

# OREGON TRANSPORTATION PLAN: SURVEY OF OREGONIANS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Overview and Methodology

A statewide telephone survey was conducted between January 20-30, 2006 as part of the review of the Oregon Transportation Plan. The purpose of this research was to gauge Oregonians' attitudes and opinions about transportation improvement needs around the state, priorities for developing a transportation system, willingness to pay for additional improvements, and specific transportation related issues including public transit, traffic congestion, and the impact of transportation on the economy and air pollution.

We interviewed 1,511 Oregonians age 18 and older (general population) using random digit dialing – 300 each from Metro, Northwest, Southwest, Central, and Eastern regions of the state. The survey averaged 15 minutes, and the overall margin of error for this study is +/-2.52%, at the 95% confidence level. Statewide results are reported based on data that is weighted to reflect the population distribution of the state. Any reports on regional differences reflect unweighted results. The full written report, following the executive summary, elaborates on other subgroup findings (including gender, age, income, education, etc.).

### Key Findings

1. Oregonians are evenly divided on whether they feel things in the state are headed in the right direction (41%) or off on the wrong track (41%). Residents identified key issues facing the region in 10 years to be the economy (28%), education/schools (27%), transportation (22%), growth/development (21%), and healthcare (17%).
2. Six in ten Oregonians (60%) believe transportation problems in the state will get worse over the next five years. While residents across the state believe problems will get worse, just as many residents in Eastern Oregon believe things will stay the same.
3. When given the choice to address transportation problems throughout the state versus fixing bottlenecks in the state's most congested areas, slightly more residents would address overall problems (51% versus 45%). While Metro is split, the rest of Oregon would like to address transportation problems throughout the state.
4. Residents rated statements on developing a solid transportation system in Oregon using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is not at all important and 7 is extremely important. All 11 statements are rated above average. Statements are clustered into tiers for reporting purposes, and are not based on statistical significance. Statements in the top tier include 1) maintaining highways-5.9 mean score, 2) maintaining neighborhood roads-5.6, and 3) public transit within cities-5.4. A second tier list includes 4) expanding highways-5.2, 5) sidewalks in communities-5.2, 6) using technology to improve traffic flow-5.2, 7) bus services between cities-5.1, and 8) maintaining regional air services-5.0. Statements in the bottom tier include 9) passenger rail service-4.8, 10) bike lanes in communities-4.7, and 11) freight rail services-4.5.
5. In general, residents in the state agree on approaches for improving traffic congestion. Results are very consistent across all regions of Oregon. Suggestions for improving congestion include public transportation (28%), increase roads (22%), and build better roads (9%). Oregonians prefer a mixed approach to managing congestion (38%) – if given an option, followed closely by

a more focused approach with an emphasis on carpooling, telecommuting, flexible work schedules, and the addition of bike lanes (32%). Expanding and maintaining highways and roads, and an increased use of technology was preferred by one-quarter of respondents.

6. An overwhelming majority, 78%, believe public transit service is needed in their community. A little over one-half of respondents (54%) believe they have adequate public transit in their communities, 29% believe they don't have adequate service, 13% do not have service, and 4% answered don't know. Those who have service, regardless of whether they feel the service is adequate or not, listed the same top responses for improvements.
  - Extended/better schedules
  - Extended/better routes
  - Additional/improved bus services
  - More/better transit generally
7. When it comes to transportation and air pollution, residents would like to see the state expand public transit in urban areas (79%) and promote the use of alternative vehicles (78%) to reduce emissions. The use of alternative vehicles was supported more in Metro and Northwest regions of the state than any other area.
8. Oregonians clearly see the connection between transportation issues and the economy. Two-thirds or more agree that bottlenecks for commercial trucks (80%) and freight transport (71%), and connections between airports and highways (67%) need to be improved to promote Oregon's economy. While there is least agreement for dredging the Columbia River to foster the state's economy, there is still a majority agreement (59%).
9. Overall findings show Oregonians lean slightly toward making efficiencies in the state's transportation system (46%) over seeking additional funds (33%) – results by region closely represent statewide findings. Small margins are found between priorities for the Oregon Transportation Plan. Expanding improvements in most needed areas around the state (39%) is identified as the first priority for the updated Oregon Transportation Plan, followed by the use of technology to increase efficiencies (33%), and then maintain the existing system (27%).
10. We tested the reference to 'Oregon roads and highways' and compared it to 'roads and highways in my region' on willingness to pay for transportation improvements. Oregon roads and highways tested slightly better. More residents would consider paying for additional improvements than allow for conditions to get worse, or not pay at all and be content with existing transportation conditions. A majority (53% using the term Oregon) and a large plurality (44% using the term region) would consider paying for additional improvements. Roughly one-quarter of respondents are split between conditions needing to get worse before paying more and believing the existing transportation system is fine and additional funds are not necessary.