

## Scorecard Lists I-95's Congested Corridors

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NORWALK HOUR

By Robert Koch

New York City is the second most traffic-congested metropolitan area in the United States, and the southbound stretch of Interstate 95 running through The Bronx is the worst corridor in the nation.

Those are among the findings of the 4th Annual INRIX National Traffic Scorecard.

Floyd Lapp, executive director of the South Western Regional Planning Agency, said the good news is that the worst congestion lies outside of Fairfield County.

But Lapp added that congestion now reaches well up Interstate 95 and for many hours of the day.

"The New York piece of I-95 (referenced in the study) is actually southbound on the freeway, between the Bruckner and the Cross Bronx (Expressway) in The Bronx, so we're out of that," Lapp said. That's "not to say that we certainly don't have congestion, from Greenwich right through Norwalk ... from Black Rock Exit 24 all the way down this way most mornings."

On Tuesday, INRIX, a provider of traffic and navigation services, released its 4th Annual INRIX National Traffic Scorecard, which revealed gridlock and longer commute times in 2010.

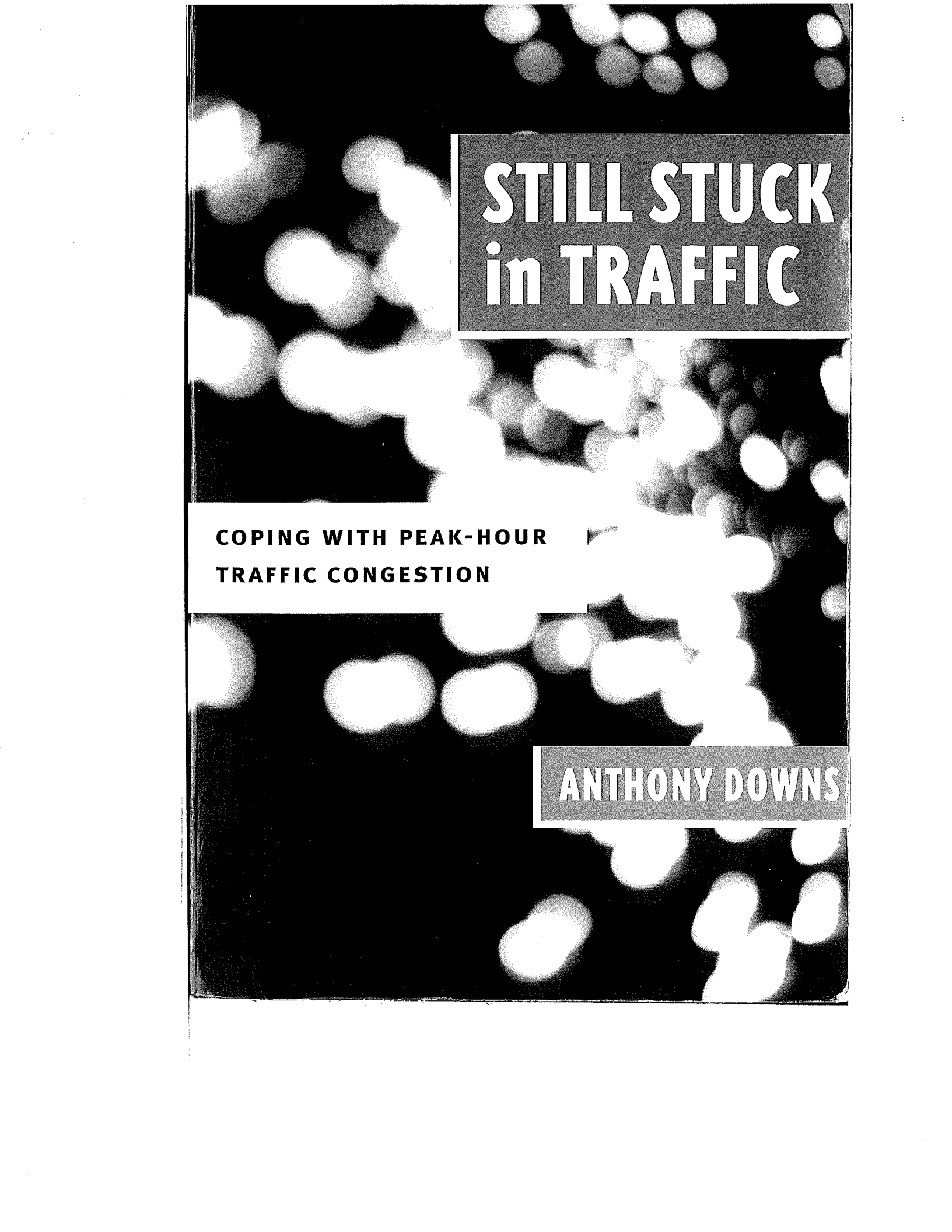
The 11.3-mile stretch of Interstate 95, from Conner Street/Exit 13 to the Hudson Terrace exit, was ranked the No. 1 among the 2010 Worst Traffic Corridors with the drive taking 43 minutes on average with 30 minutes of delay. The stretch was followed by the Riverside Freeway and San Diego Freeway, both in the Los Angeles area. Los Angeles was ranked No. 1 among the 2010 Top Congested Metros. It was followed by New York, Chicago and Washington, D.C.

Overall, the scorecard found that traffic congestion increased nationwide for 11 consecutive months in 2010 with drivers experiencing increased traffic congestion nearly every hour of the day.

"America is back on the road to gridlock," said Bryan Mistele, INRIX president and CEO. "Population growth combined with increases in interstate commerce spurred by economic recovery are fueling these increases. With only 150,000 new jobs created in our nation's urban centers last year, we can expect even worse gridlock when the 6 million jobs lost in the recession return to the nation's cities."

Lapp also predicted that traffic will increase as employment numbers improve. SWPRA has put forward a number of recommendations to alleviate traffic congestion. Some, he acknowledged, have been more popular than others.

"Encourage more convenient transit, secondly and related to that, promote transit-oriented development, as in development within a five- to 10- or quarter- to a half-mile walking distance from transit centers, be they bus terminals or rail stations," Lapp said. "And third, one that I don't think we fully agree on, congestion pricing, which -- where it's been used -- has gotten anywhere from between 10 to 15 percent of the vehicles off the road."



**STILL STUCK  
in TRAFFIC**

**COPING WITH PEAK-HOUR  
TRAFFIC CONGESTION**

**ANTHONY DOWNS**

FIGURE 6-1. Classifying Tactics to Combat Peak-Hour Congestion<sup>a</sup>

	Supply side	Demand side
Primarily regulatory	Building more roads or expanding existing ones Building more transit facilities and increasing service and amenities in existing transit systems Improving highway maintenance Adding roving response teams to remove accidents Traffic management centers ITS mechanisms for speeding traffic flows Deregulating public transit activities Upgrading existing city streets <b>Staggering work hours for more workers</b> <b>Developing means of transit feasible in low-density areas</b> Building special roads for trucks only	Prohibiting certain license numbers from driving on specific days Changing federal work laws that discourage people from working at home <b>Ramp metering on expressways</b> Encouraging transportation management associations Encouraging more people to work at home Keeping minimum residential densities higher Clustering high-density housing around transit stops Limiting growth and development in local communities Improving the jobs/housing balance <b>Using traffic-calming devices to slow flows</b> Concentrating jobs in a few suburban clusters <b>Making some lanes HOV lanes</b>
Primarily market-oriented	Converting free HOV lanes to HOT lanes	Road pricing with tolls set to raise peak-hour flows Commuting allowance for employees Charging high taxes on gasoline Charging high taxes on parking during peak hours Eliminating tax deductibility for employers for providing free parking Increasing automobile license fees "Cashing out" free parking provided by employers

Source: Author's calculations.

a. Tactics that are to some degree both supply side and demand side in nature are shown in boldface.

**Table 18-1. Tactics for Reducing Traffic Congestion**

Tactic	Effectiveness			Costs		Implementation			Significant spillover effects on nontransport sectors
	Extent	Impact	Weakened by triple convergence?	Direct to commuters	To society	Institutional change	Ease of administration	Political acceptability	
<i>Supply side</i>									
1. Rapidly removing accidents from traffic lanes	Variable	Great	No	None	Minor	None	Easy	Good	None
2. Creating traffic management centers	Variable	Great	No	None	Minor	Cooperative	Easy	Good	None
3. Increasing the capabilities of MPOs	Variable	Moderate	No	None	Minor	None	Moderate	Good	Positive
4. Adding HOT lanes to existing freeways	Narrow	Moderate	No	Small	Moderate	None	Moderate	Moderate	None
5. Improving highway maintenance	Broad	Moderate	No	None	Great	None	Moderate	Good	None
6. Building added HOV lanes	Variable	Moderate	No	None	Great	Cooperative	Hard	Moderate	None
7. Building new roads without HOV lanes	Variable	Moderate	Somewhat	None	Great	Cooperative	Moderate	Poor	Negative
8. Building separate roads for trucks only	Narrow	Great	No	None	Great	Regional	Moderate	Poor	Positive
9. Ramp metering vehicle flows onto freeways	Variable	Moderate	Somewhat	None	Moderate	None	Easy	Moderate	None
10. Developing effective means of providing transit services to low-density areas	Variable	Moderate	No	None	Moderate	Cooperative	Hard	Moderate	Positive
11. Deregulating public transit services to reduce monopolistic powers of administrators and unions	Major	Moderate	No	None	Minor	Major	Hard	Poor	Positive
12. Coordinating traffic signals, electronic signs for drivers, making streets one way	Narrow	Moderate	No	None	Minor	None	Moderate	Good	None
13. Upgrading city streets	Variable	Moderate	No	None	Moderate	None	Easy	Moderate	Positive
14. Building or expanding off-road transit systems	Narrow	Moderate	Somewhat	Minor	Great	Cooperative	Hard	Poor	Positive
15. Increasing public transit usage by improving service or amenities	Narrow	Minor	Somewhat	None	Great	None	Hard	Moderate	Positive
<i>Demand side</i>									
16. Instituting peak-hour tolls on all lanes of main commuting roads	Broad	Great	No	Great	None	Regional	Moderate	Poor	None
17. Using GPS satellites to track vehicles and vary tolls with roads traveled	Broad	Great	No	Great	Moderate	Regional or national	Hard to start up	Poor now	Positive
18. Levying parking tax on peak-hour arrivals	Broad	Great	No	Great	None	Regional	Hard	Poor	None
19. Eliminating business income tax deductibility for employee parking	Broad	Great	Yes	Great	None	Cooperative	Moderate	Poor	None
20. Providing income tax deductibility for commuting allowance for all workers	Variable	Great	Yes	None	Minor	None	Easy	Poor	None
21. "Cashing out" free parking provided by employers by offering daily payment instead	Broad	Great	Somewhat	None	Minor	None	Hard	Moderate	None
22. Substantially increasing gasoline taxes	Broad	Moderate	No	Great	Moderate	None	Easy	Poor	Positive, negative
23. Keeping densities in new-growth areas above minimum levels	Broad	Great	Somewhat	None	Minor	Regional	Hard	Poor	Positive
24. Encouraging formation of TMAs that promote more ride sharing	Narrow	Small	Yes	None	Minor	Cooperative	Hard	Moderate	None
25. Encouraging more people to work at home	Broad	Minor	Yes	None	None	None	Moderate	Good	Positive
26. Changing federal work laws that discourage working at home	Broad	Minor	Yes	None	Minor	None	Moderate	Moderate	Positive
27. Staggering working hours	Variable	Minor	Yes	None	None	Cooperative	Moderate	Moderate	None
28. Clustering high-density housing at transit stops, creating transit-oriented developments	Narrow	Moderate	Somewhat	None	Moderate	Cooperative, regional	Hard	Moderate	Positive
29. Concentrating jobs in big clusters in areas of new growth	Narrow	Minor	Somewhat	None	Great	Regional	Hard	Poor	None
30. Increasing automobile license fees, sales taxes	Broad	Minor	No	Moderate	Minor	None	Easy	Poor	Negative
31. Improving the jobs-housing balance	Broad	Minor	Yes	None	Moderate	Regional	Hard	Poor	Positive
32. Adopting local growth limits	Narrow	Minor	No	None	Minor	None	Easy	Good	Negative
33. Requiring commuters not to drive one day per week, based on license plate number	Broad	Great	Yes	Great	Moderate	Little	Hard	Poor	Negative

**FIGURE 18-1. Classification of Anticongestion Tactics by Effectiveness and Cost to Society**

Effectiveness in counteracting congestion		
High degree		Low degree
<p><b>Potentially most effective at directly reducing peak-hour congestion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Peak-hour road pricing of all major commuting roads</li> <li>—Higher taxes on gasoline</li> <li>—Creating new high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes next to congested expressways</li> <li>—Surcharges on long-term parking during morning</li> <li>—GPS satellite tracking of vehicles and charging variable tolls (long-term future possibility)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moderately effective, not costly to society</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Developing means of making public transit feasible in low-density areas</li> <li>—Deregulating public transit markets by ending administrative and union monopolies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Low effectiveness, but relatively low cost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Encouraging more people to work at home (telecommuting)</li> <li>—Changing federal work laws that discourage people from working at home</li> <li>—Cashing out free parking provided by employers by providing payment if they stop using free spaces</li> <li>—Staggering working hours for more workers</li> <li>—Eliminating income-tax deductibility of free parking</li> <li>—Providing income-tax deductibility for commuting allowances paid to workers</li> <li>—Encouraging formation of transportation management associations among employers</li> <li>—Clustering high-density housing near transit stops in transit-oriented developments</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Moderately effective, costly to society</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Improving highway maintenance</li> <li>—Upgrading major city streets</li> <li>—Adding new HOV lanes to freeways</li> <li>—Building and expanding roads without HOV lanes</li> <li>—Building separate roadways for truck traffic</li> <li>—Improving public transit service and amenities</li> <li>—Building and expanding off-road transit systems</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Relatively effective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Roving response teams to remove accidents and incidents</li> <li>—Traffic management centers</li> <li>—Ramp metering peak-hour inflows onto expressways</li> <li>—Improving traffic flows through ITS applications, such as coordinating stoplights, broadcasting current traffic conditions, electronic signs, and one-way streets</li> <li>—Increasing the capabilities of metropolitan planning organizations</li> <li>—Keeping densities in new-growth areas above certain minimum levels</li> </ul>		<p><b>Very ineffective tactics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>—Concentrating jobs in large clusters in new-growth areas</li> <li>—Requiring drivers not to drive one day a week, based on their license plate numbers</li> <li>—Trying to improve the jobs-housing balance</li> <li>—Increasing automobile licensing fees</li> <li>—Placing limits on population and other growth within individual localities</li> </ul>