



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Date: June 6, 2017

To: Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization

From: Representative Jeff Reardon

Re: Powell Blvd

Chairs Beyer and McKeown and Members of the Committee,

I have been an advocate for improvements to Outer SE Powell for over five years and have dreamed about the project's positive impact on the community.

It has long been clear that Outer SE Powell is a highway only in name. It must now serve a growing population who drive, bike, bus and walk in the community. That's a more complex engineering challenge than simply designing a way for drivers to get through the community quickly and without too many accidents.

Safety has always been a primary concern on Outer SE Powell, which is one of Portland's ten high-crash corridors. Some safety improvements were made a few years ago, but it's still an area where bicycles, pedestrians and baby carriages compete for space while the population continues to expand.

While safety must be paramount, there's another aspect to this project that is very nearly as important. Improving SE Powell has the potential to make a lasting, positive impact on the economic vitality of the area. Instead of a place motorists want to speed through, the project should help build the community in a way that encourages people to stop, shop and enjoy.

The Outer SE Powell project should both improve safety and enhance the community. I have always envisioned that this project would include streetscaping that improves the beauty of the area and has a calming effect on traffic. When done right, I also anticipate a renewed interest from those who want to grow their businesses or improve their housing stock.

This is a very important project to my community. Community leaders and citizens have been involved with this effort for years, working tirelessly to make their requirements known. If we end up with a new state highway through the area that fails to enhance the appearance, that fails to help attract renewed investments, then we will have missed an opportunity to greatly improve the lives of those living and doing business in outer SE Portland.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I may be of assistance in any way.

Best regards,



