

TRIP report ID's Oregon's 50 worst highway, multi-modal 'chokepoints'

The I-5 Columbia River Crossing tops the list of Oregon's worst transportation chokepoints, along with the I-5/I-84/I-405 Interchange, the OR 212/224 Corridor, the I-205/I-5 Interchange and the OR 217/I-5 Interchange. according to a new report released today by TRIP, a Washington, D.C.- based national transportation research organization.

TRIP's report, "Oregon's Transportation Chokepoints: the Top 50 Chokepoints and Remedies for Relief," ranks the state's urban interchanges, highway segments, bus and rail transit routes, and sections of rural highways that provide inadequate mobility.

These transportation chokepoints impede local, regional or interstate travel, diminish the quality of life of residents and visitors,

In addition to identifying the chokepoints, the report also offers potential improvements for each segment that would ease the burden on travelers and allow for improved mobility.

Oregon's top 50 surface transportation chokepoints include 38 roadway segments or interchanges, nine transit routes or corridors and three multimodal segments, which include both a roadway and a transit chokepoint. According to the TRIP report, the worst transportation chokepoint in Oregon is the I-5 Columbia River Crossing in Portland. This bridge is one of the nation's top freight routes and a key regional commuting corridor.

This chokepoint causes the worst congestion in the metro region and is one of the most severe bottlenecks on the I-5 trade corridor. The area is

typically congested for four to six hours per day, and is projected to increase to 15 hours congested per day by 2030. The chokepoint could be eased by replacing the current lift bridge (which causes significant congestion when opened daily), extending light rail across the Columbia River into downtown Vancouver, fixing the crowded interchanges and including a bicycle and pedestrian facility over the river.

The 10 worst Oregon chokepoints are all located in or near the Portland metro area and include the following segments: the I-5/I-84/I-405 Interchange, the OR 212/224 corridor, the I-205/I-5 Interchange, the OR 99W Newberg – Dundee Bypass, the I-205 / Airport Way Interchange, the interchange at I-5 northbound and I-205 to Nyberg, Cornell Road to 185th Avenue, and the OR 217 Corridor. The report's appendix contains a full list of the 50 worst chokepoints in the state as well as possible solutions to ease each chokepoint.

"This report underscores the need for the Columbia River Crossing project to move forward," Sandra McDonough, president and CEO of the Portland Business Alliance, says in a written statement. "TRIP's findings confirm previous research showing the cost of congestion to the state's businesses and residents. We support TRIP's work to demonstrate how essential transportation infrastructure is to keeping not just our cars and freight, but our whole economy moving."

As part of reversing the current economic downturn and facilitating long-term economic growth, Oregon will need to address its numerous surface transportation chokepoints, TRIP says. Enhancing critical segments of Oregon's surface

transportation system will boost the state's economy in the short-term by creating jobs in construction and related fields. In the long term, these improvements will enhance economic competitiveness by improving access and mobility, which will stimulate sustained job growth and improve the quality of life in Oregon.

In 2009, the Oregon legislature approved the Oregon Jobs and Transportation Act (HB 2001), which increased funding for local and state roads, highways and public transit systems, as a result of increased state registration fees, licensing fees and motor fuel taxes. The Act will provide \$100 million for non-road transportation improvements, including public transit and, by 2011, when all fee increases are implemented, will provide an additional \$300 million annually for local and state road and highway improvements.

A number of the chokepoints identified in this report, including the I-5/I-205 Interchange, widening of US 26 from Cornell to 185th Avenue, Newberg-Dundee Bypass in Yamhill County, US 97/Murphy Road Interchange in Bend, I-5 Steep Grade Bottlenecks in southern Oregon, and I-84 Spring Creek section, may be significantly improved by funding allocated to specific projects under HB 2001.

"In addition to causing a headache for motorists, Oregon's transportation chokepoints stifle economic development and growth at a time when it is desperately needed. Oregon can't get where it wants to go – in both a literal and an economic sense – without an efficient transportation system," Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP, says in a press statement.

–Tina Grady Barbaccia