

Frequently Asked Questions



How will this project affect me?

When it's finished, this project will help you get around outer SE Powell Boulevard more safely. During construction, there will be temporary inconveniences like traffic delays, noise and detours.

The majority of construction from SE 122nd Avenue to SE 136th Avenue is nearly complete. Construction and traffic control equipment and devices have been removed from the road. The project is in the final stages of the construction phase and there may be intermittent lane closures as needed to finish the work. Plantings for planned landscape areas will conclude in spring 2021.

The portions of the project from I-205 to SE 122nd and from SE 136th to just east of SE 174th are currently in design. If you own property or a business on SE Powell in these areas and changes to the property are expected, you will be contacted by a project team member.

The project team will continue to update this website and communicate impacts as information becomes available.

Why is this project needed?

Fatal and serious injury crashes affect the lives of many Oregonians every year. In fact, Powell Boulevard is one of Portland's top 30 high crash streets with seven of the top 20 high crash intersections. This project will address four of those intersections. Sidewalks, dedicated bike facilities, crosswalks, improved lighting and center turn lanes have been identified to help significantly reduce the number and severity of crashes in this area.

Powell Boulevard is an important connector to the central city for those living in outer East Portland. The project area is within one of the most diverse areas in Portland, with a high number of community groups and individuals that come from varying cultures and speak multiple languages. In addition, around 25 percent of households are below the Federal poverty level. Improvements to Powell Boulevard will help the communities of East Portland more safely reach their workplaces, social services and other daily destinations throughout the city.

The project area also has a significant transit ridership that will benefit from the safety improvements of this project. As of spring 2019, TriMet Route 9 has the 5th highest ridership of all TriMet buses, with over 50,000 weekly boardings. Route 9 connects riders to two other top-5 ridership routes, the 72 and the 75, and to the MAX Green Line from the Powell Blvd MAX station.

How did we get here?

Since 2014, ODOT has been conducting planning, environmental and design work for the four-mile stretch of Powell Boulevard from I-205 to the Portland/Gresham city limits just east of SE 174th Avenue. In fall 2015, the State Legislature approved \$17 million to design and construct

the SE 122nd to SE 136th section of Powell Boulevard, which recently completed construction. Through the passage of House Bill 2017, the Oregon Legislature delegated funds for improvements on the remainder of the Outer Powell Transportation Safety Project. With this funding, ODOT is designing improvements to these other sections of outer SE Powell. Design will be consistent with the section from SE 122nd to SE 136th.

Who is involved?

ODOT is leading the Outer Powell Transportation Safety Project. A Community Advisory Group and other technical and policy committees met throughout the planning and environmental phase to guide the project. ODOT is also working with the Portland Bureau of Transportation to coordinate on design and prepare for the jurisdictional transfer after the work on Outer Powell is complete. ODOT will continue to hold public meetings and community activities. Updates will be posted to this website as the project progresses. Stay tuned for project updates and ways to be involved.

What outreach is being done?

ODOT wants to make sure the public gets the information they need and has the opportunity to provide input and ask questions. The project team will continue to conduct outreach through public open houses, email and mail notifications, targeted community activities and information on this website.

Activities so far have included:

- Interviews with individuals and organizations that work with people who speak Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Spanish and other languages to help inform and guide our public engagement to ensure we are involving everyone in this project.
- Focus groups with faith-based and social service organizations working along and near Outer Powell.
- Individual Outer Powell Community Walks spoken in Chinese, Russian, and Spanish, Vietnamese and English.
- A project Community Advisory Group, representing diverse organizations and interests.
- In-person and online open houses.
- A community bike ride.
- Information booths at community events including 'Powellhurst-Gilbert National Night Out' and 'Festival of Nations' in outer east Portland.
- Canvassing of more than 60 businesses between I-205 and SE 174th to provide information about the project.
- Interviews with TriMet Route #9 bus users along Powell Boulevard.
- A ground breaking ceremony to celebrate the start of construction on the initial section of the project.
- Email newsletters to update the public at project milestones.

Is tree removal required to build the project?

In some areas, trees need to be removed in order to build the new safety improvements. ODOT takes tree removal very seriously and tries to avoid removing trees wherever possible. The

number and location of tree removals will be determined when the design details are further refined.

There is a detailed process for assessing impacts to trees in a project area, which is outlined below:

- The project arborist identifies the location, species, diameter, crown width, and general health of all trees within the project corridor that could possibly be impacted by the project.
- A preliminary project footprint is established as we approach the 30% design milestone of the project.
- During and after the development of the 30% design milestone, each tree is evaluated to determine if the project will result in impacts to individual trees.
- For each tree determined to be impacted, the project team evaluates the details of the design cross section to see if adjustments are possible to avoid tree impacts.
- Throughout the process, the project team coordinates with the City of Portland's Urban Forester.
- Sometimes tree removal is unavoidable. When that happens, we work with the City of Portland's Urban Forester on ways to offset this loss. (This may include things like planting new trees in the area, financially compensating for loss of trees or financially contributing to community programs that plant trees in the local community like 'Friends of Trees'.)

Tree removal assessment and determination for the project will occur from late 2020 through early 2022.