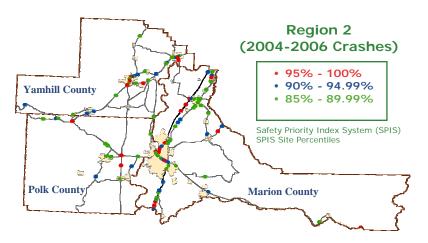
Mid-Willamette

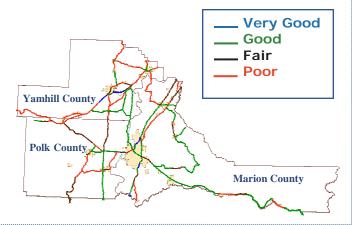
Safety



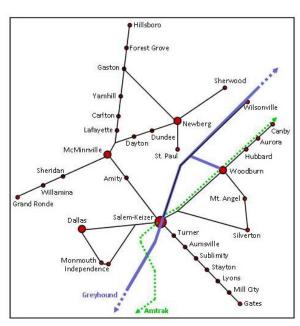
Safety of the area's roads is vital to ensure the livability of the area, the ability of goods and people to move around and through the area, and to decrease the number of hours of delay. MWACT has placed an emphasis on the safe operation of the area's transportation system. Several safety studies have resulted in a number of projects endorsed by MWACT. These include the installation of median rumble strips on Highway 18, median barriers on Highway 22, and building interchanges at Rickreall and Stayton/Sublimity. But as shown on the map, there are still areas where collisions occur with some frequency, thus requiring additional effort to address them.

Pavement

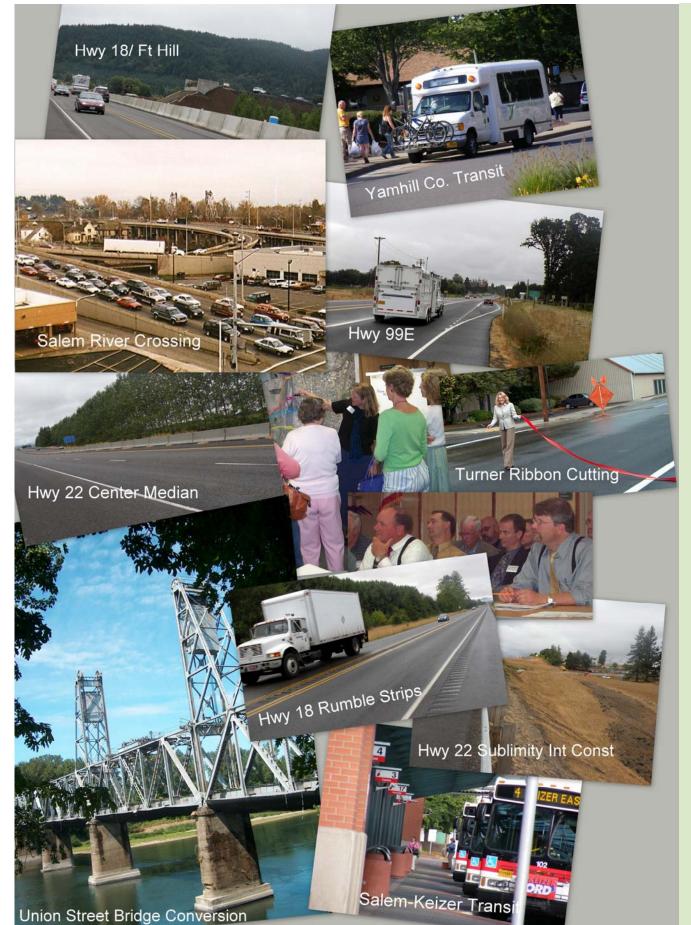
One measure of how far the maintenance of the area's infrastructure has been deferred is to consider the pavement quality of the area's highways. In 2006, 55 percent of the highways were rated "fair" or "poor" and just over 41 percent of the remainder where rated "good." As the rating of the road falls, the necessity to conduct expensive reconstruction, instead of repairs, increases. The infrastructure is slowly being degraded by use, weather, and lack of maintenance.



Transit



At first glance, it seems the region is well served by public transit. The majority of the towns have a connection to at least one other town. It is when you scratch the surface that the limitations begin to show. Many of the routes are in operation only for a limited time during the day, often providing a last run by 6:00 p.m. Some are limited by directionality: service is toward the major city with inconvenient service in the opposite direction. Is the region connected? Yes. Is the degree of mobility provided sufficient to allow people to choose this as an option for the majority of their trips? Not really, at least not without sacrifices or a level of inconvenience.



Local Setting

The Mid-Willamette Valley sits at the crossroads between major North-South and East-West movements. I-5 and the UP railroad are the major corridors connecting the west coast with Canada and Mexico, experiencing heavy freight traffic. Highway 22 provides one of the few links between Central Oregon and the Coast using one of the few bridges across the Willamette in the area. Highway 18 connects the Coast to the Portland Metropolitan area, which experiences significant demand during weekends and holidays.

These roads serve as the backbone for the longer traffic flows, as well as providing the necessary links within the region and occasionally serving as the "Main Street" of a smaller community.



Salem River Crossing

Highway 22 currently functions as the only crossing of the Willamette River in the Salem-Keizer area. Additional capacity is needed to maintain the function of the existing bridges, improve safety, and improve the connectivity of the transportation system. The current bridges are at capacity during the peak hours and travel demand is forecast to increase.





I-5/Woodburn Interchange

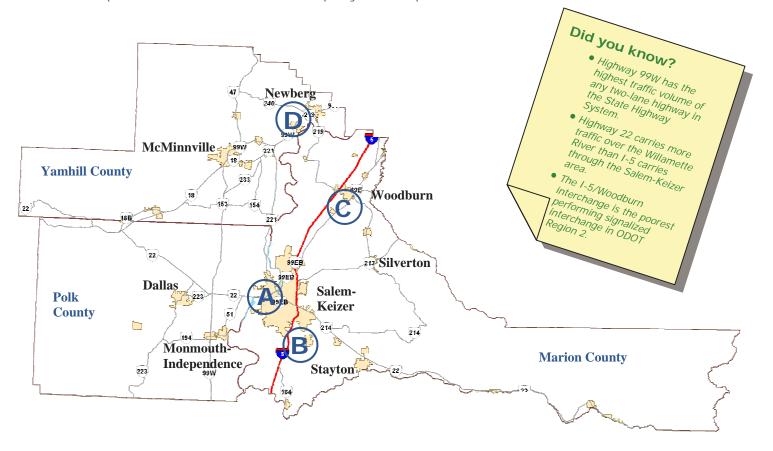


This project is designed to address existing congestion and safety issues. Traffic from the off-ramps periodically backs up into the travel lanes of I-5.

Local Efforts to Address Transportation Issues

Two local jurisdictions have recently asked voters to approve additional funds for transportation infrastructure projects. Polk County was successful in passing a \$20 million bond for road maintenance. The Salem-Keizer Transit district tried twice in 2006 for a property tax levy to maintain and increase service but was unsuccessful.

In November 2008, the city of Salem has a bond measure for \$99.8 million that will provide funds to maintain the existing roads and build new projects. The Salem-Keizer Transit district also has their property tax levy on the ballot that will provide an additional \$6 million per year for operations.



Need for Large Project Funding and Implementation Strategy

Our transportation system is facing an increasingly dire situation when it comes to funding new infrastructure projects and maintaining existing facilities. Transportation funding has been constrained for some time now; therefore, many of the affordable projects have been completed. Unfortunately, that leaves the "large" and "extra-large" projects unfunded and growing in cost.

Needed projects often cost orders of magnitude more than a local jurisdiction or the state can afford even with an optimistic view toward anticipated federal earmarks. Therefore, as the state looks at the need for transportation funding in the future, it needs to address the growing backlog of the large projects. The various transportation partners (ACTs, MPOs, cities, and counties), the stakeholders, and the general public need to be included in this vital discussion.

Local Funding Options

The majority of projects have been funded by state and federal gas tax revenues, local bonds and tax levies, and development charges on new developments. Tolls have been considered for the Newberg-Dundee Bypass. All of the above options have been considered for the third bridge in Salem, plus property taxes, a local gas tax, and a local vehicle registration fee. Transit is funded by a combination of revenue streams including property tax levies, state cigarette taxes, employer taxes, general funds and federal funds, as well as fares and advertisements.



I-5 South of Salem



I-5 has now been widened to six lanes north of Kuebler Boulevard in Salem. I-5 south of Salem remains a four-lane facility with steep hills that slow the large volume of trucks. This segment is at capacity, and any incident will cause backups for miles.



Newberg/Dundee Bypass

Highway 99W/18 connects the Portland area to the coast and the Spirit Mountain Casino. This project is proposed to reduce the congestion, improve the livability, assure economic vitality, and maintain the character of the cities of Newberg and Dundee.

