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# The Southwest Portland Post

Southwest Portland's Independent Neighborhood Newspaper

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## TriMet study documents Hillsdale pedestrian problems

By Scott Mobley  
 The Southwest Portland Post

Hillsdale's pedestrian transportation problems are well known anecdotally.

Now TriMet has documented some of them in a region-wide study of the obstacles transit patrons face on their way to and from the bus. Hillsdale was one of 10 areas around the Portland area where TriMet sees

investment in sidewalks, crosswalks, streetlights and trees doing the most good.

"Getting to or from a stop is part of every customer's trip," said Jessica Engelmann, a senior planner with TriMet's planning and policy department.

"The design of streets, sidewalks, intersections, and crossings all affect whether a person wants or is able to use our service," said Engelmann.

Sixty-five percent of TriMet customers in Hillsdale walk to and from the bus stop, the study said. Only six percent drive and park nearby before boarding the bus or have someone drop them off at the stop (the rest transfer in from another part of the system).

The bus stop at Southwest Capitol Highway and Sunset Boulevard near Wilson High School is by far the busiest in Hillsdale with 8,158 boardings per week, according to the study. The stop at Southwest Barbur and Bertha boulevards is the next busiest, with 2,863 boardings per week.

Analysts found the greatest dangers getting to bus stops along Barbur Boulevard, where pedestrians face high-speed traffic, extra-wide intersections, disconnected side streets and too few

places to safely cross the boulevard.

Barbur Boulevard has long stretches without sidewalks, while in other places the walkways are too narrow, the study said.

TriMet analysts saw a wheelchair-bound man exploit a gap in heavy Barbur Boulevard traffic near Southwest 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue to reach a bus stop.

They watched elderly pedestrians and mothers with children rush across the vast intersection where Barbur Boulevard meets Bertha Boulevard only to see the signal change before they could get to the bus stop on the other side.

And where there were no sidewalks, observers saw handicapped men and women in scooters motor along Barbur Boulevard's bike lanes as 35-mile-per-hour traffic blows by, the study said.

Capitol Highway isn't quite so pedestrian hostile as Barbur Boulevard, especially through the Hillsdale town center, where sidewalks are wider and nicely landscaped, the study said.

Still, some Capitol Highway stretches lack sidewalks east and west of the business district. And Capitol Highway pedestrians must also contend with up to twice as many driveways – and po-

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The #44 bus stops at Capitol Highway and Sunset Boulevard, March 26. According to a TriMet study this is the busiest bus stop in Hillsdale. (Post photo by Don Snedecor)

## Southwest Portland will host first Sunday Parkways this summer

By Scott Mobley  
 The Southwest Portland Post

For a half-day July 22, the city will reserve ordinarily busy streets for walkers, joggers, cyclists, skaters and any other non-motorized traveler.

The 7.8-mile-long street festival will wind through the Multnomah, Hillsdale and Maplewood neighborhoods.

Walkers will stroll and cyclists will roll through Multnomah Village and the Hillsdale Town Center, where merchants will be ready. Vendors will also stake out spots in Gabriel Park near the route along Southwest Vermont Street.

Roger Averbeck, who chairs the Southwest Neighborhoods Inc. transportation committee, was among those lobbying the city to bring Sunday Parkways to a part of town well-known as automobile-dependent.

That dependency is thanks to low-density development on a discontinuous street grid that winds around hilly topography and often lacks sidewalks.

Many Southwest Portland residents walk the area's extensive trail network for recreation but drive even for short

errands, Averbeck said.

"With an event like this, it's important for local residents and businesses to recognize it's possible for people to get around Southwest Portland by walking or biking," Averbeck said.

"You don't have to drive a car for everything you do, especially for short trips."

The event, timed to coincide with the Terwilliger Parkway Centennial, will close or partially close sections of Vermont Street, Multnomah Boulevard, Troy Street, Southwest Capitol Highway and Terwilliger Boulevard.

Sunday Parkways won't completely close off the busiest streets such as Vermont Street and Capitol Highway, said



Linda Ginenthal, the Portland Department of Transportation program manager coordinating the event. Motorists will still have one lane.

Residents along the route needing their cars between the event's 11 a.m. start and 4 p.m. conclusion won't be trapped in their homes, Ginenthal said.

Sunday Parkways will enlist roughly 300 volunteers to help handle traffic, including bicycle-mounted escorts to get motorists to and from homes or businesses.

Portland Police will direct traffic at the busiest intersections during the event.

The city in 2008 kicked off Sunday Parkways with a street festival in

North Portland that drew an estimated 15,000. This year the city will hold five Sunday Parkways festivals between May 13 and Sept. 30, with events also slated for the north, northeast, southeast and east sides of town.

Portland modeled its Sunday Parkways on the ciclovias of Colombia, where officials in Bogota, Cali and Medellin reserve miles of streets for runners, cyclists and skaters. New York, Chicago, Brussels, Winnipeg and dozens of other cities around the world have adopted this idea.

Visit <http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?c=46103> for more information on Sunday Parkways, including volunteer opportunities.

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 4207 SE Woodstock Blvd #509  
 Portland, OR 97206