

Number: 25-61

Proposed Title: Oregon Guidebook for Considering Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change in Environmental Reviews

1. Concisely describe the **transportation issue** (including problems, improvements, or untested solutions) that Oregon needs to research.

In January 2023 the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) released interim guidance for addressing greenhouse gas (GHG) and climate change during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The guidance recommends that projects quantify GHG emissions and provide information about a project's effects on climate change as well as impacts from climate change to projects. However, ODOT currently lacks a standardized process for conducting a project-level environmental analysis consistent with the guidance. Without documented guidance for implementing the CEQ guidance, projects often approach GHG and climate analyses with differing methods and varying levels of detail. Additionally, a uniform approach consistent with Federal guidance would help ODOT address concerns from local agencies and community partners about how ODOT conducts these analyses.

Since the last update of ODOT's Air Quality Manual in 2018, there have been many Federal and State changes to regulations and guidance emphasizing the importance of considering GHG and climate change during planning and the NEPA process. Transportation accounts for about 35% of greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon. GHG emissions will exacerbate climate change with increasing impacts on weather, people, plants, and animals. ODOT is committed to reducing GHG. We follow the Statewide Transportation Strategy (STS) for GHG reduction. Flooding, landslides, and wildfires are more frequent. They damage infrastructure, costs taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars per year, and negatively affect our communities where we live, work and play.

Additionally, for this proposed process guidance and associated documentation to meet the need of one ODOT, interdisciplinary coordination across the Agency and with our partners will be critical to ensure high-utility and efficient implementation.

2. Document how this **transportation issue** is important to Oregon and will meet the [Oregon Research Advisory Committee Priorities](#)

Climate change impacts pose major threats to the transportation system and to Oregon communities. Planning for resilient infrastructure investments is a critical issue and the first step towards ensuring that we meet our mission for these communities. To address this pressing need as well as current regulatory requirements, we propose development of an ***Oregon Climate Guidebook for NEPA and Planning***. The ***Oregon Climate Guidebook for NEPA and Planning*** will support ODOT's GHG Reduction Measures and Executive Order 20-04. This guidebook will also be designed to ensure equity and environmental justice needs are properly addressed. The proposed research will include multiple workshops to collect input from key members within and outside of our agency with the goal of identifying limitations, needs, and structuring the guidebook to be effective, clear, and replicable across diverse projects. Oregon has many transportation infrastructure climate concerns that this guidebook will address in a meaningful way throughout the agency and help ODOT better communicate climate concerns with decision makers and stakeholders for optimal outcomes.

This project also aligns with several ODOT’s Strategic initiatives such as “Reduce Our Climate Footprint,” “Reduce Congestion in Portland Region”, and “Electrify Oregon’s Transportation System.”

3. What **final product or information** needs to be produced to enable this research to be implemented?

This research project will leverage the national research project *NCHRP 25-64: “Considering Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change in Environmental Reviews,”* which is anticipated to be completed in January 2024 as an online publication. NCHRP 25-64 developed a ‘Guide for Considering Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change in Environmental Reviews’ that aims to support DOTs and partner agencies pursuing the NEPA and other state environmental reviews. However, this manual has yet to be fully piloted by a state DOT, and to be most effective, an Oregon focused guidance document with examples and Oregon reference material is needed. Deliverables envisioned for this research project include an ***Oregon Climate Guidebook for NEPA and Planning***. An Oregon pilot project that aides in refining and optimizing this manual is also envisioned, as well as development of a ***Living Appendix*** that includes a walk-through of how this manual was used for the pilot project. For this ***Living Appendix***, in addition to the Oregon pilot project at least two theoretical case studies will be included, as well as indexing for all ODOT future studies (the appendix will be expandable and searchable). The goal of this Oregon Guidebook and Living Appendix is to provide users with thorough examples that they can leverage and draw from to improve assessments and communication of future projects with regards to Climate Change impacts and GHG.

4. (Optional) Are there any individuals in Oregon who will be instrumental to the success of implementing any solution that is identified by this research? If so, please list them below.

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Susan Peithman	Director of the Climate Office	Susan.Peithman@odot.oregon.gov	503-881-8358
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5. Other comments:

This project will include multiple virtual workshops to gather input from internal departments at ODOT (Climate Office, Planning, Environmental, Project Delivery and Design and others) and external stakeholders (FHWA/FTA, EPA, LRAPA, DEQ). To maintain focus there will be separate workshops for Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change. The workshops will cover mitigation and resilience, timing methods, policies and communication, and environmental justice.

This project will also include development of an annotated outline, or template, for GHG emission and climate change analysis for each level of NEPA review. The template would provide a framework for GHG, and climate change analysis expected to be contained within NEPA documents produced for ODOT projects. The template would be consistent with NCHRP Guide 25-64, and would, at a minimum, include:

- Required headings that should be included in a GHG emission and climate change analysis with accompanied text, as appropriate.
- Instructions and guidance to be reviewed and considered, then deleted from the final analysis.
- Sample text that can be used in NEPA documents and/or technical reports, as appropriate; and
- Sample tables of applicable climate impacts, potential mitigation and adaptation by various project types and regions of Oregon, if feasible in the timeframe of the project.

ODOT will work with EPA Region 10 and Oregon DEQ to ensure that modeling methodology addressed by this project is consistent with regional work. ODOT will work with partner Federal and State agencies to ensure this project is consistent with Federal law and Oregon climate change policies. ODOT’s [policy brief](#) summarizes the relationships between initiatives designed to reduce GHG emissions and enhance resilience

across multiple state and federal agencies as well as the state transportation planning program led by ODOT. The initiatives occur at all levels, from federal and state legislation and executive orders, to ground level project delivery, maintenance, and operations.

6. Corresponding Submitter's Contact Information:

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