

Open House #1 Summary

Date: Tuesday, December 09, 2014

Time: 6PM TO 8PM

Location: Centennial High School Cafeteria, 3505 SE 182nd Ave., Gresham, OR

The first public open house event for the US 26: Outer Powell Transportation Safety Project was held on Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2014, from 6 pm to 8 pm in the Centennial High School cafeteria near the Portland/Gresham city limit. The open house featured two detailed, printed aerial wall maps of the entire corridor, a live online comment map, a looped aerial video of the corridor, display stations featuring information about the project, and a live video comment station. Thirty-one people signed in for the open house, which had been publicized through a mass mailing to 15,500 households in the project vicinity. The open house was also publicized via the Community Advisory Group, Decision Committee, project website, media release, email notification and social media.

The purpose of this open house was to introduce the current planning effort and obtain community input about existing conditions and safety concerns along the corridor. The event was staffed by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and members of the HDR consultant team, all of whom wore nametags with the project logo to be easily identified and approachable.



The slogan of this project is “Your Voice Matters!” and this was realized through the many options available for participants to provide their input. The printed corridor roll maps were displayed on an expansive wall where attendees were encouraged to write and draw directly on the maps to express areas of interest, concern and suggestions for improvement. Additionally, a member of the consultant team staffed a live online comment map helping attendees select specific geographic locations along the map and post online comments directly to the project website. An aerial video of the corridor played on a loop continuously, creating a communal focal point for open discussion about the study area. Finally, a videographer was on hand to interview meeting participants about their thoughts of the Outer Powell Boulevard corridor. Several people took advantage of this opportunity and the footage of their comments will be edited into a video for the project website at a later date.

The open house room layout was set up so attendees could mingle at a number of display boards, interact with various map layouts, sit down over refreshments to share thoughts with a neighbor or staff member, or take their time to fill out a comment form.

The comment form featured the following questions:

1. What would you most like to see addressed on Outer Powell? (Choose your top 5)

- Pedestrian crossings
- Turn lanes for vehicles
- More travel lanes
- Speeding/speed limits
- Sidewalks
- Curb ramps
- Street lighting
- Trees
- Bus stop spacing
- Bus stop signs/shelters
- Parking
- Bicycle lanes
- Roadway/shoulder surface
- Business access
- Residential access
- Other: (Open ended)

2. How do you use Outer Powell? (Check all that apply)

- Drive
- Ride Bike
- Take Bus
- Walk

3. For what primary reason do you use Outer Powell? (Choose one)

- Shopping
- Commuting
- Live along road
- Other

4. What suggestions or questions do you have about Outer Powell? (Open ended)

5. What are the best ways for us to keep you informed about this project?

- Email
- Social Media
- Newspaper ads
- Meeting/open house
- Website updates
- My community newsletter
- Other

6. Would you be interested in joining us for a walking tour of Outer Powell Blvd. in early 2015?
- Yes
 - No
 - Maybe (contact me)

Open House Overview

The open house event drew mostly from the Outer Powell community. The vast majority of the participants signed in with a 97236 area code, so the input received largely reflected local neighborhood issues and concerns. Many participants expressed interest in vehicle turn lanes, sidewalks, bike lanes, pedestrian crossings and street lighting. It was evident that multiple modes of transportation are regularly used along the corridor; walking, driving, riding bikes and taking the bus are common on Outer Powell Boulevard. Driving was most often cited.

Corridor safety was a common concern for meeting participants. Regardless of how people go to or from work, get to school, go shopping or visit friends, the participants expressed concern for making sure people are safe throughout their journey.

Finally, there were questions from participants about the planning process itself and how and when decisions for this project would be made.

Fifty-seven comments were gathered through the wall maps, online comment map and paper comment forms. There was strong support for adding turning lanes to both alleviate traffic congestion and address safety concerns associated with vehicle turning movements. Participants also expressed a strong desire for adding sidewalks along the corridor, increasing the number of marked crosswalks, and providing better street and sidewalk lighting.

1. What would you most like to see addressed on Outer Powell? (Choose your top 5)

Turn Lanes for Vehicles

Seventeen people chose this as a top issue. Comments received:

- “Periodic turn lanes would be helpful to alleviate traffic backups during busy periods.”
- “No middle turn lanes – dangerous to pedestrians.”
- “Cars go into bike lane when cars are turning left.”
- “I think things are better now as far as passing left turners on the right (because of new turn lanes) – thanks for that!”
- “At rush-hour there's not enough capacity to cross (against oncoming traffic).”
- Map comment – location near Ed Benedict Park: “A turn lane would help park traffic.”
- Map comment – location SE Naegli Drive: “Always a problem getting on Powell from Naegli Drive – need center lane.”

- Map comment – location from SE 104th Ave. east to SE 112th Ave.: “Traffic is heavy. Add middle turn lane.”
- Map comment – location not specified: “Lack of left turning / center turn lanes.”
- Map comment – location at SE 162nd Ave. intersection: “Drivers mistake this for a southbound to eastbound left turn lane and is a hazard. Left turn lane is needed!”
- Map comment – location at SE 125th Place: “Needs median lane for entrance – a lot of apartment housing here. Also needs sidewalk.”

Sidewalks

Seventeen people also chose this as a top issue. Comments received:

- “Sidewalks for safety – needed in the entire corridor please.”
- “There are no sidewalks – dangerous to pedestrians.”
- “Very dangerous as a pedestrian – very much need sidewalks.”
- “Please accommodate pedestrians with sidewalks first!! Safety is the main issue.”
- Map comment – location at SE 125th Place: “Needs sidewalk.”

Pedestrian Crossings

Fourteen people chose this as a top issue. Comments received:

- “Very dangerous as a pedestrian – very much need crosswalks with blinking lights or island in the middle.”
- “Add a crosswalk at SE 108th Ave.”
- “Need more crosswalks.”
- Map comment – location approximately east of SE 132nd Ave: “I live here. Crosswalk good idea especially for those crossing to/from bus stop.”
- Map comment – area near and west of SE 145th Ave.: “A very dangerous section. Blind corner and people crossing to and from bus stop. Need a safer crossing.”
- Map comment – location between SE 170th Ave. and SE 174th Ave: “Bus stops here – is crosswalk an option?”
- Map comment – proposed crossing located between SE 168th Ave. and SE 170th Ave.: “Is this crosswalk necessary with the addition of one on 168th Ave.?”
- Map comment – location east of SE 108th Ave., between SE 108th Ave. and the Church of the Korean Martyrs: “Good potential crossing location (people going to Earl Boyles Elementary School).”
- Map comment – location near SE 130th Ave.: “Need a crosswalk with a blinking light or island on SE 130th Ave. – very difficult to cross to get to bus stop.”

Street Lighting

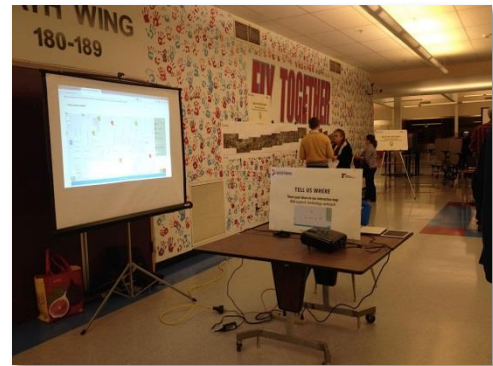
Twelve people chose this as a top issue. Comments received:

- “Better lighting for sidewalks and bus shelters.”
- “Need better street lighting – visibility of pedestrians is very poor.”
- Map comment – location east of SE 174th Ave.: “Crosswalk by Family Worship Center is SO dark I have almost hit three pedestrians. Please look at this. SO dangerous!”
- Map comment – location between SE 116th Ave and SE 119th Ave.: “Poor visibility, especially in the dark under trees.”

Bicycle Lanes

Eight people chose this as a top issue. Comments received:

- “We need buffered bike lanes.”
- “There should be an east to west buffered bike lane.”
- Map comment – location from SE 72nd to SE 92nd Ave.: “No bike lanes. Need bike lanes from SE 72nd to SE 92nd Ave.” (Note: Outside of study area)



Speeding/Speed Limits

Seven people chose this as a top issue. Comments received:

- “Speeds when there is space get pretty quick.”
- “Speed between 119th Ave. and 130th Ave. should be more than 20 mph at this point.”

Bus Stop Signs/Shelters

Six people chose this as a top issue. No comments received.

Trees

Five people chose this as a top issue. Comments received:

- “Less trees and bushes in the middle of the road.”
- “I’m concerned about the street trees. Will you help us relocate existing trees?”

More Travel Lanes

Four people chose this as a top issue. Comments received:

- “I would like more car lanes and less trees and bushes in the middle of the road.”
- “The pedestrian use of Powell is very low. After watching your video of the area in question I could only count six people walking. Six people from I-205 to 174th Ave. Please think of those who use this road the most. More lanes would be my first choice of improvement, turn lanes in the middle second. I would say Powell is not a heavy

pedestrian used road except in business areas so maybe combining sidewalk/bicycle lanes. Right now 20-feet is proposed for people walking and bicycles, cut that down some.”

- “Needs more travel lanes – during rush hour you can walk it faster! Take right of way from just one side. Buy out the whole property not just pieces.”
- “Both sides need two (vehicle) lanes.”
- Map comment – location from SE 104th Ave. east to SE 112th Ave.: “Traffic is heavy. Add one extra travel lane in each direction.”
- Map comment – “Adding travel lanes encourages speeding! And adds conflicts when 2nd lane ends.”
- Map comment – location west of SE 122nd Ave.: “Needs two lanes each way! I sat here and further back trying to cross 122nd Ave. as a guy in a motorized wheel chair kept up with me!”

Curb Ramps

Three people chose this as a top issue. No comments received.

Roadway/Shoulder Surface

Four people chose this as a top issue. No comments received.

Bus Stop Spacing

One person chose this as a top issue. No comments received.

Business Access

One person chose this as a top issue. No comments received.

Residential Access

One person chose this as a top issue. Comments received:

- “I live at 12540 SE Powell Blvd., it's hard to get out onto Powell east and west (light?).”
- Map comment – location SE Naegli Drive and Powell Blvd.: “Need easier access out of Naegli Dr.”

Parking

None chosen.

2. How do you use Outer Powell?

The majority of people (19) responding to this question drive a vehicle as their primary mode of transportation along the corridor. Seven people indicated they walk, and four people each indicated they ride a bike or take the bus along Outer Powell.

3. For what primary reason do you use Outer Powell?

Thirteen people indicated they commute on Outer Powell. Five people visit friends and family. Three people each indicated they shop along Outer Powell and live on the road itself.

4. Other Suggestions/Comments/Questions:

- “Cars don't yield at street corners to pedestrians.”
- “The traffic flow and safety of pedestrians/bikes are a huge concern! I currently do not let my children bike or walk here because it's SO dangerous.”
- “Make it look nicer! I.e. side walks, trees, small businesses in now-vacant stores.”
- Map comment – location at SE 132nd Ave. along north side of street: “There is already a sidewalk here would this be pushed further back?”
- Map comment – location east of SE 174th Ave.: “Turning right out of Safeway center – can't see curb in middle – some people try to go left.”
- Map comment – location east of 143rd Ave.: “Need advance warning technology to affect driver behavior. Example, enforcement warning to slow vehicles.”
- Map comment – location – intersection at SE 104th Ave.: “A lot more traffic at this access.”
- Map comment – location – traffic along SE 162nd Ave south of Powell Blvd.: “Powell Butte Park access – will become more active when it gets warmer. Hazard with northbound traffic and southbound turns.”
- Map comment – location – proposed crosswalks near SE 129th Ave. and SE 132nd Ave.: “This should have been completed by now – a dangerous intersection. Two cross walks between SE 122nd Ave. and SE 136th Ave. Look at the apartment buildings in this area – Planning Department.”
- “Could there be planning involving on how property will be affected?”

5. What are the best ways for us to keep you informed about this project?

Email was suggested as the most popular way of keeping people informed about the project, with 15 responses. Eight people chose the open house, six people chose their community newsletter (with Powellhurst/Gilbert N.A. being mentioned), and one person each selected website and newspaper ads. No one selected social media as a preferred method for staying informed.

6. Would you be interested in joining us for a walking tour of Outer Powell Blvd. in early 2015?

Four people said “yes”, five people said “maybe” and six people said “no.” Those who said “yes” and “maybe” will be contacted in advance of the walking tour being planned on Feb. 7, 2015.

One person who was unable to attend the open house provided the following comments via email:

“Having dealt intimately with another ODOT-led construction project this past year, I wish ODOT would do a much better job dealing with disruption to pedestrian traffic in the following ways:

- 1) *Better coordinate with TriMet the current status of the construction project to facilitate accurate information on TriMet's website and Transit Tracker systems regarding stop closures.*
- 2) *Provide information (email distribution, website, social media, phone hotline, whatever) regarding areas that will affect pedestrian usage - INCLUDING areas that might make it difficult or impossible to navigate with strollers, mobility devices, or elderly pedestrians to navigate.*
- 3) *Do not allow contractors to use transit stops as staging points.*
- 4) *Consider key access points that pedestrians use - hospitals, libraries, grocery stores, banks, transit stops, etc. On an overcrowded, busy street like Powell, if pedestrian pathways are closed, then pedestrians cannot access such buildings. (ODOT goes great pains to insure that businesses were available to DRIVERS but has no qualms about closing access to pedestrians.)*
- 5) *Realize that a detour of "a few blocks" may have a great impact on a pedestrian, especially if she uses a mobility device, walker, stroller, are lugging groceries, are elderly or disabled, or don't have other means for conducting the daily business of living.*
- 6) *Accept that many people in the affected area will use a language other than English, may have difficulty using or limited access to technology, or may have financial limitations thus suffering from the impact of the disruption.*
- 7) *Consider pedestrian detours carefully. While auto detours are well signed (and drivers protected from the elements), pedestrian detours currently are marked with "sidewalk closed" or "crosswalk closed" signs where the closure starts. Also, many side streets in the targeted area have limited access points (some only on Powell). Make sure pedestrians can still get where they need to go and don't assume everyone can fight traffic or go overland (it rains here sometimes).*

Simply put, pedestrians have just as much right to use the public thoroughfares as drivers but ODOT currently only pays lip service to pedestrian needs (albeit overwhelmed by the demands placed on infrastructure by drivers). While I'm sure pedestrians will be pleased once the project is completed, it's a lot to ask them to go without access to food, work/school, or healthcare - or take a multi-mile detour - for weeks or months to make this happen. ODOT doesn't require this of drivers, so why does it have no qualms of forcing it on pedestrians?"