

Bus Canvassing Summary

HDR conducted interviews with 30 TriMet Route #9 bus users in August 2015 as part of the multimodal outreach for the Outer Powell Transportation Safety Project.

The outreach effort, conducted over two different weekdays during peak travel times, focused on higher volume bus stops in the corridor (locations provided by TriMet). Interviewers polled riders at their bus stop before their bus arrived. The short polls were designed to be completed in 2-3 minutes with additional opportunity for discussion as time allowed.

Each survey started by gathering base information:

- Location of primary transit stop
- Purpose of transit use
- Frequency of transit use

Then, participants were asked to rate roadway components at and around their bus stop and route to their stop on a scale of 1 to 3 where: 1) needs no change, 2) needs some improvement and 3) needs a lot of improvement. The facilities and elements polled were sidewalks, lighting, distances between bus stops, crosswalks, traffic speeds, bike interactions and bus stop features.

Following the rating exercise, participants were asked: if they could change one thing about Powell Boulevard, what would it be? If time allowed, surveyors discussed with participants other general comments about their experience as transit riders on Powell Boulevard.

Findings

Of the 30 persons polled, about 80 percent used the bus to commute to work or go to school. The other riders were split among running errands or “other”. As such, 63 percent of polled riders fell into the categories of frequent riders – 5-10 trips per week or more – while 30 percent took the bus 2-5 times per week. Only two of the participants said they averaged one or less trip per week.

Of the roadway elements polled, participant opinions were mostly split. People were happy with **distances between stops** – nobody rated it as needing significant improvement, and about 85 percent said no change was needed. The component with the second most favorable rating was **bus stop features** (such as shelters and benches), about which only 10 percent said they need a lot of improvement (although more than half (52 percent) requested some improvement).

Regarding **traffic speeds**, half of the participants (50 percent) said they did not see a need for change, though several added that posted speeds need enforcement. One quarter said traffic speeds need improvement and another quarter said they need lots of improvement.

The most frequent improvements cited among participants were **sidewalks** and **lighting**, both with at least 70 percent of participants calling for improvements. Regarding sidewalks, 42 percent said they need a lot of improvement and another 31 percent said they need some improvement. For lighting, 33 percent suggested a lot of improvement and 37 percent said they need some improvement.

The full list of percentages is included in the chart below with the highs highlighted in red and the lows highlighted in blue.

	Sidewalks	Lighting	Distance between bus stops	Crosswalks	Traffic speeds	Bike interactions	Bus stop features
1) needs no change	28%	30%	85%	38%	50%	44%	38%
2) needs improvement	31%	37%	15%	34%	25%	33%	52%
3) needs a lot of improvement	41%	33%	0%	28%	25%	22%	10%

Comments and Changes -- Highlights

Traffic flow and congestion was the most frequent topic that participants brought up unsolicited. Several suggested adding additional lanes to ease congestion. Another suggested timing the signals better for traffic flow and crossings.

Bike interactions also were mentioned by several participants as part of their general comments. Several participants said bikes are unsafe on Powell, partly because of the lack of facilities, but also because of their behaviors (riding the wrong way, erratic behavior).

Safety and lighting were mentioned frequently, especially for the winter months when it's dark much of the time. Lighting would make the area feel safer, a few said. Some people suggested trimming the large trees. While most participants said bus features did not need a lot of improvement, several also mentioned a preference for better lighting and additional shelters to shield from rain, snow and wind.

Several interviewees noted improvements to crosswalks and sidewalks are needed. Recent crosswalk installations with pedestrian-activated lights were noted as being a good addition and improvement to the corridor. Specifically, adding crosswalk(s) with flashing lights between SE 122nd and SE 136th was noted more than once.

A number of participants mentioned unsafe behaviors among corridor users (cyclists and pedestrians) for which they felt additional enforcement might help.



Notably, two participants called out TriMet drivers for their professionalism and friendliness.

A full list of public comments can be found in Appendix A.

Appendix A. Public Comments

The full list of comments and suggestions from bus users are included below.

Responses from bus users when asked, “If you could change one thing about Powell Blvd., what would it be?”:

- Better shelters, lighting.
- More shelters at bus stops.
- The people.
- Make intersection at SE 89th clearer; it's a mess; people don't know where to stop.
- Make two lanes both ways.
- Wider road; alternative to Damascus.
- Needs more lanes. Especially during rush hour. SE 122nd is fine. Powell should be more like it.
- Lots of lights; this improves accident reduction. Add cameras at SE 122nd to SE 148th.
- Need better lighting at night, especially east of SE 174th.
- Speed reduction and crosswalks (more, especially near schools).
- Speed up time it takes to get places on bus.
- Less stop lights.
- Violence - working with police and businesses.
- Improved safety. A lot of crime. More police presence to stop illegal activity then more people would use the area.
- Better crosswalks.
- Slow traffic down. More stop lights.
- Improved transit. Buses are sometimes full and won't stop. We fund their job and drivers don't take the time to care. Not very accommodating.
- Area near high school and Starbucks (SE 36th).
- Pedestrian behavior needs to improve. Too many people walk across the street without crosswalks and think it is okay. Needs to be better enforcement.
- Improved traffic. Flows pretty good, but used to flow a lot faster.
- Lower speed limit. Ticket people who pass cars by going into the bike lane.
- Wouldn't change anything.



- More police enforcement.
- Too much traffic.
- Wouldn't change anything.
- Lighted crosswalk at/near Powell Plaza. SE 132nd to SE 136th very dangerous, very dark.

General Comments:

- Lighting at night at stop (near SE 148th) poor here and under trees. More bus stop structures.
- Areas with no lights. Scary areas on 148th south of Powell. Need trash cans.
- Safety is an issue. I live on 136th, child was killed there. Most people biking are on drugs. Bus stop features are dirty.
- Bikes don't use Powell that much. Add shelters. You guys (ODOT) are awesome!
- Distance between bus stops is sometimes too close; should be 5 blocks maximum. Crosswalks: add blinking lights around 130th to 132nd. Lots of disabled people there. Excess speeding. Wrong direction wheelchairs and walkers. More lights on poles. 32nd, 34th and 36th bus stops are too close. 136th location area is dangerous. More tree maintenance is needed.
- Bus stop features are nice at this stop. I like my drives.
- Don't make it so dark; trim the trees.
- Sidewalks: frustrating with stroller and kids, especially in winter between 174th and 181st. Crosswalks: some are good; some are not. Next stop before 181st needs to be improved. Traffic speeds are terrible during rush hour. Not many bikes.
- Lighting is pretty good. Crosswalks are better then they were. Traffic speeds are still too fast for Powell and Division. Bus stop features: people break things. Goes into downtown daily; transit service is good.
- New crosswalks are good. Well lit, beeping signals are good. Not many bikes. It takes \$5 and 2 hours to get anywhere on TriMet; work on that.
- Crosswalks: it's been improving. Traffic speeds are fine if people obey them. Bikes shouldn't be on Powell or Division: too fast, too busy.
- Lighting: spots need work. Crosswalks: more, existing are good. Better with info (schedules, etc.); lights for night.
- 136th area requires traffic dodging. More trash cans will help keep it cleaner. Stagger the signals so people can cross better.
- More than anything needs sidewalks. Traffic speeds: they can slow down. Needs improvement out here. It feels desolate.



- Crosswalks: especially near bus stops. Traffic speeds: too much speeding. Bus stop features: for stops that are not illuminated/pronounced, buses sometimes pass stops, especially at night. SE 21st right turn light and pedestrian crosswalk are at the same time and doesn't make sense. We have walk signal and they have green right arrow.
- Bike interactions: don't see a lot of bikes in area.
- Sidewalks: recent improvements helped. People going around buses is scary.
- Bike interactions: need better bike lanes. Curbs - need more.
- Traffic speed: 35 is good. Bike interactions: not a lot of bike riders. People try to go around buses.
- Bike interactions: a bus-bike wrap around concept seems challenging.
- Crosswalks: depends on locations. Traffic speeds: fine as is. Bike intersections: Bus-bike wrap around concept could be good, or challenging. Tries to stay away from Powell due to danger and crimes.
- Sidewalks: like having less sidewalks; like things to feel more rural. Sidewalks mean more urbanizations and more social constructs. Crosswalks: hard getting across Powell. Bike interactions: like that bike lanes were added, but more bike support would be good. Bus stop features: more shelters at busy locations. Overall this area has gotten busier.
- Lighting: really needs help. Crosswalks: people don't always cross where it is marked. Bike interactions: Bus-bike wrap around idea - could be good for bikers.
- Lighting: SE 122nd to SE 136th near Powell Plaza Elderly Community, way dark area. Crosswalks: Need to have a lighted crosswalk between 122nd and 136th, especially near Powell Plaza. Bike interactions: bikers are disrespectful, they don't follow the rules and should have to register their bikes. Tired of paying for bike improvements when they don't obey the laws. Re: Holgate there is not enough bike use to pay for what they did along Holgate.