

Strategic Assessment of Transportation and Land Use Plans



Overview

A Strategic Assessment evaluates a region's adopted plans and policies, assesses how far those plans help the region reach its goals over the next 20 years, and identifies alternative paths to achieving those goals. It also identifies the value of state-led actions such as newer clean vehicles and fuels. The assessment provides valuable information that can help inform decisions about the future, helping communities to understand where the current path will take us and what options exist for the region. This can inform plan updates and general decision-making. Additional work may be desired to help answer specific policy questions or to evaluate many scenarios to test policy resilience and/or formulate a vision for the region.

The purpose of the Strategic Assessment is to estimate the transportation and land use outcomes likely to result if adopted plans are implemented and current trends continue. The assessment can provide information about:

- Household Travel Costs
- Transportation Energy Costs
- Air Quality indicator
- GHG Emissions
- Household and Commercial Vehicles
- Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Travel Delay
- Fuel Consumed
- Mixed-Use Development
- Walking And Biking

How it works

ODOT and DLCDC staff work with MPO and local government staff to gather and vet the necessary data. ODOT and DLCDC staff then develop a report with regular check-in with local staff. The report includes outcomes of the adopted plan, as well as an analysis of potential alternative actions and possible next steps for the region.

Why should a region conduct a Strategic Assessment?

The results of a Strategic Assessment can help the region determine whether current plans and trends are achieving the long term outcomes the region wants to see, and identify potential actions to better meet the region's goals. The results of the assessment help local governments better understand issues and quantify the effect of adopted policies as they review and update the area's transportation plans and make investment decisions. It can also bolster collaboration on policies such as transit, parking, and state-led actions such as implementation of pay-as-you-drive insurance, by quantifying the value of such policies. The effort can inform the public of new policies and emerging modes and highlight the tradeoffs of alternative paths to meeting regional goals. In addition, the information provided in the assessment is intended to help local officials decide whether to pursue a more comprehensive analysis of land use and transportation options through scenario planning.

How will the results of a Strategic Assessment be used?

It is entirely up to the region and individual jurisdictions how the information is used. A Strategic Assessment can inform planning efforts and general decision-making and can be further expanded upon to develop a detailed long term vision and even performance measures of interest to the area. **Conducting a Strategic Assessment does not obligate a region to conduct scenario planning nor to make any changes to current plans.**



How the outcomes are measured

The Regional Strategic Planning Model (RSPM), a regional-level version of the award-winning GreenSTEP, is a model ODOT has developed specifically for planning in metropolitan areas. The RSPM allows smaller geographic areas to quantify the potential future effects of existing or new policies. These might include various transportation and land use strategies to meet state GHG reduction targets and other regional goals. The RSPM models the households in the metropolitan planning area, and assigns specific attributes and land use characteristics to each household to determine their travel and vehicle-level emissions. This modeling tool is strategic, in that it supports analysis when there are a number of unknowns about the future. RSPM can help a region understand future trends and identify policy actions to reach local goals. Traditional urban travel demand models can then be used to help implement the regional vision and specific policy actions identified by the analysis.

How long does a Strategic Assessment take to complete?

The timeline for a Strategic Assessment can vary from region to region, but because a Strategic Assessment is primarily a technical exercise based on adopted plans, it can generally be completed within six to eight months.

How much staff time is required to complete a strategic assessment?

The amount of staff time required on the part of the MPO is relatively small, mainly to coordinate with local jurisdictions and with ODOT and DLCDC staff on information-gathering. The time and effort required on the part of the local government staff could vary depending on the level of interest and desired involvement by the local governments. Funding may be available from ODOT through an intergovernmental agreement to offset MPO staff time costs for the Strategic Assessment effort. In addition, technical assistance from ODOT and DLCDC is provided at no cost to the MPO.

You can view a short video about strategic assessments at:

<https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Planning/Pages/Strategic-Assessment.aspx>

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