

3. Oregon's Transportation System

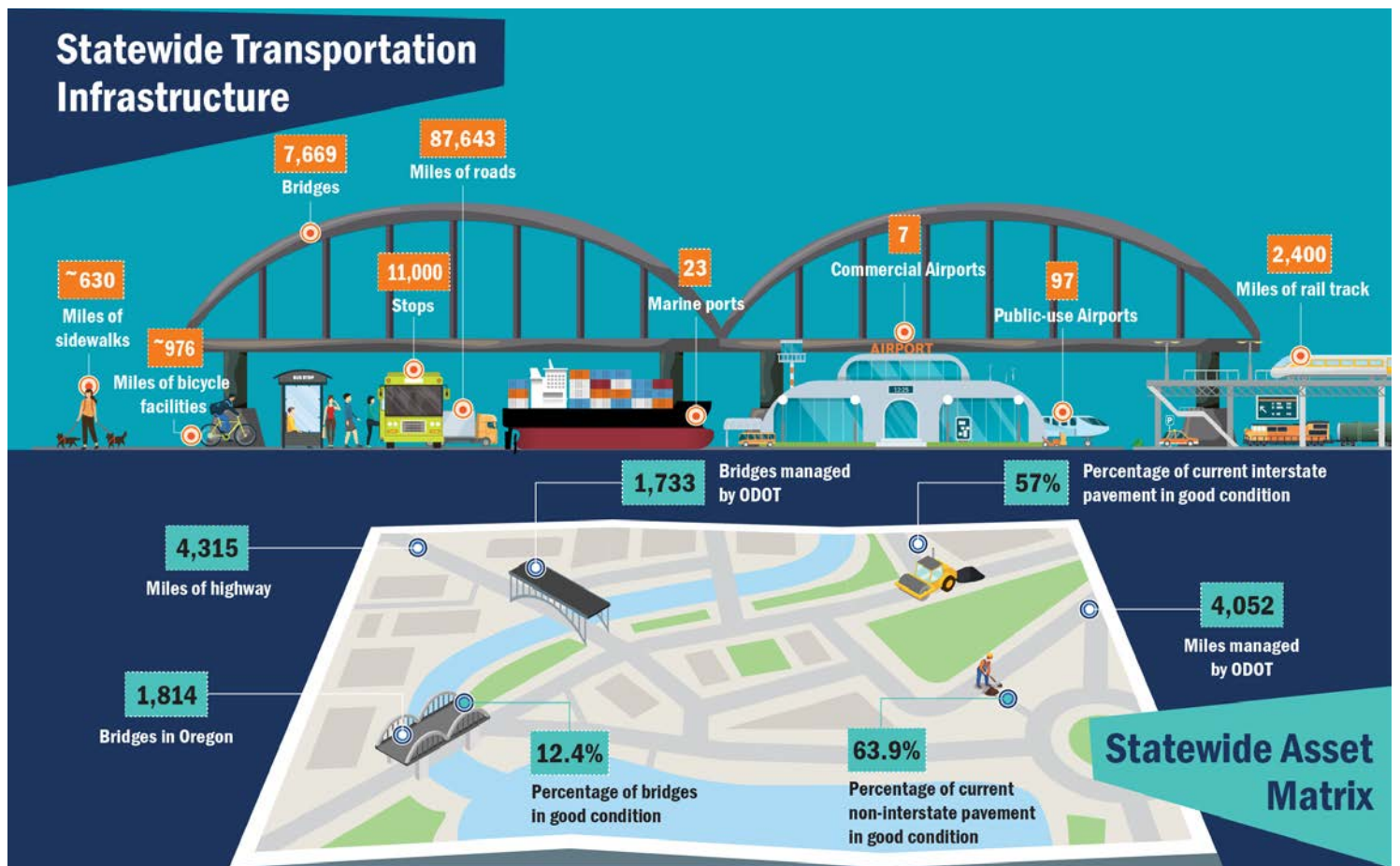


3 Oregon's Transportation System

A modern transportation system ensures that all Oregonians can travel safely and efficiently throughout the state via the mode of their choice. By maintaining and enhancing the many facilities that transportation agencies manage, transportation plays a key role in the economic, social, and environmental health of the entire state.

As Oregon looks to the future, planning for transportation services in support of Oregon's increasing population and growing economy only becomes more critical.

Oregon's transportation system is complex and consists of many different modes for all types of users. Preserving and maintaining these assets is critical as a basic foundation of Oregon's transportation system. The following chapter summarizes key elements of transportation in Oregon. Additional information can be found in Volume 2 of this plan. The OTP's goals, policies, strategies and investments provide direction as Oregon manages these critical assets in the face of challenges and trends, and other drivers of change.



3.1 Aviation

Oregon has 97 airports that are vital to the state’s economy and public safety. These airports range from international passenger airports connecting Oregon to the world, key business and freight-air services, to rural airstrips supporting critical resource management. Key takeaways include:



- Aviation infrastructure and services have seen challenges in commercial enplanements from the pandemic leading to revenue reductions and less reliable service.
- Airports provide a critical role in emergency management. For example, the Redmond Airport will play a key role in recovery in the event of a major seismic event as the primary aviation hub in Central Oregon.
- Rural airstrips play a critical role in wildfire response and are facing challenges with aging infrastructure and inadequate funding to make necessary improvements.

3.2 Bicycle and Pedestrian

Active transportation relies on safe and connected bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure tailored to Oregon’s diverse communities. Key takeaways include:



- In areas outside of communities, people often use roadway shoulders as walkways and bikeways.
- Shared use paths serve non-motorized travelers in both urban and rural areas for commute and recreational purposes.
- Walkways are also crucial for meeting Americans with Disabilities Act obligations and remain a focus of state and local transportation providers alike.
- Bicyclists and pedestrians face system gaps on key routes as well as features designed to improve safety when traveling along Oregon roadways and crossing roads and streets.
- Bicyclists and pedestrians are particularly vulnerable users of the transportation system and experience disproportionate risk of being killed or seriously injured when using the system.

3.3 Freight

Oregonians depend heavily on the transportation system to get needed goods and services to market and enhance economic prosperity. Freight mobility in Oregon is provided by a multimodal network that includes highways, local roads, rail, air, marine and pipeline operations. The majority of Oregon's freight (70 percent) is transported on Oregon's highway system and congestion from bottlenecks has a direct impact on Oregon's economy. Key takeaways include:



- Studies of existing freight highway conditions in Oregon identified congestion from urban bottlenecks as a major issue, affecting Oregon's economy with variations in travel-time reliability and rising travel costs.
- Oregon has struggled with competitiveness with international air freight due to limited direct services to the Pacific Rim and Europe.
- Oregon's marine freight facilities have aging infrastructure that requires substantial investments and has challenges with efficient marine-roadway connectivity.
- Oregon's rail infrastructure is served primarily by two major rail lines that have constrained speeds due to tight curves and height constraints. Short-line railroads provide other key connections in Oregon, but preservation and maintenance remain key issues.

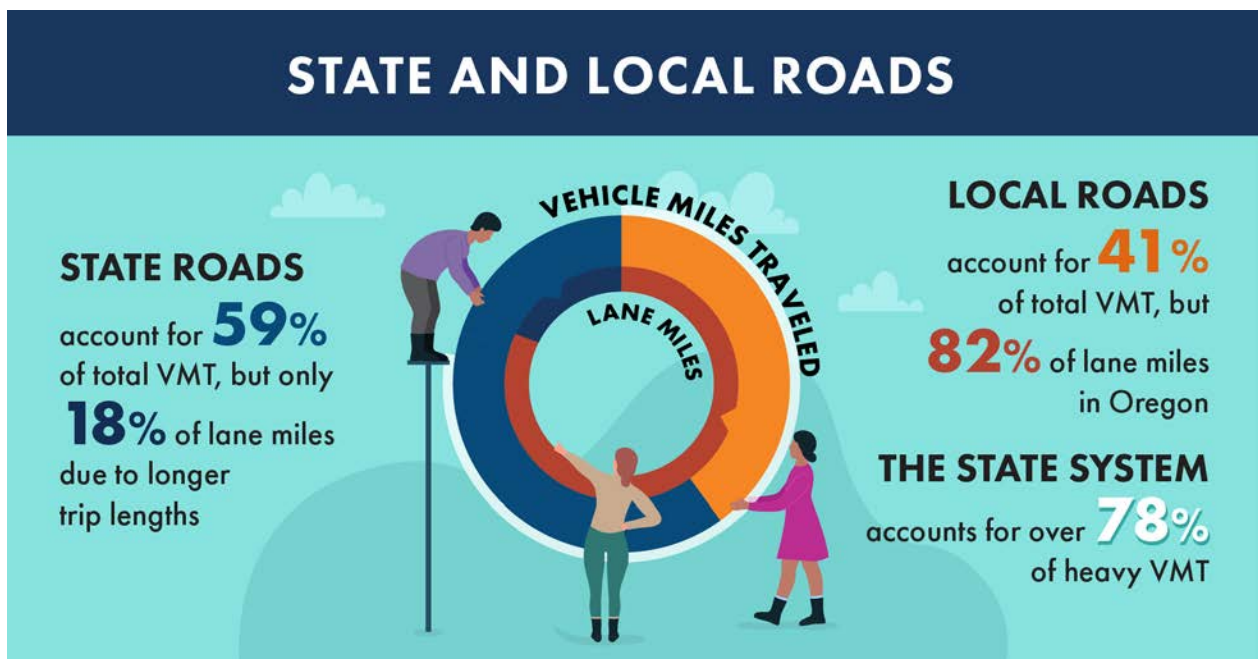


3.4 State Highways and Local Streets

State highways and local roads and streets play a critical role in Oregon transportation, facilitating the movement of freight, passenger vehicles and supporting public transportation, and bicycle and pedestrian travel within and along the right of way. These facilities are complex infrastructures that often serve different purposes such as long distance travel and connections to jobs and schools that serve mainly local traffic. Key takeaways include:



- While state highways are just a share (18 percent) of the total miles of roads within the state, travel on these roads accounted for 59 percent of total VMT. Highways account for the majority of heavy vehicle VMT.
- Roadways across the state are increasingly falling into a state of disrepair. Many bridges are structurally deficient and seismically at risk. Drainage systems are undersized to current stemflows and changing weather.





3.5 Public Transportation

Public transportation is an essential element of Oregon’s transportation system. Oregonians take over 100 million public transportation trips each year. Key takeaways include:



- There are three primary forms of public transportation in Oregon: intra-urban fixed route public transit (transit within cities), inter-urban fixed-route transit (transit between cities) and demand responsive (dial-a-ride) services for those with special transportation needs.
- The public transportation system suffered significant setbacks in ridership and financial challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic and has yet to fully recover.
- In urban areas, frequency and reliability are important to transit users, especially communities of color. Equity communities are especially vulnerable to impacts related to reliability.
- Safety and security have become substantial concerns for public transportation users in urban areas, which disproportionately affects communities of color.
- Some Oregonians are dependent on public transportation to travel within urban areas, as well as rural travelers seeking needed medical services or goods in other cities or connecting in their own communities are similarly dependent on public transportation.
- Successful public transit is a key component to reducing VMT and GHGs.

3.6 Passenger Rail

Railroads in Oregon serve both freight providers and travelers; helping move bulk goods efficiently and providing important connections for people traveling between Oregon communities. Key takeaways for passenger rail travel include:



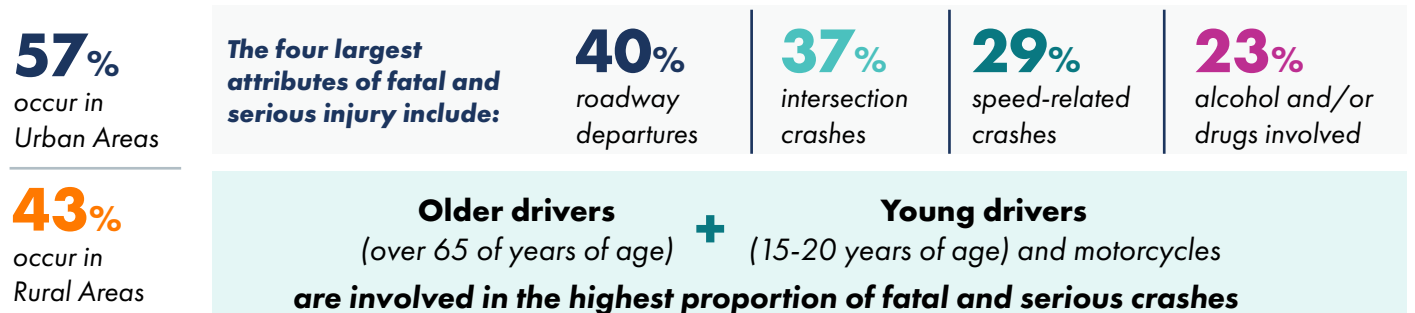
- Passenger rail service in Oregon uses the national rail network owned by Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe, which consists of long-distance intercity service that links metropolitan regions along the U.S. West Coast, with connections to other U.S. regions. Passenger service is offered on freight rail railroads, which can lead to delays for passengers while freight rail services takes priority on the railroad tracks.
- Amtrak Cascades intercity passenger rail connects the Willamette Valley to the larger Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor that links Eugene to Vancouver, British Columbia.
- TriMet’s Westside Express Service commuter rail service operates through an agreement with Portland and Western Railroad and serves stations in Beaverton, Tigard, Tualatin, and Wilsonville.
- Funding is very limited for passenger rail improvements.

3.7 Transportation Safety


Traffic fatalities and serious injuries have been increasing for a decade, especially steeply in recent years. Different areas of Oregon experience diverse types of safety challenges; roadway departures are much more common in rural areas where medical services may be large distances from the crash location while intersection crashes, often with vulnerable users such as bicyclists and pedestrians involved, account for the majority of fatal and serious crashes in urban areas. Key takeaways from 2021 data include:



FATAL AND SERIOUS INJURY FINDINGS:



2021 in Oregon:



Oregon's increases in fatalities and serious injuries is consistent with national trends:




52% of crashes occurred on **state highways**

48% of crashes occurred on **city and county roads**

32 year high in **fatalities**

25 year high in **serious injuries**

Several key emphasis areas outlined in the Transportation Safety Action Plan arising from detailed analysis of trends and factors provide focus for key actions to work toward eliminating fatal or life changing injuries.

RISKY BEHAVIORS	INFRASTRUCTURE
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <p>IMPAIRED DRIVING UNBELTED OCCUPANTS SPEEDING DISTRACTED DRIVING</p> </div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <p>INTERSECTION ROADWAY DEPARTURE</p> </div>
VULNERABLE USERS	IMPROVED SYSTEMS
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <p>PEDESTRIANS BICYCLISTS MOTORCYCLISTS AGING ROAD USERS</p> </div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <p>IMPROVED DATA TRAINING AND EDUCATION ENFORCEMENT EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES COMMERCIAL VEHICLES</p> </div>

3.8 Transportation Options

Transportation options programs connect people to transportation choices, allowing them to bike, walk, take transit, drive, share rides, and telecommute, among other things. Key takeaways include:



- Advancements in technology have provided many new options for travelers looking for alternative ways to get around or connect multiple modes where those options exist.
- Local transportation option providers supply individualized and custom connections to enable all people to get to their required destinations.
- The creation of transportation options programs has made progress in connecting people to transportation services in Oregon. The “Get There Oregon” ride matching program has grown by over 20 percent a year.