



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Oregon Transportation Commission

Office of the Director, MS 11

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DATE: November 8, 2022

TO: Oregon Transportation Commission



FROM: Kristopher W. Strickler
Director

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item F** – Powell Boulevard (U.S. 26) Update

Requested Action:

Receive a briefing on Powell Blvd. (U.S. 26) safety improvements and a joint ODOT/PBOT analysis of potential improvements on other ODOT-owned facilities adjacent to schools within the city limits.

Background:

In light of recent incidents along Powell Blvd. in Portland, including the fatality of a bicyclist in front of Cleveland High School on October 4th, ODOT is working with local partners to make immediate bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements along the corridor.

At a public forum in Portland, Director Kris Strickler announced several new short- and long-term safety improvements coming to Southeast Powell Blvd. near Cleveland High School that will make the corridor safer for all users.

Director Strickler shared this news during an Oct. 26 gathering at Cleveland High School which was hosted by Senator Kathleen Taylor and Representatives Rob Nosse and Karin Power. The meeting was organized to in response to the October 4th incident and in order to address community concerns about safety on the streets surrounding the high school. Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) and TriMet also announced several improvements they will be making in the vicinity.

ODOT's commitments include:

- Creating a new school speed zone next to Cleveland High School with permanent school zone signs on Powell Blvd. and reducing the speed along the state highway to 20 mph from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.;
- Adding new photo radar for speed zone enforcement. This work is underway with the City of Portland, with completion expected in 2023; and
- Adjusting signal timing to allow pedestrians a head start to enter nearby crosswalks before vehicles get a green light.

ODOT and PBOT further committed to immediately establishing a task force to analyze potential additional longer-term safety improvements around inner Powell Blvd., including considering reallocating traffic lanes on Powell, establishing school zones at other schools adjacent to ODOT

facilities within the city, and, longer term, building on the 2019 State of Good Repair study to refine improvements needed to facilitate the jurisdictional transfer of this portion of Powell Blvd. from ODOT to the city.

Over the past year, ODOT has been developing a program and with dedicated funding in order to be able to more quickly implement immediate pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements on state facilities with emerging active transportation safety needs. The department anticipates bringing forward a presentation to the OTC on this concept and going live with the program in early 2023. This program could be a potential partial funding source for longer-term Powell Blvd. Near-term improvements will be funded primarily out of regional state safety funds.