



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Transportation

Region 1 Headquarters
123 NW Flanders St
Portland, OR 97209-4012
Phone: (503) 731-8200
Fax: (503) 731-8259

File Code:

January 18, 2017

Dear East Portland Action Plan and Partners:

Thank you for your letter of November 7th, 2016. I'm pleased to hear you appreciate the revisions to the project as proposed by the ODOT team, our consultant partners at HDR Inc. and Toole Design Group, with input from PBOT and other regional jurisdictions.

ODOT staff, along with our consultant partners, has spent a significant amount of time and effort continuing to explore a wide range of options for improving the project, including the addition of a physically separated bike lane. Our efforts have taken into account the following factors:

1. The direction provided by years of public process including ODOT's project Community Advisory Committee and the Decision Committee Recommendation
2. Our commitment to minimize property impacts and the project's environmental footprint which is required to maintain the project's Documented Categorical Exclusion (CE) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
3. The need to protect the City's 100+ year old underground water line on the North side of Outer Powell
4. Our commitment to provide ample sidewalks with landscaping and to consolidate existing accesses/driveways where possible in the project
5. The project must improve safety for all modes of transportation including car, truck, transit, bicycle and pedestrian users in the corridor

Again, I'm pleased to hear your agreement that the proposed curb separated bike treatment will enhance safety and is a substantial improvement over the buffered bike lane treatment. In addition, ODOT is continuing to evaluate the opportunity to include a section of sidewalk-level cycle track near SE 132nd Ave. and SE 136th Ave. that may serve as an example for future sections of Outer Powell where conditions allow for separated bikeway.

Your letter also expresses a number of additional requests for the project, including a desire to see more cycle track bikeway, vertical delineation of the curb, HAWK signals, bike signals and a reduced speed limit on Powell. During the past two months I have asked my staff to review your requests and to provide specific responses for each proposal and how they will be considered as we continue the design work, or why they will not be considered further at this point. (See "Supplemental Information for Outer Powell Safety Project" attachment.) Ultimately the final decision to include some of your suggestions will be made based on the safety of all modes, the constraints of the corridor and our fixed project budget.



That said, we have now spent two years reviewing and reconsidering bike improvement options for Outer Powell and I'm convinced that work has been a valuable addition to the project that has provided us with a better overall project for all modes given the numerous constraints we face. Now, having reached a decision for moving ahead on the bike treatment, which was the only outstanding element from the decision committee's recommendation back in 2015, ODOT has given the design team the go ahead to move quickly and begin acquiring right-of-way so we can proceed to construction on schedule in 2019.

As you know, these multi-modal safety improvements have been "conceptual" for nearly 15 years and delivering them is already long overdue. My team and I are committed to moving ahead with delivery of the sidewalks, signal improvements, intersection improvements, the physically separated bikeway and the other improvements East Portlanders have been calling for on Outer Powell.

I appreciate our on-going communication and look forward to working with EPAP, the City of Portland and our regional legislative delegation to re-focus our energies and efforts on seeking the additional funding necessary to build out the remainder of the plan.

Sincerely,



Rian Windsheimer
ODOT Region 1 Manager

CC: Portland City Commissioner Dan Saltzman
Leah Treat, Director, PBOT
State Representative Jeff Reardon
April Bertelsen, PBOT
Andrea Valderrama, Office of Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler
Bobby Lee, Regional Solutions, Office of Governor Kate Brown
Elizabeth Cabral, Street Trust
Gerik Kransky, Street Trust
Heather McCary, Chair of Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee
Jim Chasse, East Portland Action Plan/City of Portland Bike Advisory Committee
Teresa Keishi Soto, East Portland Action Plan Transit Representative
Kem Marks, East Portland Action Plan, Powell-Division Transit Development
Project Representative
Linda Bauer, Chair, East Portland Land Use and Transportation Committee
Arlene Kimura and Jeremy O'Leary, Co-Chairs, East Portland Action Plan
Stephanie Noll, Interim Executive Director, Street Trust
State Senator Rod Monroe
State Senator Michael Dembrow
Former State Representative Shemia Fagan
State Representative Alissa Keny-Guyer
Multnomah County Commissioner District 3, Jessica Vega Pederson

January 12, 2017

To: Region Manager

From: Outer Powell Project Team

Supplemental Information for Outer Powell Safety Project

Addition of vertical plastic wands. ODOT will continue to explore the addition of the plastic vertical wands, bike lane surfacing and coloring options and other awareness tools to inform transportation users that this space is intended for high bicycle use.

Extend the “Pilot Cycle Track” to the full south side of the project area.

Powell Blvd. is a diverse urban corridor with frequent residential and commercial driveways, off-set local streets, frequent service bus stops, and properties that require access for large vehicles (e.g. delivery trucks, mobile home trailers). ODOT has worked diligently with the project team to identify potential solutions to the design challenges of implementing separated bike facilities on this constrained corridor. The south side of Powell between SE 132nd Ave. and SE 136th Ave. was identified as the most appropriate area for a “pilot cycle track” design treatment because it is a continuous block with very few of the constraints that are present on the rest of the corridor: very limited driveways and side street intersections, internally circulating mail delivery and garbage pick-up in the Powell Plaza development, no impacted buildings or utilities. Providing this higher level of physical separation between the south side travel lane and the bike lane in this segment of Powell Blvd. is additionally desirable due to the curvature of the roadway in this section. Due to the large number of driveways, side streets, and service vehicle conflicts in the remainder of the project area, we feel the “Tuff Curb” is a more compatible solution. ODOT does not recommend further consideration of the “pilot cycle track” treatment as part of this project beyond SE 132nd Ave. to SE 136th Ave.

As the project design progresses, ODOT will continue to consider the pilot cycle track between SE 132nd Ave. and SE 136th Ave. through a public process with residents and stakeholders that outlines the trade-offs, technical feasibility, and financial implications of implementing a pilot cycle track in this area.

Furthermore, ODOT is also developing a before/after study and monitoring program for both the proposed curb separated buffered bike lane and potential pilot cycle track treatment. The information we gain from the monitoring program will be used to inform future phases of design and construction on Powell Blvd. and other ODOT corridors.

Request for ODOT to install HAWK signals instead of Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFBs): ODOT carefully selects and designs the locations where RRFBs along with -- where

appropriate-- median islands are installed to ensure that they increase safety for all users and do not introduce new safety hazards. As a result of our deployment process, ODOT has observed very high vehicle compliance rates at the RRFBs installed on state highways. ODOT has evaluated the RRFBs installed on Powell Blvd. at SE 119th Ave., SE 141st Ave., and SE 156th Ave. as part of the 2013 Outer Powell Blvd. Safety Improvements Project and found that 96% of drivers stopped for pedestrians using the RRFB. This is the same compliance rate observed for HAWK signals in a national study conducted by FHWA.

We have heard East Portland residents express concerns that RRFBs may be hit and knocked down by errant drivers as an additional reason to implement HAWK signals. To date, we have not had a single report of an RRFB being knocked down on ODOT facilities in Region 1. Consistent with the engineering study conducted for each proposed crossing location, the successful installation of several RRFBs elsewhere on the Outer Powell corridor, and for the reasons mentioned above, ODOT plans to install RRFBs and not HAWK signals as part of this project.

Speed reduction along the Outer Powell Corridor to 30mph: By law, ODOT traffic engineering staff must conduct an engineering investigation using nationally accepted traffic engineering standards and procedures to determine recommendations for a speed zone change. Factors taken into consideration are crash history, roadside culture, traffic volumes, roadway alignment, width and surface. A major factor in establishing speed zones is the 85th percentile speed – the speed at or below which 85% of vehicles are traveling.

ODOT understands the desire to reduce speeds and increase safety on Outer Powell Blvd. In 2014, ODOT conducted a speed zone review for the segment of Powell east of SE 136th Ave. and was able to reduce the posted speed to 35mph, per the recommendation of the Outer Powell Conceptual Design Plan. In that instance, ODOT waited for the Outer Powell Safety Improvements project to be complete, including the installation of several RRFBs, which ODOT suspected would reduce the travel speed of 85% of motorists and garner the study results we hoped for. This approach allowed ODOT and PBOT to present the data to the state Speed Review Board resulting in a speed reduction on this stretch of Outer Powell Blvd. ODOT is open to requesting a speed zone review in the project area west of SE 136th Ave., but we feel this would be most effective after construction of the Outer Powell Safety Project is complete.

ODOT's access management (driveway) spacing, clear zone, lane width, or turn lane width design requirements are the same for highways with posted speed limits of 35 mph or 30 mph. The Outer Powell Safety Project team is considering design exceptions to further narrow most of these design elements to promote a more urban environment that discourages high travel speeds. The Outer Powell Safety Project will narrow the through travel lanes and construct raised pedestrian median crossing islands, physically separated bike lanes, and curbs. These design elements will physically and visually narrow the street and provide a traffic calming effect, making a speed zone review after project completion more likely to result in the community's desired recommendation for a 30 mph speed limit. It is likely that once the Outer Powell project is complete between SE 122nd Ave. and SE 136th Ave., including the installation

of some additional RRFBs, we may see a reduction in speed. At the time of project completion, ODOT will pursue a speed study to evaluate the opportunity to reduce the speed limit.

Bike specific traffic signal at SE 136th: ODOT has worked with its consultants to evaluate multiple alternative intersection design treatments to improve safety for all users at SE 122nd Ave. and SE 136th Ave. At SE 122nd/Powell Blvd., it has been determined that keeping the bike lane curb tight up to the intersection and using a bicycle signal to separate bicycle movements and right-turning vehicle movements could help improve safety and comfort for people biking. Due to the right-turn lane, we are able to operate a bike signal at this intersection in a way that creates minimal extra delay for people biking and driving.

Since there are no right-turn lanes on Powell Blvd. at SE 136th Ave. (and there is not enough space to add right turn lanes without impacting neighboring businesses) it is much more difficult to implement a separate bicycle signal phase at this intersection. ODOT cannot mitigate the impact to traffic through signal timing/phasing like we can at SE 122nd Ave. where there will be a separate right-turn phase. As we work through final design for the SE 136th/Powell Blvd. intersection, we will continue to identify other ways to heighten awareness of bicycles at SE 136th Ave. and prevent right-hook crashes.

Last year ODOT worked with Oregon State University to complete a research study that evaluated treatments to reduce vehicle/bike right turn conflicts at intersections. Some of these treatments, such as tightening curb radii, adding intersection pavement markings, and "Turning Vehicles Yield to Bikes" signs will be evaluated and considered at the Powell/136th intersection.