



Research Notes

Oregon Department of Transportation

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Oregonians' Views of the Transportation System

In November 2004 the Federal Highway Administration conducted the *Traveler Opinion & Perception Survey (TOPS)*. This was a nationwide survey on the needs and expectations of users of the nation's transportation system. To gain a better understanding of Oregonians' attitudes about the transportation system, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) funded additional interviews and expanded the survey to cover additional issues. Seven specific areas of opinion were addressed in the survey:

- What contributes to an effective and high quality transportation system;
- Satisfaction with the transportation system;
- Work zone management;
- Delays resulting from roadwork;
- Bridge conditions;
- Impact of transportation on the environment; and
- Support for future transportation programs.

Here is a summary of the findings of the Oregon survey compared with results from the Pacific Census Division states and the nation as a whole.

An Effective transportation system

Oregonians, respondents in the Pacific states, and respondents nationwide all said that *highway and roadway safety, the ability to get around easily, and bridge and pavement conditions* were the most important factors contributing to an effective and high quality transportation system.

Satisfaction with the transportation system

While Oregonians were generally satisfied with most aspects of the transportation system, they gave the highest marks to the *management of work zones, traveler information, and bridge conditions*. They tended to give somewhat lower grades to *pavement conditions, efforts to reduce congestion, and transportation planning*. Oregonians tended to grade

most elements of the transportation system as high as or higher than respondents in the Pacific states and the nation as a whole.

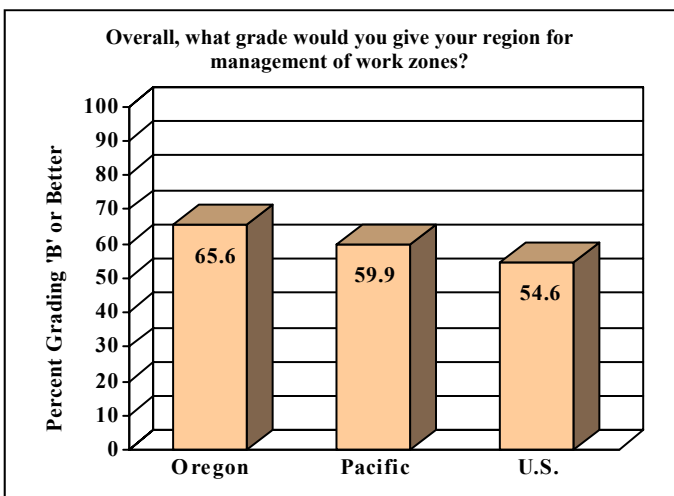
A majority of Oregonians believed that roads and highways here were becoming more dangerous, which they felt was largely due to issues related to driver behavior and increased traffic and congestion.

Work zone management

Oregonians expressed positive levels of satisfaction with all elements of work zone management, rating the following elements highest:

- *orange signs indicating ongoing construction;*
- *overall safety while traveling in work zones;*
- *safety features (visibility, lanes, signs, traffic speed);*
- *detour signs and directions.*

About two-thirds of Oregonians (66%) gave a grade of 'B' or better to the management of work zones. This grade was higher than those given by respondents from the Pacific states or those nationwide. Region 1 residents tended to grade the management of work zones somewhat lower than respondents in other ODOT regions.



Eight out of ten Oregonians expressed satisfaction with how well public agencies keep citizens informed about roadway construction projects in their area. Radio, television and newspaper were all cited as important sources of information on roadway projects.

Delays resulting from roadwork

Oregonians expressed positive levels of satisfaction with all elements of managing delays from roadwork. Highest ratings statewide went to the following:

- *making repairs during non-rush hour periods;*
- *number of flaggers with information signs;* and
- *the amount of time to clear accidents.*

Six in ten Oregonians gave a grade of ‘B’ or better for their region’s efforts and programs to reduce delays from roadwork. This was a higher approval rating than that given by respondents from the rest of the country. Residents in ODOT Region 1 tended to give lower grades than respondents in other regions of the state.

Bridge conditions

Oregonians expressed positive levels of satisfaction with all elements of bridge conditions. The highest levels of satisfaction were with the *appearance, safety, and smoothness of ride* of bridges. Oregonians’ satisfaction levels were similar to those of respondents in the Pacific states and in the nation as a whole.

Impact of transportation on the environment

Oregon respondents showed positive levels of satisfaction with the overall impact of the transportation system on the environment. They

showed a slightly higher average level of satisfaction than did respondents in either the Pacific states or the nation as a whole. Within Oregon, satisfaction was higher in rural regions than in urban regions.

Support for future transportation programs

Oregonians expressed only tentative support for building or expanding the transportation system, less than in the Pacific states or the nation. Pedestrian and transit programs received higher support than bike lanes or roadways in all groups.

Type of Transportation Program or Project	Mean Score on a Scale of 1-10		
	Oregon	Pacific States	U.S.
Build or expand pedestrian walkways	6.6	7.2	7.1
Build or expand public transportation services	6.4	7.3	7.0
Build or expand bike lanes	6.2	6.9	6.7
Build more roadways	5.7	6.7	6.4

When asked if they agreed or disagreed that they were getting their money’s worth for their tax dollar to build and maintain the transportation infrastructure, they gave a tentatively positive response, with a ‘6’, on a scale of ‘0’ (*strongly disagree*) to ‘10’ (*strongly agree*). This response was slightly more positive than the responses from the Pacific states or the nation.

Given \$100 to allocate among four major components of roadway improvement, Oregonians allocated the largest amounts to roadway pavement conditions and roadway safety features and lower amounts to environmental preservation and roadway beautification.

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To request a copy of the research report “2004 Traveler Opinion and Perception Survey,” contact the ODOT Research Unit by phone, or view the report on the Research Unit web page listed below.



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For more information on ODOT’s Research Program and Projects, visit the web site at

http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP_RES/