



## Article Side

Brightbridge Wealth Management Headlines: Zurich streets among Europe's most congested by [Brightbridge Wealth](#)

Article published on January 6th 2012 | [Finance](#)

by Matthew Allen in Zurich

Everyone needs to learn to share the streets (Keystone)

Zurich car drivers spend more time stuck in traffic jams than in most other European cities, but the city is unrepentant about its pedestrian friendly policy.

A recent survey has revealed that more than a quarter of roads in Switzerland's main business conglomeration are clogged, putting Zurich in 16th place in the list of most congested cities.

The survey by Dutch navigation system maker TomTom comes days after a critical report in the New York Times accusing Zurich of "working overtime in recent years to torment drivers".

The article reports that traffic lights are programmed to favour trams while pedestrian crossings have been moved from underground passages to street level.

The TomTom analysis found that daytime traffic on 27.4 per cent of Zurich city's streets was forced to travel less than 70 per cent as fast as during the night when roads are less busy. Brussels came out worst in the report with nearly 40 per cent of its streets congested.

Angry pedestrians

Pio Marzolini from Zurich's civil engineering department told swissinfo.ch that the authorities had made a decision to share out the limited space in the city more equitably.

"Most cities put cars first, but in Zurich we give equal rights to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport," he said. "We do not want to create traffic jams, but tram users and pedestrians also get angry when they get delayed."

Marzolini added that inhabitants of Zurich city supported the policy "unlike commuters" and that good public transport links had encouraged more people to relinquish their cars. In the last decade, the percentage of households without a car in the city has increased from 40 to 45 per cent.

"It is no good just telling people to give up their cars, we have to provide them with a good alternative too," he said.

The policy is bound to please environmentalists who three years ago launched a campaign to reduce vehicle congestion in five of Switzerland's largest cities.

More bypasses needed

Zurich even toyed with the idea of introducing a congestion charge for vehicles driving in the city, but the city council shelved the project because it lacked enough political support.

However, motor vehicle associations are less than happy with the situation in Zurich. Reto Cavegn, director of the Touring Club of Switzerland's (TCS) Zurich chapter, told swissinfo.ch that, unlike for pedestrians and trams, the city had no clear policy for vehicle transport.

He argued that road congestion is critical throughout the canton of Zurich and not just in the city. Cavegn laid the blame on a lack of construction projects that could take traffic away from the city and other built up areas.

The Uetliberg tunnel was opened in 2009 to improve traffic access to central Switzerland from the south of Zurich. But Cavegn believes that there should be more such outlets and that existing bypasses, such as the notoriously congested Gubrist tunnel, should be upgraded.

â€œNothing is being done for car drivers,â€• he told swissinfo.ch. â€œAs long as vehicles lack clear route away from the city then we will have too much traffic there.â€•

TCS estimates that traffic jams cost the canton of Zurichâ€™s economy SFr100 million (\$118 million) a year as commuters are late for work or deliveries are delayed.

### Intelligent traffic lights

Dirk Helbing, a professor of sociology at Zurichâ€™s Federal Institute of Technology, claims to have the answer to all these problems. Together with colleagues at Dresdenâ€™s University of Technology, Helbing has developed an intelligent traffic light system that he claims could reduce traffic waiting time by up to 30 per cent.

Using sensors and wireless technology, this system monitors the amount of vehicles on the roads and better coordinates traffic flow by having traffic lights â€œtalkâ€• to one another before changing from green to red.

This system would adapt to changes in traffic flow rather than the present rigid method of programming lights to change at fixed times according to the time of day.

â€œThis is a more flexible approach that responds to actual traffic flow and provides better performance,â€• Helbing told swissinfo.ch. â€œIt would not be very expensive to install because the wireless technology can be adapted to existing systems and does not require roads to be torn up.â€•

The system would also recognise buses and trams and be able to give them priority, Helbing added. Pedestrians and cyclists would also benefit by breaking traffic into smaller blocks, giving more space to others using the road or wishing to cross over, he said.

Matthew Allen in Zurich, swissinfo.ch

Article Source:

<http://www.articleside.com/finance-articles/brightbridge-wealth-management-headlines-zurich-streets-among-europe-s-most-congested.htm> - [Article Side](#)

[Brightbridge Wealth](#) - About Author:

Brightbridge Wealth Management

Brightbridge Wealth

100 Park Avenue

New York City, New York 10017

United States

212 880 6400

info@brightbridgewealthmanagement-advice.com

<http://brightbridgewealthmanagement-advice.com>

Article Keywords:

brightbridge wealth management, brightbridge wealth management zurich, brightbridge wealth management technology, sports and financial world headlines

You can find more [free articles](#) on [Article Side](#). Sign up today and share your knowledge to the community! It is completely FREE!