Communities & Commerce ETG (Expert Task Group) 2025-26

ODOT Internal SME Members:

Member Name	Division/Section	Title
Matt Bagwell	PDAD – Research, Chair	Principle Research Analyst
John Boren	PDAD – Freight	Senior Freight Planner
Tom Guevara	Region 3 - Planning	Senior Transportation Planner
Erik Havig	PDAD – Planning	Division Co-Manager Administrator
Bob Melbo	Public Transit/ Rail Operations	State Rail Planner
Chris Melson	PDAD – TPAU	TPAU Manager
Gian Olsen	Commerce & Compliance	Operations & Policy Analyst
Matt Rubic	Office of Civil Rights	Research Analyst
Naomi Zwerdling	Region 2 - Planning	Planning Manager
Allen Molina	Revenue, Finance & Compliance	Economist
Evan Rogers	Revenue, Finance & Compliance	Economist

Invited External Univ. SME Members/ Commenters:

Member Name	Division/Section	Title
Miguel Figliozzi	PSU, College of Engineering	Professor
Sal Hernandez	OSU, College of Engineering	Professor
Jason Anderson	PSU, College of Engineering	Research Associate

Research Priorities

This statewide ETG reviews research problem statements related to areas of commerce, transportation policy, planning, freight, and economic analysis. ***The annual deadline for submissions is November 15th.*** The following sections identify areas of research this ETG evaluates (*Note: the examples of topics in the list below are not exhaustive*):

Economics & Commerce

- **Transportation Finance:** innovative analysis methods, development of new data sources, explore revenue options for financially sustainable transportation and ODOT agency operations.
- **Performance Measures:** return on investment, benefit cost methods, impacts of regulations and policy, system performance monitoring.
- **Forecast Methods & Modeling:** improve methods of spatial forecasting for population, employment, residential housing, businesses by industry, and address risks and uncertainties in resource constrained environments.

Freight

- **Safety:** truck-rail-marine-air safety, interaction/conflict with non-freight modes,
- **Freight Logistics**: intermodal facilities, warehousing, first/last mile, emerging modes (micro-freight), supply chains, block-chains, industry trends.
- **New Technology & Travel Modeling:** shared freight transportation data and emerging tech.
- **System Reliability and Redundancy:** benefit cost analysis for freight users, return on investment to freight users, freight capacity across modes, freight bottlenecks, commodity flow, freight movement by industry, modal system performance metrics.
- **Maritime/Ports:** rail and terminal operations, aviation, highway Ports of Entry, intermodal efficiencies.
- **Performance Metrics:** development of new performance measures, evaluation of emerging data sources.

Planning Analysis

- **Transportation Planning & Travel Modeling**: Planning in the face of uncertainty: financial, political, regulatory, disaster events—how do we do planning around uncertainty?
- **Financial Planning**: Prioritizing ODOT investments strategically, given limited resources.

- **Strategic Planning & Project Management**: CIP objectives and action items: How are you implementing the plan? Mission example—understand how rubber meets the road in terms of planning implementation, including monitoring and reporting progress on projects.
- **Planning for the Future**: innovation; tackling large, wicked problems, unpredictable problems, e.g. wildfires, Critical Incident Management (CIM), increasingly inclement or extreme weather events, and/ or systems disruptions.

Policy Analysis

- **Evaluating Distinct & Specific Transportation Policies and their Implications in Practical Application**, e.g. Tolling (how messaging/ communications or policy implications fit into this area/ aspect)
  - Understanding the current state of specific policies
  - Problem Detection & Mitigation
  - Design Intervention(s) for the problem to mitigate or "resolve" gaps in services or other aspects needing attention
  - Closing the Loop: Intervention Analysis (did the intervention do what it set out to do?) Evaluation/ Assessment
- **Financial and Budgetary Policies**: CBA, diversifying revenue streams, highway cost allocation, Freight trucks, State Policies, internal or external policies
- **Maintenance & Policy**: e.g. Studded Tires, "long pothole" creators, Policy example: How to monetize or quantify road damage? Develop fee to cover maintenance costs of roads, if feasible.
- **New Technologies/ Innovations:** explore novel technology impacts on the agency, evaluate emerging data sources, identify impacts on the public and the agency.

This ETG will consider the following criteria when evaluating problem statements:

1. Does the research problem statement address a problem, issue, or need that ODOT has?
2. If the research idea is funded, can it be implemented by someone in ODOT?
3. **Overarchingly, what is the value of the research to ODOT (as a state agency) or to the Oregon public?**

Please contact Matt Bagwell for more info.
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