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Testimony to the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources HB2027

Chair, members of the committee, I have lived in Bend since 1995 and like thousands of others I moved here for the opportunities for outdoor recreation. Even before 1995 when my family visited we dreamed of the day when a continuous trail connected Sunriver, Meadow Camp, Bend, Shevlin Park and Tumalo State Park. Although the trail alignment could be located in less scenic areas or on roads, no project could capture the imagination as this special place. It can provide a sensitivity for nature along the same corridor that Native Americans, birds, fish, and animals have used as a natural highway since the beginning of habitation.

A trail has been envisioned for the all time I have lived in Bend, and I first saw it in the 1995 Park, Recreation and Greenway Plan, which also serves as the recreation component of the City of Bend Comprehensive Plan. It has been a key component to recreation planning in subsequent plans and throughout countless public meetings. The Parks and Recreation District has been moving forward on trail acquisition and construction with the rapid growth in new residents.



*Interpretive boardwalk on the Deschutes River through Bend, Unique design solutions to trail design*

A bridge can be designed to minimize its appearance in the landscape, it could also be designed to add to the scenic value of the riparian corridor. It would also be possible to find alternate river crossings such as ferries or tunnels. Perhaps Plexiglas tubes could be used not only to cross the river, but to create an educational component to the trail crossing. But a simple pedestrian bridge is the most cost effective and likely the least disruptive crossing method. In addition to the recreational component, a bridge can provide access to fire and rescue crews and equipment adding safety to its recreational benefit.

District Parks and Recreation has been an effective steward to the Deschutes River and the riparian corridor. Projects like the Sawyer Park Bridge, Miller's Landing, Farewell Bend Park and the Southern River Crossing have demonstrated their commitment to maintaining the natural values and protection the public requires.

Having had an opportunity to travel to other Cities to see trail opportunities, it is obvious a scenic trail can lend to economic gains through increased tourism. I look forward to riding Chicago's lakeside trail which provides both transportation and recreation, and induces me to spend my limited vacation dollars on bike rentals and bike tours. Even Jackson County's Bear Creek Bike Trail has been a boon for tourism and economic opportunity, while preserving the natural asset of the Bear Creek Greenway. Connecting Ashland, Medford, and Central Point is a completed vision of the type of trail we are seeking for Deschutes County.

As a Bend resident and East-sider my family and I urge you consider a bridge crossing to offer connection to Forest Service Lands and a continuous trail corridor from Sunriver to Tumalo State Park along the beautiful Deschutes River.



*South Canyon Bridge View, Me, my daughter, Harley and Davidson on the River Trail.*



*Volunteer opportunities bring community closer together, Portland Trailblazer Organization helps build Deschutes River trail, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation bridge walk fundraiser.*

Thank you for taking my testimony.

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