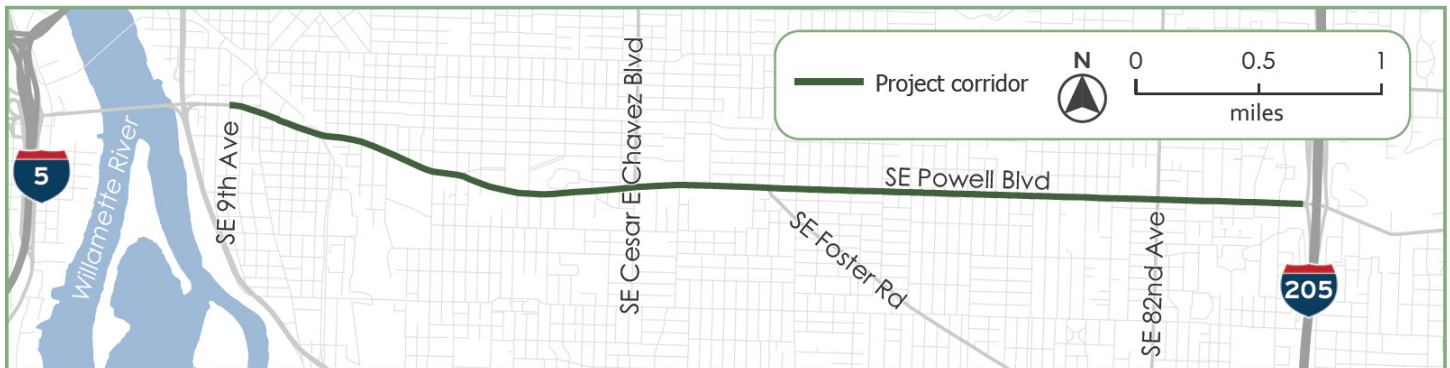


# Making Powell Boulevard Safer for All

## Path to Jurisdictional Transfer



### Context

Roads aren't frozen in time. The communities that rely upon them change and the needs we place upon them change. Sometimes, that means a road that was once a local road is transformed into a highway to connect communities to each other. Other times, an existing state highway can end up functioning more like a local road and is transferred to a local government to become a main street.

U.S. 26 from SE 9th Avenue to the I-205 interchange, known as Inner Powell Boulevard, is one of these routes. The highway no longer serves the statewide need it was originally constructed for. Today the urban areas that have grown-up around it have different needs.

Several studies of Inner Powell completed prior to 2017, by the City of Portland, TriMet and ODOT have identified a number of issues and possible projects to upgrade and improve the street to serve these changing needs:

- Inner Powell Streetscape Plan (City of Portland-led plan)
- High Crash Corridor Study (City of Portland-led study)
- Road Safety Audits: SE 20th-SE 33rd Ave; Cesar Chavez-42nd/43rd Ave (ODOT-led safety studies)
- Improving Pedestrian Access to Transit (TriMet-led study)

ODOT, in partnership with the City of Portland, has implemented many of the projects identified through these planning efforts.

### House Bill 2017

House Bill 2017 (HB2017) included a requirement for the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) to study the costs to upgrade Inner Powell to a "state of good repair" in preparation of future jurisdictional transfer discussions with the City of Portland. The OTC reported the study's findings to the Oregon Legislature's Joint Committee on Transportation in late 2019.

The study identified a number of needed improvements, focused on the following categories:

- Drainage and utilities
- Concrete sidewalks and medians
- Pavement
- Signals
- Lighting

# Path to Jurisdictional Transfer

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- Signing
- Striping
- ADA curb ramps

The study established a “state of good repair threshold” for various roadway elements, but did not identify new safety or modernization needs. The City of Portland and ODOT still need to identify and negotiate what additional projects and/or funding may be necessary to facilitate a mutually agreeable transfer agreement.

## Jurisdictional Transfers in the Portland area

Inner Powell is one of many urban roads that has changed over time, and today functions more like a local road than a state highway.

“It makes more sense to transfer the road to a local government to oversee these changes. Government at the local level is naturally the most responsive to community needs. Transferring ownership can ensure that the road is designed in a way that reflects the community.” — ODOT Director Strickler

As part of HB2017, the Oregon Legislature provided ODOT with \$105 million to complete state of good repair improvements to Powell Boulevard from I-205 to just east of SE 174th Avenue (Outer Powell), and then transfer jurisdiction of Outer Powell to the City of Portland. These improvements will be completed in 2028, with the jurisdictional transfer to immediately follow.

Additionally, in 2022, ODOT transferred ownership of 82nd Avenue to the City of Portland. This transfer also included providing the City with \$150M from the State of Oregon for upgrades.

Unfortunately, ODOT simply doesn’t have the funding available to immediately upgrade and transfer, or transfer and fund local improvements, for every road that is suitable for transfer.

## Next Steps

ODOT’s approach to advancing transfers is a negotiation with the receiving jurisdiction, that begins with an evaluation of past corridor investment and establishing shared goals. The 2019 State of Good Repair Study for Inner Powell was the first step.

Creating a safer facility doesn’t rely on a jurisdictional transfer, nor does a jurisdictional transfer make any facility inherently safer. The actions taken to improve safety for the current users are what creates a safer environment. Candidates for transfer should be agreed upon up front so that modifications and improvements can enhance the future desired outcome for the local jurisdiction and community.

With that in mind, ODOT and the City are immediately forming a joint task force to look at corridor safety for some of the region’s high speed arterials, with the first task being further evaluation of inner Powell, including:

- Updating the recommendations and cost estimate from the 2019 State of Good Repair study for Powell
- Working together to identify corridor safety improvements beyond the immediate ones around Cleveland High School
- Developing a funding and delivery strategy for both short and longer term safety improvements on and around Powell
- Working toward a jurisdictional transfer that reflects our shared goals for the safe operation and community desire of Inner Powell into the future

ODOT has identified initial funding for this additional planning work and is prepared to begin working with the City to complete it by the end of 2023.