



June 16, 2021

Mayor Sally Russell
Bend City Councilors
Delivery via E-mail

Mayor Russell and Council Members,

The Bend Chamber of Commerce is pleased to submit this letter in support of the proposal to close a portion of Minnesota Avenue and create a permanent pedestrian promenade on that stretch of downtown street. The Chamber represents over 1,500 small and medium sized businesses through the region, many of which are located in, or near the Downtown District.

In response to COVID, we supported the Downtown Bend Business Association (DBBA) and downtown businesses for a temporary program for use of sidewalks and curbside parking spaces to allow businesses to remain open. We've also been on record supporting the City's proposal to transition the temporary street closures to a Commercial Parklet License Program.

The proposal to close a section of Minnesota Avenue is not a new one, given it was contemplated with the initial temporary COVID related street closures. We believe it warrants a stand alone policy proposal and feel it will have a positive economic impact on all of downtown as well as the businesses that front Minnesota Avenue.

We appreciate the thoughtful and strategic approach that DBBA has outlined, including a feasibility study to ensure the promenade is designed in a sustainable and suitable manner as to withstand the test of time. The addition of public restroom facilities is a needed recommendation, given the increase in visitors the promenade will bring. We understand the project will be financed, in part, by existing downtown parking revenue and we support that approach to keep the funds within the downtown district.

As our City continues to grow, it is important that we have a long term vision for the downtown district in order for the area to remain vibrant. The pedestrian promenade proposal is the start of that long term vision and the Chamber wholeheartedly supports moving forward. We look forward to working collaboratively with the City and other stakeholders as the project comes to fruition.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katy Brooks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. To the right of the signature is a vertical line.

Katy Brooks
President + CEO
Bend Chamber of Commerce

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