

Guidance for Evaluating Land Use Impacts

Every proposed highway improvement is evaluated to measure how it will affect community growth and livability. Federal environmental regulations require an assessment of a number of impacts, including land use impacts.

Recently, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) published “A Guidebook for Evaluating the Indirect Land Use and Growth Impacts of Highway Improvements.” to help in environmental analysis and land use planning. The guidebook recommends processes for evaluating proposed highway projects.

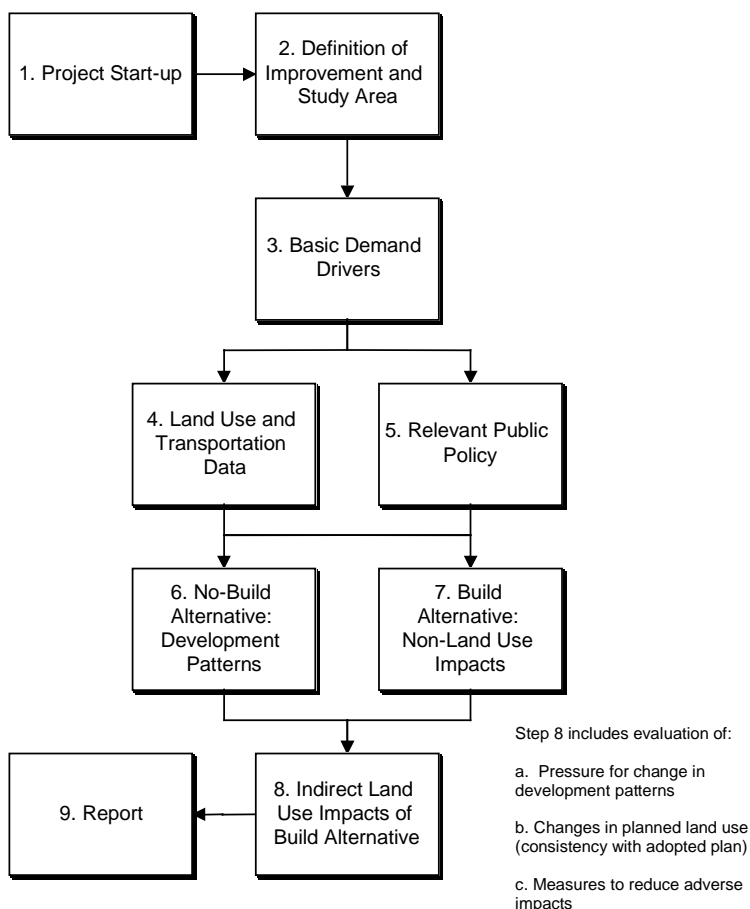
A Step-by-Step Guide

The Guidebook has advice for completing the land use analysis for an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. Its findings may also be of interest to planners as they describe potential future growth patterns under build and no-build alternatives.

To start the analysis, potential information sources and factors are outlined, along with tips on how to estimate the potential magnitude of land use change. If a project is expected to have considerable impact, a more thorough step-by-step analysis process is justified and described.

Chapter 4 provides a sample Indirect Land Use Analysis, along with an “Analysts Notebook” that describes the nine steps used to create the sample report. A checklist is also provided to help the user determine, in the prospectus process, the potential impacts of the proposed improvement and whether a full analysis is likely to be required.

The Guidebook is not a directive, but a compilation of recommendations for a systematic, consistent approach for looking at highway improvements to predict the indirect land use impacts. Appendices provide background information on the research behind the findings, including relevant literature and summaries of case studies. A discussion of population and employment forecasting issues and a



summary of ODOT processes for project evaluation

The Study Methodology

In the first phase of the study, Portland State University and ECONorthwest studied historical land use changes for 20 Oregon cities over the past 20 years. They used aerial photos and a Geographic Information System to analyze the ability of several factors to predict growth.

Initial findings were further investigated in six in-depth case studies of highway improvements and their impacts on community growth patterns. Case studies were completed for projects in Albany, Bend, Corvallis, Grants Pass, La Grande/Island City and McMinnville. The case study reports are available electronically from the Research Group web page under "Published Reports."

are also included.

The study found that most increases in highway capacity do not cause development to be dramatically different from guidance in local land use plans, or from what would have occurred in the absence of the improvement. Local governments in Oregon hold the tools to determine development patterns, using zoning and public utilities such as water, sewer and roads.

The Guidebook has been distributed to ODOT staff, and presentations on the project and Guidebook have been made at national planning conferences. The Technical Advisory Committee for the project hopes that ODOT staff will find the report useful.

TO FIND OUT MORE...

*Request a copy of
"A Guidebook for Evaluating the Indirect Land Use and Growth Impacts
of Highway Improvements" and the Appendices
from the ODOT Research Group by phone, e-mail, or in person.
Or view the reports and the six Case Studies on the Research web page listed below.*

*For more information, contact Joni Reid at 503-986-5805,
or via e-mail: <mailto:joni.e.reid@odot.state.or.us>*



Oregon Department of Transportation

**Research Group
200 Hawthorne Ave. SE, Suite B-240
Salem, OR 97301-5192**

**Telephone: 503-986-2700
FAX: 503-986-2844**

***For more information on ODOT's Research Program and Projects,
check the website at***

<http://www.odot.state.or.us/tddresearch/>