non-smoking campus, sending riders and bus drivers onto our properties to smoke cigarettes under our overhangs and near our doorways. There aren't enough parking spots available at the transit station for people wishing to leave their cars and ride the bus, or space to pick up riders and so frequently our parking lots are filled with vehicles associated with the transit center, preventing our own customers from accessing our parking lots.

CET bus drivers often use our parking lots as turn arounds or places to park while waiting for their next trip. In some cases, our driveways have been completely blocked by buses, meaning distribution trucks cannot access our loading zones and customers cannot reach our businesses without frustration. Delivery trucks attempting to reach the businesses in Bend Towne Center often must try to squeeze through large buses parked on both sides of 4th Street and Hawthorne Avenue, or re-route and find another way to access the property. This cramming of the streets makes it very difficult to see oncoming traffic. And on Hawthorne between Third and Fourth, we truly anticipate that someone will be seriously injured as people, bikes, buses, cars and delivery trucks all try to navigate the same narrow streets.

At the same time that activity from the station has dramatically affected our properties and businesses, we have experienced a strong uptick in the instances of crime and nuisance activity. We do not fault transit riders or COIC for this increase, but we are aware that these increasing safety and security challenges are related to the location of facilities in our neighborhood such as the bottle drop and the transit station. Drug use, drug deals, theft, property damage, trespass, assaults, people locking themselves in our bathrooms—all of these activities are common occurrences on our properties. To date some of us have invested tens of thousands of dollars on new lighting, security systems, security guards, and tearing out landscaping that's conducive to nuisance activity as we attempt to protect employees, customers and property.

It is for all these reasons that we are so grateful to COIC and the Bend Police Department for being willing to work with us to find both immediate and long-term solutions. We write to you today to formally ask COIC, the Bend Police Department and the City of Bend to work with us to turn the lists of possible solutions that we developed on Dec. 5 into action plans that can be monitored, reviewed for progress and revised to improve conditions.

We know that we have an important role to play in being good partners, too, and look forward to continuing to work together to improve transit facilities in Bend and ensure safety and economic vibrancy in this important commercial area of Bend.

Thank you,

Bob Bobosky, Bend Towne Center
Andrew Burzynski, Denture In
DeeDee Burzynski, Denture In
Tad Burzynski, Denture In
Julia Carda, Everyday Brain Fitness
Andrew Deenik, New York City Sub Shop Inc.
Sandra Dickinson, Pizazz Hairstyling
Ashley Evert, Bend Three Sisters Inn and Suites
Dusty Harris, Ace Hardware
Brad Hester, Bend Family Dentistry
Karen Joss, Joss Property Services
Mark Merrick, 3rd Street Beverage
Stacey Sabin, Bend Family Dentistry
Petie Thom, Hutch's Bicycles
Jerry Williams, The UPS Store

COMMUNITY MEETING INPUT

Dec. 5, 2018 at Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council

OVERVIEW

On December 5th, approximately twenty “Hawthorne Avenue Neighbors” gathered at the COIC office to meet with Andrea Breault of COIC and Mike Landolt of the Bend Police Department. The meeting was the first time many residents and businesses owners in the area of Hawthorne Avenue and Third and Fourth Streets had been able to express their concerns with staff from these agencies. The conversation was highly productive and focused on finding solutions. The following is a list of the concerns and action items discussed by participants, COIC and the Bend Police Department.

TRAFFIC-FLOW CONCERNS

- Congestion is a major issue on these streets. Buses and vehicles on both sides of the road make it very difficult to travel through the area
- Minor traffic accidents occur due to congestion
- Traffic speeds on 4th Street
- Buses parking near stop signs causes cars to pull out into intersections to see oncoming traffic
- Business parking lots are used by idling vehicles and sometimes buses, making it difficult for customers to access businesses
- Buses frequently block the entrance to Bend Towne Center on Hawthorne Avenue
- Buses use the Bend Towne Center parking lot to access Hawthorn or to turn around
- This is a very busy block, with pedestrians, bikers, cars, delivery trucks and buses all trying to navigate to use the congested streets
- There is a high level of concern that someone will be seriously injured

SAFETY AND NUISANCE CONCERNS

- Non-patrons using bathrooms, especially when Hawthorne Station bathrooms are locked. Sometimes people lock themselves in bathrooms for several hours.
- People disturbing trash cans at homes and businesses to throw away trash or drug paraphernalia
- Hawthorne Station is non-smoking, so people move to other nearby properties to smoke cigarettes and vape
- There is a frequent issue of people sleeping in the landscaping, on the roofs, in the closets inside buildings or near garbage dumpsters of nearby properties
- Panhandling
- Employees being accosted in parking lots
- Staff safety a strong concern and many businesses now have a policy that employees do not leave alone at night
- Littering
- People defecating on private properties
- Drug use on properties and hypodermic needles being left behind

BUSINESS EXPENSES INCURRED

- Customers have been lost because they are afraid or uncomfortable to visit
- Bend Towne Center has had to hire a security company at very high expense
- Bend Towne Center has had to add a gate to prevent buses from using the side lot as a turn around

- New lighting has been added by Bend Towne Center, Three Sisters Inn and Hutch's bicycles
- An older tree was cut down to prevent drug use and cigarette smoking at the corner of the Bend Towne Center parking lot
- Businesses are considering moving away, even knowing that it will be a high cost to do so. Those tenant spaces may become more difficult to lease
- Security cameras have been installed at many businesses
- Businesses have had to remove landscaping so people cannot hide in the bushes
- Commercial property values are declining

RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS

- Hawthorne Station needs a location more conducive to its uses
- COIC could partner more closely with the City of Bend streets department to add painting to streets noting where people and bus drivers should and shouldn't park
- Bus drivers smoking on adjacent properties can be reduced
- Buses can be prevented from using the Bend Towne Center parking lot
- Make the transit station location a bigger part of the Bend Central District conversation
- Mini-hubs for transit around the city could be a better solutions rather than a hub and spoke system
- Better security after hours and more duties noted within the scope of security guards
- Look at other parts of the community where similar challenges have been addressed and model successes that occurred there
- Increase police presence
- Possible urban renewal investments in new transit station
- Begin better documenting issues through photos and notes, and tracking what times of day they occur

OTHER AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

- Cascades Disposal
- Bend Bottle Drop
- Other nearby residents
- Juniper Swim and Fitness Center staff

ACTION ITEMS

- Send summary of these notes to everyone involved
- Send bus station map to stakeholders noting where buses should and shouldn't be
- Generate spreadsheet that captures cost and expenses for businesses and share with the Bend Economic Development Advisory Board
- Send times when extra patrol is needed to Bend Police Department
- Business owners need to begin documenting crimes
- Business owners need to keep contacting the police