



Street Conditions Survey Report

AUGUST 2024

2024 Street Conditions Survey Report

June 2024

Paul Aljets, Aljets Consulting

The 2024 Street Conditions Survey by the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) offers a detailed examination of the current state of streets and roads in Oregon's cities, building on the 2016 Street Conditions survey data. This year's findings are essential for understanding the infrastructure challenges and funding needs faced by cities, especially considering the recent Infrastructure Survey that identified \$5.5 billion in road infrastructure needs. The survey reveals that 78% of cities rate their roads as "Fair," "Poor," or "Very Poor." This is consistent with previous findings, and highlights ongoing city struggles due to budget constraints that favor major road projects over side streets. These results emphasize the urgent need for increased funding and more effective maintenance strategies to ensure urban infrastructure safety and reliability.

Introduction

The 2024 Street Conditions Survey, conducted by the League of Oregon Cities, provides an in-depth analysis of the current state of streets and roads within Oregon's cities. The survey was last conducted in 2016, in advance of the 2017 legislative session. The information collected at that time was integral to the development of the 2017 transportation package. The findings from this year's survey are crucial for understanding the infrastructure challenges and funding needs faced by cities across the state.

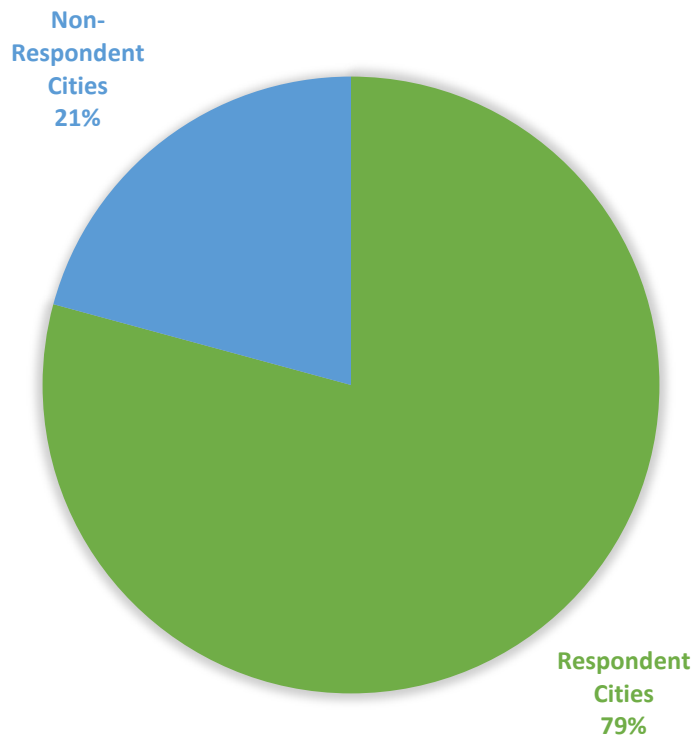
A notable backdrop to this survey is the LOC's recent Infrastructure Survey (conducted April to May 2024), which identified a \$5.5 billion in highway and non-highway road infrastructure needs within Oregon cities. This highlights the pressing demand for substantial investments and strategic planning to address the growing concerns of urban infrastructure. Supporting the findings of the infrastructure survey, this 2024 Street Conditions Survey reveals the mounting challenges in maintaining city roads and streets.

The results show that a significant portion of city streets are in subpar condition, with 78% of cities rating their roads as Fair, Poor, or Very Poor. Consistent with findings in 2016, many cities continue to struggle with maintaining their road networks, often due to budget constraints that prioritize major thoroughfares over lesser-used side streets. These findings underscore the critical need for additional funding sources and more effective maintenance strategies to ensure safe and reliable urban infrastructure.

Survey Methods

This survey was conducted from May 28 to June 21, 2024. Responses were received from 113 cities (out of Oregon's 241 cities) and represent 2,433,556 residents, or 79% of the population residing in cities. The LOC created the survey with Qualtrics and distributed it to city managers, city recorders, and other individuals with positions equal to a city's chief executive officer. These individuals often relied on support from relevant city staff or forwarded the survey to be completed by city staff.

Population		
	#	%
Quintile		
1st Quintile	13	11.5%
2nd Quintile	14	12.4%
3rd Quintile	22	19.5%
4th Quintile	27	23.9%
5th Quintile	37	32.7%
TOTAL	113	
Region		
N. Coast	12	10.6%
Metro	20	17.7%
N. Willamette	18	15.9%
S. Willamette	11	9.7%
C. Coast	6	5.3%
S. Coast	5	4.4%
S. Oregon	9	8.0%
Gorge	7	6.2%
C. Oregon	5	4.4%
SC Oregon	2	1.8%
NE Oregon	11	9.7%
E. Oregon	7	6.2%
TOTAL	113	



Cities are divided into population quintiles or groups of cities representing roughly one-fifth of Oregon’s 241 incorporated cities. This provides a more accurate comparison of differences among city populations. If the LOC randomly selected cities from each quintile, we would expect 20% to come from each of the five quintiles. Respondent distributions by population Quintiles were overrepresented in the fourth and fifth quintiles and underrepresented in the first and second quintiles. This imbalance in respondents by population is common in LOC surveys. Regionally, there was overrepresentation in the North Coast, Metro, and South Willamette regions. Further, the survey showed an underrepresentation of cities in several regions, including several in the eastern most regions of the state. In the above table, cells marked with green indicate an overrepresentation and those in red denote underrepresentation.

Please see Appendix C for a map of LOC’s Small Cities Regions.

General Results

Road Conditions

Cities were asked to assess the overall condition of the roads and streets they own and manage. This evaluation was based on a set of standardized road conditions pictures included with the survey that were provided by the Oregon Department of Transportation in the first iteration of this survey in 2016. Figure one shows that the majority of cities listed their overall street conditions as Fair (38.3%) or Poor (31.3%). A full 78% of cities listed their street conditions as Fair, Poor, or Very Poor.

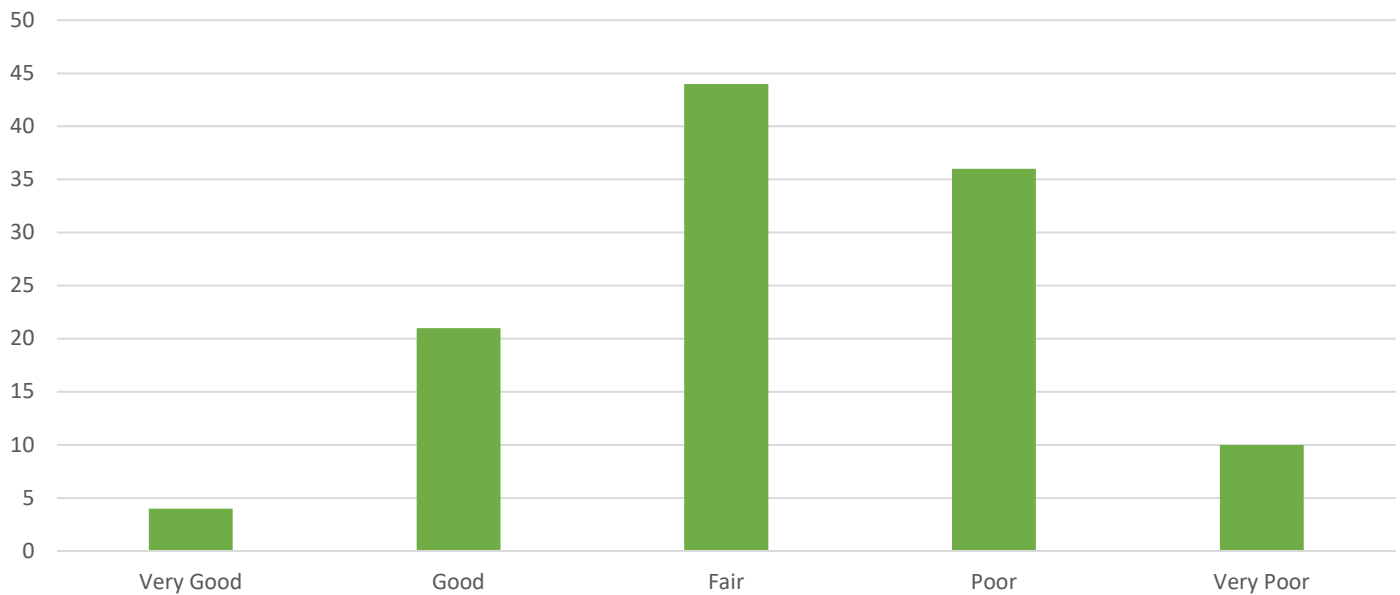


Figure 1: Rate the condition of the city streets under the city's ownership and management

This is slightly lower than the 83% that listed the same in 2016. However, a higher percentage of cities marked their conditions as Poor or Very Poor compared to 2016. Figure 2 shows that the distribution has skewed toward the poorer conditions in the last eight years.

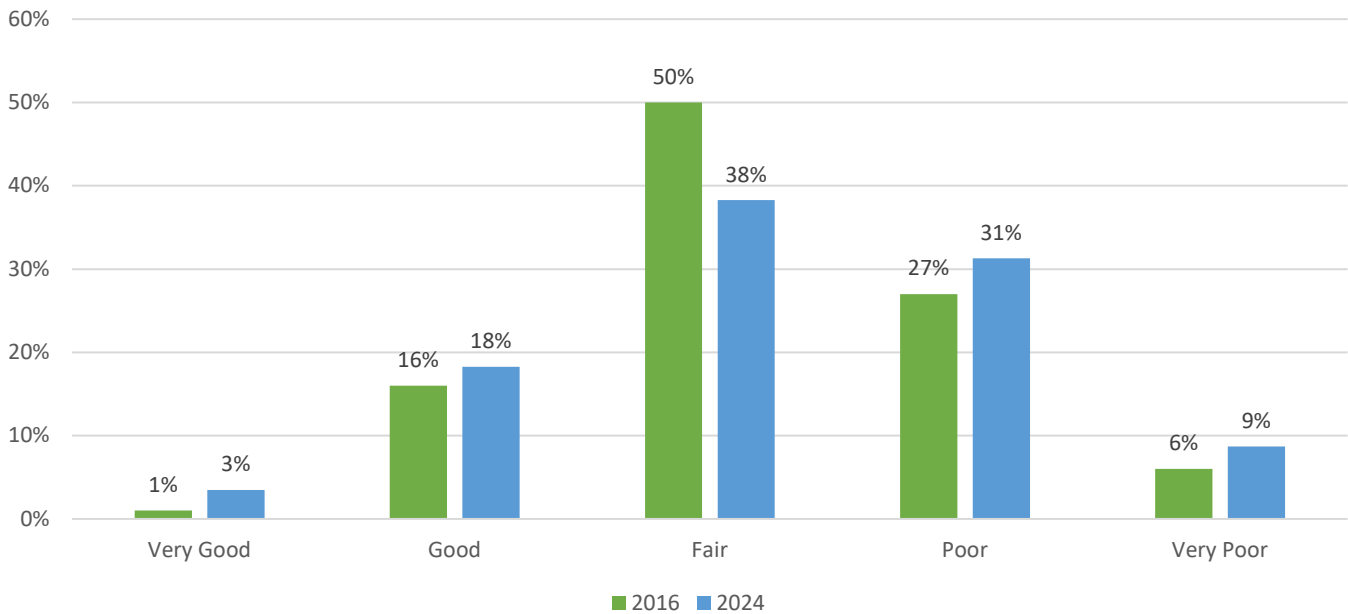


Figure 2: Street Conditions 2016 vs. 2024

Cities were asked about an explanation for their overall street rating. The condition of the city’s roads shows a significant disparity between heavily trafficked main roads and lesser-used side streets. Many respondents claim that the main roads, having been recently paved, are generally in good condition. Meanwhile, many side streets are in poor or very poor condition, exhibiting wear and numerous potholes. Budget constraints further exacerbate the situation, as cities must prioritize major issues, leaving limited funds for comprehensive repairs.

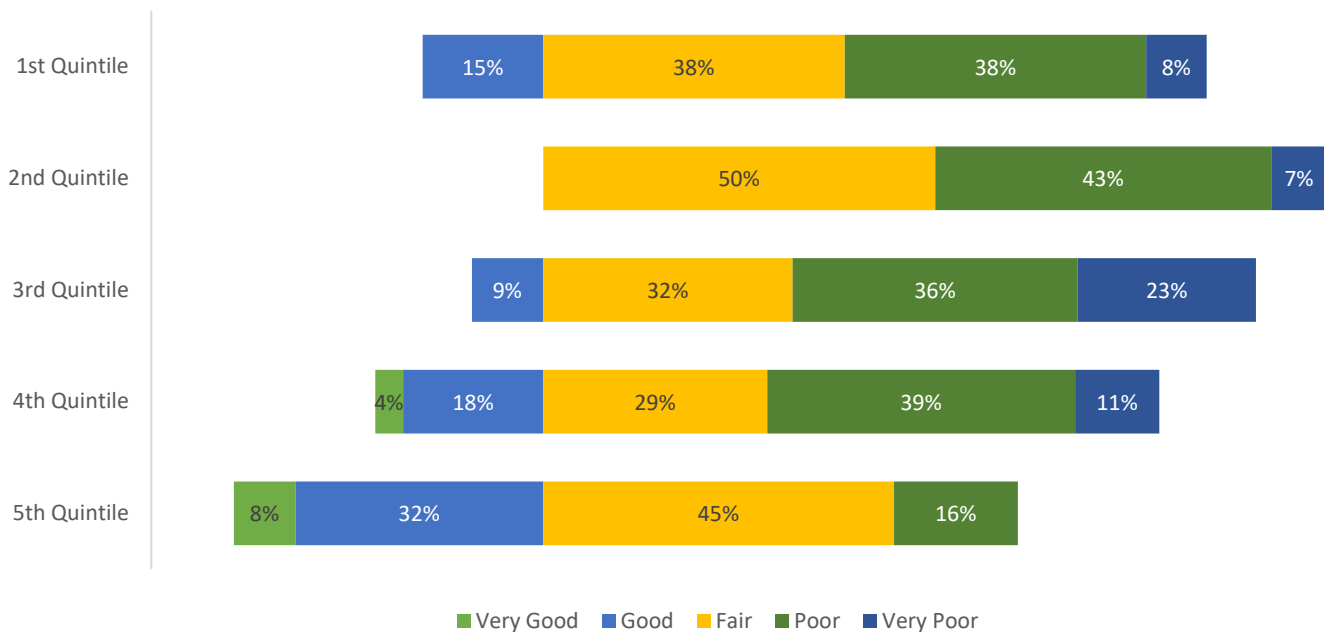


Figure 3: Street Conditions by Population Quintile

Some Emblematic Responses Include:

“Our main road was paved within the last few years and is in good condition. However, several of our side streets are in poor or very poor condition.” – City of Cascade Locks

“We have very limited budget and have to prioritize major issues.” – City of Scotts Mills

“With our current budget they projected our overall score would fall into the 'Fair' category by 2025 with our current street maintenance budget.” – City of Sandy

Additional Funding Sources

Cities were also asked what additional local funding sources they use to fund their road network. Figure 4 below shows that while a large number use the expected supplementary funding sources (gas tax, street tax, utility fees), nearly one-half of responding cities indicated they use other sources.

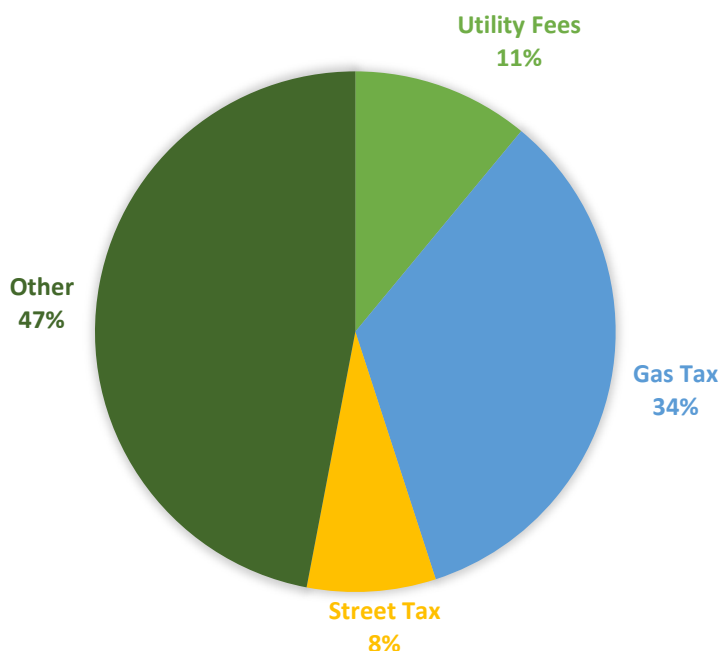


Figure 4: What additional local funding sources does your city use to fund your road network?

Other common funding sources included user fees, state and federal grants, general fund transfers, bonds and special taxes such as a car rental tax of 12.5% enacted in March of 2024 by the city of Redmond. Funding with utility fees appears to be more common in the Metro, South Willamette Valley and Southern Oregon regions. Gas taxes are more common in the Metro region. Additionally, analysis showed no correlation between additional funding sources and overall road conditions. This implies that funding *source* is not the issue with regards to funding street maintenance and improvement.

Scoring Systems

Cities were asked if they used a scoring system to gauge the conditions of their streets. The majority (57%) did use a scoring system of some kind. This was most common in cities with a population greater than 3,276 residents as well as in the North Coast, Metro, Valley and Central Oregon regions.

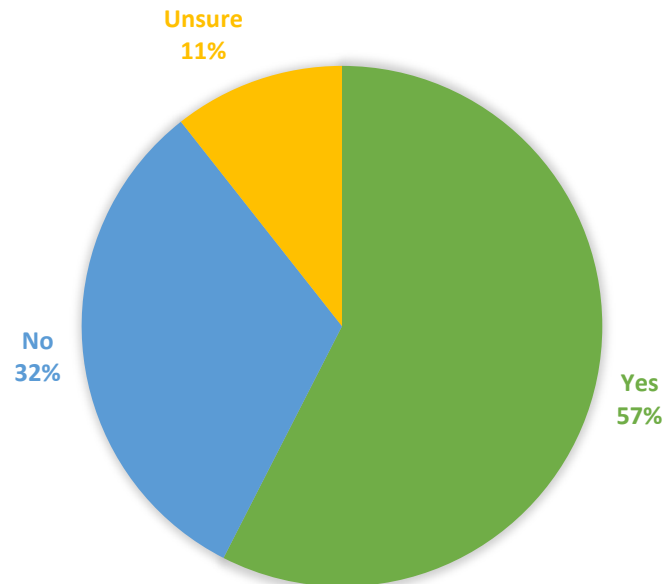


Figure 5: Does your city use a scoring system to gauge the conditions of the streets under your ownership and management?

The most common scoring methodologies included the Pavement Condition Index (PCI), Visual Assessments on a 1-4 scale, and custom scoring systems (including those aided with software). Third party evaluations were common as well, which led to some uncertainty about the scoring methods employed. However, the PCI was the most common system used for evaluations.

Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

The League needs your help – please complete this survey by Friday, June 21.

The last time this survey was sent out was in 2016, in advance of the 2017 legislative session. The information collected at that time was integral to the development of the 2017 transportation package. We fully expect updated data will again be helpful for the upcoming 2025 session and provide vital information for the legislature.

This survey is only one page and should not take much time to complete. There is one additional question in the study that I want to point out. This question asks you to identify what other funding options are being used in your community, such as a gas tax, registration fee increase, utility fees, or street fees.

You will have 30 days to complete this survey, and the LOC truly appreciates your participation in building a solid data set we will use during the 2025 session.

NOTE: Please submit all answers using the online form. Please use the attached PDF only for information and guidance.

Survey Link Below:

https://orcities.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a3iFluo0RbUcIvQ

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions regarding the survey at jpierce@orcities.org or 503-588-6550.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to fill out this survey.



Jim McCauley, Legislative Director
503-588-6550 direct: 503-540-6593 cell: 971-219-5963
1201 Court St. NE, Suite 200, Salem, OR 97301-4194
www.orcities.org



Appendix B: Survey Instrument

Street Conditions Survey 2024

Q1

Street Conditions Survey 2024

This survey is intended to gauge the overall state of street conditions in Oregon cities.

Q2 Please fill out the following questions.

- City Name: (1) _____
 - Your Name: (2) _____
 - Your Title: (3) _____
 - Email Address: (4) _____
-

Q3 Please rate the condition of the city streets under the city's ownership and management

- Very Good (1)
 - Good (2)
 - Fair (3)
 - Poor (4)
 - Very Poor (5)
-

Q4 Please explain the reason for your answer to the above question.

Q10 What additional local funding sources does your city use to fund your road network?

- Utility Fees (1)
 - Gas Tax (2)
 - Street Tax (3)
 - Other (Please Specify) (4) _____
-

Q5 Does your city use a scoring system to gauge the conditions of the streets under your ownership and management?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - Unsure (3)
-

Display This Question:

If Does your city use a scoring system to gauge the conditions of the streets under your ownership a... = Yes

Q6 What form of scoring system do you use?

Display This Question:

If Does your city use a scoring system to gauge the conditions of the streets under your ownership a... = Yes

Q7 If your city publishes a street conditions report, please email the most recent version to research@orcities.org.

Q8 Do you have any other additional comments

Appendix C: Population Quintile and Regional Breakdowns

Quintile Ranges	# Cities	% Cities
1st Quintile <490	48	19.8%
2nd Quintile 491-1,350	48	19.8%
3rd Quintile 1,351-3,275	48	19.8%
4th Quintile 3,276-10,800	48	19.8%
5th Quintile >10,800	49	20.2%
Small Cities <5,000	160	66.1%
Top 5 % >45,000	12	5.0%

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8	Region 9	Region 10	Region 11	Region 12	
	N. Coast	Metro	N. Willamette	S. Willamette	C. Coast	S. Coast	S. Oregon	Gorge	C. Oregon	SC Oregon	NE Oregon	E. Oregon	TOTALS
1st Quintile	3	1	4	3	0	0	2	9	3	2	8	13	48
2nd Quintile	2	4	5	6	2	2	6	3	1	3	10	4	48
3rd Quintile	8	2	9	5	3	3	5	1	2	1	5	4	48
4th Quintile	5	5	10	6	3	5	6	1	2	0	3	2	48
5th Quintile	1	19	7	6	1	1	5	1	3	1	3	1	49
TOTALS	19	31	35	26	9	11	24	15	11	7	29	24	241
	8%	13%	15%	11%	4%	5%	10%	6%	5%	3%	12%	10%	100%

Appendix D: Map of Small Cities Regions



Member Cities with Regions

