



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Department of Transportation

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The Oregon Department of Transportation has appreciated the opportunity to participate in the development of the City's Comprehensive Plan and Transportation System Plan by attending the Networks Policy Expert Group (PEG), Transportation System Plan Expert Group, and the Portland/ODOT/Metro/DLCD Comprehensive Plan Coordination Meetings over the last 2+ years. During that time, our staff has provided direction regarding compliance with the Oregon Highway Plan (OHP), Transportation Planning Rule, and Regional Transportation Functional Plan; safety data; analysis of transportation modeling results; suggestions for how to address identified safety and capacity problem areas on State Highways; and professional advice regarding transportation project prioritization. City staff is still in the process of finalizing TSP and Mixed Use Zoning recommendations, and we will continue to engage in that process.

Meanwhile, draft Comprehensive Plan (CP) designations have been released for public review. ODOT is generally supportive of the direction the City is taking in this Comprehensive Plan Update, as well as the proposed CP designations. We do, however, prefer a different Comprehensive Plan designation along Powell Boulevard, a State Highway, from the Ross-Island Bridge to Foster Road, and in the vicinity of SE 122nd Ave. ODOT recommends designating land along Powell Blvd. as a Civic Corridor, not a Town Center, a designation which allows for transit-supportive development, walkability, and implementation of the safety and streetscape improvements agreed upon in the adopted Inner Powell Blvd. Streetscape Plan and Outer Powell Blvd. Right-of-Way Implementation Plan, while better reflecting the mobility function of the roadway as an important east-west connection. Be assured that ODOT supports community development goals along Powell Blvd. – we are leading a NEPA process along Outer Powell that will lead to implementation of a 3-lane cross-section with full bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Background:

Powell Blvd from the Ross Island Bridge to Foster Blvd was identified during the TSP development as not meeting Regional Transportation Plan and Oregon Highway Plan mobility standards under current zoning. While it is difficult to predict future conditions because the Mixed Use Zoning designations to implement the new Comprehensive Plan designations have not been determined yet, preliminary results show that congestion gets worse in the future under the proposed Town Center Comprehensive Plan designation. This segment of Powell includes multiple top 5% SPIS sites, meaning it has severe safety problems.

In our conversations with City staff about how to handle identified mobility and safety problems on State Highways, we identified a range of approaches: identify projects to address the problem, defer to another study or plan, develop alternative mobility standards consistent with OHP Action 1F3, and/or do not intensify land uses and associated increased vehicle trips.

In discussing ODOT's objections with City staff, we were told that the designation is the result of an exercise of drawing a line of 1 mile outside the current Central City boundaries and assigning a Town Center designation to all Main Street and Corridors within that radius, without consideration for variations in land use or transportation context. Again, ODOT believes that a Civic Corridor designation is more consistent with the vehicle volumes and speeds, number of travel lanes, vehicle, freight, and transit functions, and ownership of Powell Blvd, each of which are very different from the other Corridors within the proposed Town Center: Division, Hawthorne, Belmont, Burnside, etc. It is also consistent with the proposed designation of other state facilities in the City.

ODOT requests that the Planning and Sustainability Commission provides direction to City Council and staff that land along Powell Blvd be designated Civic Corridor rather than Town Center. Again, ODOT supports the exciting changes along Powell Blvd. but believes the Civic Corridor designation is the best way to get there.

We appreciate this opportunity to comment,



Kirsten Pennington
Policy and Development Manager, ODOT Region 1

CC: Eric Engstrom
Attachment: Comp. Plan Policy Chapter 3 Excerpts

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICY CHAPTER 3 EXCERPTS

Town Centers

Town Centers are located throughout Portland to serve broad parts of the City. They are typically anchored by employment centers or institutions, featuring a wide range of commercial and community services, and have a wide range of housing options. Development in town centers is intended to be mid-rise in scale. Mid-rise development includes buildings from 5 to 20 stories in height, but most frequently ranging from 5 to 6 stories.

Policy 3.26 Role of Town Centers: Enhance Town Centers as successful places that serve the needs of surrounding neighborhoods and a wider area and contain higher concentrations of employment, institutions, commercial and community services, and a wide range of housing options.

Policy 3.28 Transportation: Improve Town Centers as multimodal transportation hubs that optimize access from the broad area of the city they serve and are linked to the region's high capacity transit system.

Corridors

Corridors, like centers, are places are areas where Portland will grow and change over the next 25 years. They are busy, active streets with redevelopment potential. They are close to neighborhoods and are places with transit, stores, housing, and employers. They need to be planned, designed, and improved to be places that benefit and become successful additions to surrounding neighborhoods. The largest places of focused activity and density along these corridors are designated as centers. There are 3 types of street corridors: Civic Corridors, Neighborhood Corridors, and Freight Corridors.

Policy 3.34 Growth and Mobility: Coordinate transportation and land use strategies along corridors to accommodate growth and mobility needs for people of all ages and abilities.

Policy 3.35 Connections: Improve corridors as multimodal connections providing transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and motor vehicle access and that serve the freight needs of centers and neighborhood business districts.

Policy 3.36 Design: Encourage street design that balances the important transportation functions of corridors with their roles as the setting for commercial activity and residential living.

Civic Corridors

Civic Corridors are the city's busiest, widest, and most prominent streets. They provide major connections among centers, the rest of the City, and the region. They support the movement of people and goods across the city, with high levels of traffic and, in some cases, pedestrian activity. Civic Corridors provide opportunities for growth and transit-supportive densities of housing, commerce, and employment. Mid-rise development includes buildings from 5 to 10 stories in height, but most frequently ranging from 5 to 6 stories.

Abundant trees and high quality landscaping beauty Civic Corridors and offset the impacts of their large paved areas. These corridors exemplify the benefits of green infrastructure by cleaning and soaking up stormwater runoff and minimizing urban heat island effects, while also being enjoyable

places to live, work, and gather. Civic corridors are safe for all types of transportation. Civic Corridor policies apply to the roadway, the public realm of the street, and the buildings that line the street.

Policy 3.38 Integrated land use and mobility: Enhance Civic Corridors as distinctive places with transit-supportive densities of housing and employment, and high quality transit service and pedestrian and bicycle facilities that are models of ecologically-sensitive urban design.

Policy 3.39 Design to be great places: Encourage public street and sidewalk improvements along Civic Corridors to support the vitality of business districts, create distinctive places, provide a safe and attractive pedestrian environment, and contribute to creating quality living environments for residents.

Policy 3.40 Mobility Corridors: Improve Civic Corridors as key mobility corridors of citywide importance that accommodate all modes of transportation within their right-of-way or on nearby parallel routes.

Policy 3.41 Freight: Maintain freight mobility, freight access, and freight capacity on Civic Corridors that are also Major or Priority Truck Streets.