

ODOT confirms Portland traffic is getting worse

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — It's not your imagination: Traveling on Portland-area highways and interstates takes longer than it used to, according to a new report by the Oregon Department of Transportation.

In-migration and the state's better-than-average economic prosperity has exacerbated congestion, crashes and delays in six highway corridors: Interstate 5, Interstate 84, Interstate 205, Interstate 405, U.S. 26 and Oregon 217.

"The region's infrastructure is now tasked with accommodating additional traffic as more residents travel for work and daily activities and more businesses need to move goods and services on the highway system," the report states.

The intensifying bottlenecks, unforeseen road conditions and unreliable travel times took an economic toll. In the I-5 corridor alone, congestion, crashes and delays caused more than \$80 million in lost productivity.

The report by ODOT staff and consultants shows travel times took longer because average speed declined on all Portland-area highways between 2013 and 2015.

The most dramatic drop in speed was on northbound Interstate 205, which decreased by more than 7 mph, from 42.6 mph to 35.4 mph.

Meanwhile, congestion has intensified even during non-peak travel times. That has interfered with freight delivery schedules and driven up the cost of shipping, the report found.



Courtesy Oregon Department of Transportation

A new report released by ODOT confirms what drivers already know — traffic around Portland is getting worse. The congestion has increased commutes and has caused freight delays and other economic impacts.

"Traffic congestion in the Portland region can now occur at any hour of the day, including holidays and weekends; it is no longer only a weekday peak hour problem," the report states.

During the same period, bottlenecks mushroomed by 13 percent and crashes multiplied in tandem with increasing congestion.

Congestion has not increased response times for ambulances, said Rob McDonald, operations manager for AMR in Portland. However, the increasingly difficult traffic conditions have forced the company to hire more medics and deploy more ambulances in a greater number of strategic locations in order to maintain its target response time, McDonald said. The number of staff increased

about 7 to 9 percent per year between 2013 and 2015, he said. Those staff increases and downstream expenses such as more ambulances have fueled the cost of doing business, he said.

RealTime signs that notify motorists of crashes and delays and auxiliary lanes have helped stabilize or lessen the frequency of crashes in certain corridors, the report found. For example, the auxiliary lane between the on-ramp and off-ramp at Northeast Halsey Street on I-84 East had a 14 percent decrease in crashes and a 10 percent decline in delays. Auxiliary lanes are designed to prevent crashes caused by merging and weaving between exits, said ODOT spokeswoman Kimberly Dinwiddie. Meanwhile, RealTime signs

activated in 2014 on Oregon 217 reduced crashes by 21 percent in one year.

ODOT is in the design phase of projects to:

- Extend a northbound auxiliary lane on I-205 between Powell Boulevard and I-84;
- Build northbound and southbound auxiliary lanes on Oregon 2017;
- Install RealTime signs on I-205 between Sunnyside and the Glenn Jackson Bridge.

Construction already has started on expanding RealTime signs along U.S. 26 and I-84.

The \$5.3 billion transportation funding bill approved by the Oregon Legislature last month is expected to yield similar projects intended to improve safety and relieve congestion, Dinwiddie said.

Euthanasia used for 4.5 percent of deaths in the Netherlands

By **MARIA CHENG**
AP Medical Writer

LONDON — Euthanasia has become "common practice" in the Netherlands, accounting for 4.5 percent of deaths, according to researchers who say requests are increasing from people who aren't terminally ill.

In 2002, the Netherlands became the first country in the world that made it legal for doctors to help people die. Both euthanasia, where doctors actively kill patients, and assisted suicide, where physicians prescribe patients a lethal dose of drugs, are allowed. People must be "suffering unbearably" with no hope of relief — but their condition does not have to be fatal.

"It looks like patients are now more willing to ask for euthanasia and physicians are more willing to grant it," said lead author Dr. Agnes van der Heide of Erasmus University Medical Center in Rotterdam.

The 25-year review published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine is based on physician questionnaires. The use of euthanasia and assisted suicide "to relieve end-of-life suffering has become common practice in the Netherlands," the authors said in the report.

The review shows that in 1990, before it was legal, 1.7 percent of deaths were from euthanasia or assisted suicide. That rose to 4.5 percent by 2015. The vast majority — 92 percent — had serious illness and the rest had health problems from old age, early-stage dementia or psychiatric problems or a combination. More than a third of those who died were over 80.

Requests from those who aren't terminally ill still represents a small share, but have been increasing, Van der Heide said.

"When assisted dying is becoming the more normal option at the end of life,

there is a risk people will feel more inclined to ask for it," she said.

About 8 percent of the people who died in 2015 asked for help dying, the review showed. Van der Heide said about half of all requests are approved now, compared to about a third in previous years.

Scott Kim, a bioethicist at the U.S. National Institutes of Health who was not part of the study, said the report raises concerns, particularly in regards to people seeking euthanasia due to age-related issues.

"These are old people who may have health problems, but none of them are life-threatening. They're old, they can't get around, their friends are dead and their children don't visit anymore," he said. "This kind of trend cries out for a discussion. Do we think their lives are still worthwhile?"

Euthanasia is also legal in Belgium, Canada, Colombia and Luxembourg. Switzerland, Germany and six U.S. states allow assisted suicide.

Some experts said that the euthanasia experience in the Netherlands offered lessons to other countries debating similar legislation.

"If you legalize on the broad basis (that) the Dutch have, then this increase is what you would expect," said Penney Lewis, co-director of the Centre of Medical Law and Ethics at King's College London.

"Doctors become more confident in practicing euthanasia and more patients will start asking for it," she said. "Without a more restrictive system, like what you have in Oregon, you will naturally see an increase."

In 1997, Oregon was the first state to allow physician-assisted suicide for those given six months or less to live. It is now legal in Colorado, California, Montana, Vermont, Washington state and the District of Columbia.

DRONES: UAS range's biggest need going forward is more hangar space

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pounds of water. Built by a Spanish company called Singular Aircraft, the Flyox is being developed for firefighting, agriculture and goods transport, according to the Singular website.

With the vehicle already tested in Europe and generating significant demand, Abling said Singular is interested in manufacturing the aircraft in Pendleton.

The Flyox is expected to arrive in Pendleton in October.

Navmar Applied Science Corp. is already familiar with Pendleton, having recently tested its ArcticShark drone at the range.

Abling said Navmar will return with their atmospheric measuring unmanned aerial vehicle in August and will bring a bigger team, transferring some of its business from Pennsylvania to Pendleton. Abling said the ArcticShark will be the first UAS tested under the range's fixed command center.

The range hired Steve Lawn to helm that command center. Lawn previously worked for Digital Harvest, another UAS company with an office in Pendleton.

While excited by the news, some on the council wanted Abling to provide a report with more statistics to satiate some of the skeptical members of the public.

"I'd like to see, at some point, some documentation on return on investment," Councilor Paul Chalmers

"We're just starting to see a mushroom cloud starting to develop for the activity that's taking place out there."

— **Paul Chalmers**,
Pendleton city councilor

said. "I know there was a lot of skepticism. 'Why is the city investing all these dollars' and yada yada yada. I understand that concern. But from everything that I'm hearing and seeing from this presentation, we're just starting to see a mushroom cloud starting to develop for the activity that's taking place out there."

Councilor Neil Brown said he's also fielded questions about how many jobs the UAS range has generated and a report about that topic would be useful.

When asked what the UAS range needed going forward, Abling said the "biggest alligator in the boat" was the need for more hangar space.

Wayne Green, the city's airport engineer, said the price of building a new mid-size hangar ranges between \$250,000-\$500,000.

After Abling concluded his report, the council continued to lavish praise on the range, with Councilor Becky Marks calling it "phenomenal."

"This is a snowball," Councilor Scott Fairley said. "It's going to ripple throughout this community."



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Sunny, an 8-year-old Brussels griffon, watches another dog during an awards ceremony of the Umatilla County Fair 4-H dog show on Wednesday in Hermiston.

DOGS: Results will be published after the fair is completed

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He uses treats as an incentive.

"Cut up hot dogs and cheese are his favorite," Devin said.

He told Redbear to stay and then walked about 10 feet away, demonstrating the golden retriever's patience.

"He was really well behaved before, but now he's even better," he said.

Emmy Simmons, also of Hermiston, also used hot dogs to train her collie Maggie. Emmy was sitting inside the covered cage with the dog, using a cool damp towel to keep the collie from getting overheated after running through an obstacle course.

Morgan Brown put her dog Sadie through her paces in front of a judge after what she called "a lot of practicing" to get ready.

"She did pretty good, but she could use some work though," Morgan said.

Kim Linier judged the rally portion of the competition, which put the dogs and their owners through a course made up of signs directing their owners to turn in a certain direction, walk at a fast pace or sit.

Unlike other competitions at the dog show, the American Kennel Club allows all dogs, including mixed breeds, to participate.



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Emmy Simmons tells her collie Maggie to sit during her turn on the rally course at the Umatilla County Fair dog show.

"I like that the (American Kennel Club) opened it up to mixed breeds, so us shelter dog owners get to participate too."

— **Kim Linier**, judge of the rally portion of the competition

"I like that the AKC opened it up to mixed breeds, so us shelter dog owners get to participate too," Linier said.

The dog show for the Umatilla County Fair was a 4-H event, but Linier said she participates in dog shows for all ages, and said the children and teenagers partici-

pating in Wednesday's event were gaining skills that they could use throughout their lives. Often their parents are appreciative of the more obedient pets, too.

The rally course was a more lively event than the obedience portion, where dogs and their owners spent a

lot of the time quietly standing or sitting at attention.

"They can be very enthusiastic, you can pat your hands and talk to the dogs, so it's more fun than obedience," Linier said.

As a bonus, she said, "the dogs seem to like it."

Results of the dog show will be published with complete results after the fair is completed.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.