



# City of Salem, OR

SALEM, OR

CUSTOMIZED WEDGE ANALYSIS LEADS  
CITY'S APPROACH TO NET ZERO EMISSIONS



## Project Summary

Salem's Climate Action Plan will propel the City toward its goal to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 50% by 2035 and achieve net zero emissions by 2050. Our planning process kicked off with residents envisioning what a climate-smart Salem would look like in 2050. We formed a local Task Force of 40 community members, City staff, and business and nonprofit leaders from diverse industries. We also tapped climatologists, emergency response managers, utilities experts, and others to ensure the Plan accounted for local context.

We supported public engagement efforts by advising the City on where and how to collect feedback, and supported the City's plans to adopt equity criteria to ensure strategies benefit everyone equitably.

We also created a wedge analysis for two detailed scenarios of how Salem's GHG emissions trajectory may play out over the next 30 years, based on a business-as-usual baseline and accounting for changing variables in the consumer market, regulatory environment, and efficiency improvements. We closely followed Oregon's regulatory changes during our planning process and incorporated new climate regulations into our analysis.

## SERVICES PROVIDED

- Climate Action Plan
- Public Engagement Plan
- Climate Vulnerability Assessment
- Consumption-Based Greenhouse Gas Inventory
- GHG Wedge Analysis
- Targeted Strategy List
- Benefit-Cost Analysis
- City Council Approval Process Support
- Workshop Facilitation
- Alignment with Comprehensive Plan

## PROJECT DETAILS

**Date:** 07/2020 – 02/2022

**Partners:** Ecotone Analytics,  
Carson+Co Global

**Relevant Links:** [Salem Climate Action Plan](#), [City Project Site](#)

## Challenges

- Some proposed emissions reduction strategies prompted concerns from industry associations.
- The COVID-19 pandemic prevented us from traveling to Salem or hosting in-person meetings and workshops.
- Salem experienced several extreme weather events during the project, including ice storms, extreme rainfall and flooding, and unhealthy air quality produced by nearby wildfires.

## Solutions

- We welcomed diverse viewpoints in workshops, and addressed differing opinions by presenting solid data, revising our forecasts when presented with new data, and providing City staff with the information and resources they will need to help address concerns in the future.
- We implemented innovative technical solutions to successfully facilitate the planning process completely virtually. We replicated our fun, interactive workshops with web-based tools such as Miro.
- Rather than ignore extreme weather events happening during the project, we used the opportunity to reflect and educate the public on the region's vulnerabilities, which ultimately emphasized the urgency of climate action.

## Impact

The result of this project is a comprehensive roadmap for the City of Salem, complete with detailed emissions and economic analyses, action strategies, and buy-in from community members and organizations. Salem's Climate Action Plan successfully synthesizes the decisions that emerged from our collaborative consensus-based planning process. The document is tailored to the City's realities and climate vulnerabilities and includes a custom strategy list that will guide the City's implementation progress for years to come.

// *I want to commend the City of Salem staff and all the citizen volunteers who put the draft Climate Action Plan together. It is an excellent plan that shows how the ambitious but necessary and achievable greenhouse gas reduction goals established by the Salem City Council can be met."*

- Mike Grainey, former director of the Oregon Department of Energy

## Our Climate Action Planning Expertise

Our experience in the sustainability and climate action planning world includes dozens of sustainability and climate planning projects for complex organizations including municipalities.

Our approach prioritizes community engagement in a way that allows participants to shape each phase of the planning process, with an emphasis on inclusive outreach with frontline communities.

Our four-part strategic planning process sets us apart from our competitors and ensures a successful outcome. It allows participants to set a vision for what the community can achieve, to understand barriers that might impede the vision, to develop strategies and goals to reduce GHG emissions and increase community resilience, and finally, to plan implementation actions that will bring the vision to life.

To learn more, visit [verdisgroup.com](https://verdisgroup.com) or connect with us at [info@verdisgroup.com](mailto:info@verdisgroup.com).