

Research Stage 1 Problem Statement


PROPOSED TITLE: *Analyzing Trends in Micromobility Safety to Inform ODOT's Safety Programming*

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

The use of electric micromobility devices, including e-bikes, e-scooters, e-unicycles, and others, has been steadily increasing in Oregon over the past several years, generating many questions about how best to integrate these devices into our transportation system. Questions regarding safety have been a particular area of focus, as the rate of injuries sustained while riding an electric micromobility device that necessitated an ER visit or hospitalization has significantly increased between 2021 and 2024, rising from 414 potential injuries in 2021 to 1,229 in 2024, according to OHA data. There have also been some tragic incidents involving youths under 16 on electric micromobility devices even though, legally, a person must be at least 16 to ride e-bikes, e-scooters, and other e-devices in Oregon. The problem is a lack of understanding about the extent and magnitude of the injuries that are being sustained, the types of devices involved, and the primary causes of crashes. The Transportation Safety Office (TSO) oversees safety education and training programs, including bicycle and motorcycle safety, and need to develop electric micromobility safety materials, but need a better understanding of the safety issues to make strategic funding investments.

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

We need information that will provide us with a clearer understanding of electric micromobility and safety. In particular, we are interested in research that helps us answer the following questions:

- *What's the extent and magnitude of injuries?*
- *What's the rate of injury for youth compared to adults?*
-  *What are the primary causes of crashes involving people riding electric micromobility devices? What factors may be contributing to the severity of the injuries sustained, such as impairment, helmet use, and single vs. double riders?*
- *What types of devices are most commonly involved in crashes? (The line between an e-bike and e-moto can be blurry, so the extent to which we can better understand what types of devices people are riding when they are injured will be especially helpful.)*

We are looking for a research product that summarizes existing literature on the topic, as well as analyzes trends in Oregon based on available data. Having this information will help us identify the core messages we should communicate to promote the safe use of these devices and will enable us to better tailor our safety programming.

3. (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.

Name	Title	Email	Phone
Heidi Manlove	Oregon Safe Routes to School Program Manager / Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program Manager	Heidi.manlove@odot.oregon.gov	503-986-4196
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4. Other comments:

Based on data OHA provided, there were 414 reported injuries involving an electric micromobility device that resulted in an ER visit or hospitalization in 2021. In 2024, there were 1,229 reported injuries, a nearly 200% increase.

5. State of Oregon Decision Making Lenses

State decision making lenses are a part of the state of Oregon's policy structure. State policy and federal policy are not always aligned. The state will prioritize research according to state policy, however ODOT may be required to skip prioritized proposals based on constraints placed on the use of federal funds. If state funds are available, ODOT will attempt to fund prioritized research that is deemed ineligible for federal funding.

Please complete the following three sections. Your answers to these questions will be applied on a programmatic basis to support agency decisions. Answering yes to the questions below is not required. Resolving a narrowly focused technical research problem may meet agency needs without answering yes to any of the following questions. The ODOT Research Section will seek a balanced portfolio some projects will answer yes to one of the three categories below (e.g. climate, equity, and/ or safety) and other projects in a different category.

We are looking for an overall program balance and no one project is expected to balance all categories. Generally, a research problem statement is expected to be able to answer yes with clear and verifiable information in only one of the three categories below, some projects may be able to answer yes in two or even three categories. Some projects (i.e. needs focused on specific elements of infrastructure design), may have no 'yes' answers but may still be a high value research need.

Climate

Oregon recognizes the climate crisis and makes systemic changes to reduce emissions caused by travel. To that end, we seek research that reduces carbon emissions from construction activities and materials, and from maintenance equipment and operations. Oregon envisions a transportation system that is resilient, this means a system that is durable in the face of seismic events and extreme weather to avoid negative impacts, withstand them or bounce back quickly to resume system function. We seek research that improves the ability of the transportation system to adapt or cope with more frequent and extreme weather events. This may include innovations in data and data sharing, construction materials and project design, communication, emergency planning and response, and more. Similarly, we seek research that avoids negative impacts on key habitats and ecosystems that can buffer or reduce damage to infrastructure and improve environmental conditions for wildlife and native vegetation. For definitions and details please review the equity vision, goals, and objectives of the [ODOT Strategic Action Plan](#) and [Oregon Transportation Plan](#).

5a. Will addressing the transportation issue identified as a need in Question 1 develop, or **validate methods for the estimation, measurement, or monitoring** of transportation generated greenhouse gases (GHG)?

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Unsure

5b. If climate or GHG is not the focus of this **transportation issue** identified in this problem statement, will the research apply a GHG analysis to transportation infrastructure, planning, operations, maintenance, or materials?

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Unsure

5c. Will addressing the **transportation issue** include development or testing of construction practices, methods, or materials to establish potential reductions in greenhouse gas emissions?

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Unsure

5d. Will solving the **transportation issue** in question 1 study or support the reduction of vehicle miles traveled and single occupancy vehicle travel or support transition to electric vehicles (or other types of zero emission vehicles) or low-carbon alternative fuels?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

5e. Will the solving the **transportation issue** in question 1 lead to work that will support, measure, or monitor, transportation system resilience in response to expected climate events, effects, or natural disasters in general?

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Unsure

5f. Will solving the **transportation issue** in question 1 lead to work that may result in better environmental conditions for wildlife and native vegetation?

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Unsure

5g. If you answered yes to any of the climate questions above or can provide alternative details related to climate, please provide additional information:

While climate is not the primary focus of this research, the adoption and use of electric micromobility devices support the reduction of vehicle miles traveled and single occupancy travel, as well as the transition to zero emission vehicles. We want to be able to maximize the benefits of these devices and support further adoption while limiting the risks as much as we can, which means having a better understanding of how we can promote safe use. Answering the transportation issue identified above will help us to tailor our safety programming and investments.

Equity

Equity can have many dimensions and impacts relating to communities and transportation. It is important that problem statement proposals clearly explain the equity dimensions or impacts being examined. Oregon commits to social equity in the OTP, specifically to *improve access to safe and affordable transportation for all, recognizing the unmet mobility needs of people who have been systemically excluded and underserved. Create an equitable and transparent engagement and communications decision-making structure that builds public trust.* We seek research that studies elements of this goal or applies analysis to specific transportation topics to ensure the resulting research recommendation is consistent with agency equity goals. For definitions and details please review the equity vision, goals, and objectives of the [ODOT Strategic Action Plan](#) and [Oregon Transportation Plan](#).

5h. Is the **transportation issue** identified as a need in Question 1 specifically focused on transportation equity?

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Unsure

5i. If the **transportation issue** is not focused on transportation equity, will the primary topic be assessed for equity benefits or impacts within the research project?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Unsure

5j. Is the implementation of potential findings from this research likely to directly involve participation from an identified group that would benefit from an equitable process or outcome?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Unsure

5k. Is the intended final product or information expected to support ODOT's equity efforts (Including but not limited to supporting one of the equity related objectives of the [ODOT's Strategic Action Plan](#) or [Oregon Transportation Plan](#)) ?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

5l. If you answered yes to any of the equity questions above or can provide alternative details related to equity, please provide additional information:

Equity is not the primary focus of this research proposal, but it does align with equity goals identified in the OTP. Electric micromobility devices can help expand mobility access since they provide an affordable alternative to vehicle ownership. Additionally, e-bikes and e-scooters don't require licenses to operate, mitigating barriers for some groups of people who either cannot or choose not to drive. [Efforts to lower the minimum age to ride so that youth under 16 gain access to these options, but there are also many concerns about safety. Having a better understanding what the existing data reveals about safety will help us, particularly if a bill is passed to reduce the minimum age to ride.]

Research outcomes may include interventions and countermeasures to prevent or reduce the frequency of crashes or other causes of transportation-related injury or death; or may include measures to reduce severity of injury (including prevention of death) after a crash or other injurious event. For definitions and details please review the equity vision, goals, and objectives of the [ODOT Strategic Action Plan](#), [Oregon Transportation Safety Action Plan](#) and [Oregon Transportation Plan](#).

5m. Will solving the **transportation issue** in question 1 support improving **safety culture** for either transportation workers or the traveling public?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

5n. Will solving the **transportation issue** support improving safety through **healthy and livable communities**?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

5o. Will solving the **transportation issue** support improving safety through using **best available technologies**?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

5p. Will solving the **transportation issue** support improving safety through **communication and collaboration**?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

5q. Will solving the **transportation issue** support improving safety through **investing strategically**? 5r. If you answered yes to any of the safety questions above or can provide alternative details related to safety, please provide additional information:

☒ Yes

☐ No

☒ Unsure

Safety is the primary focus of the proposed research. We are seeking a deeper understanding of safety issues and concerns related to the emerging field of small devices that have varying amounts of assisted power beyond human propulsion, such as e-bikes, e-scooters, and e-unicycles. While usage of these devices has emerged in the last decade—and in higher numbers in the last five years—safety research and recommendations have been slow to catch up. Given this, there is a lack of clear policy, rules, and safety recommendations. Analyzing the available data will help inform the development of data-driven strategies and investments within ODOT, as well as the external partners we work with.

6. Corresponding Submitter's Contact Information:

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7. ODOT Sponsor Contact Information (Required if Submitter is not an ODOT employee)

Name:	
Title:	
Crew Number:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

This form is not a grant application or contract document. Please do not include proprietary information on this form. Once this form is received ODOT may revise and publish the problem statement. If selected, ODOT will assign investigator(s) of the department's choosing to conduct research.