

“To travel is to live.”
-Hans Christian Andersen

Journeys

2013 Regional Transportation Planning Highlights

2013 Notable Projects in the Thurston Region

Yelm Highway Phase V Construction (Henderson Boulevard to Rich Road)
Thurston County

Light Emitting Diode (LED) Streetlights Conversion (Citywide, expected 55% energy savings totaling \$174,000 a year)
City of Olympia

I-5/Nisqually River Bridges - Bridge Painting (complete except for touch ups as weather permits)
WSDOT

Regional Transit Mobility (implemented 2 new routes, adding 32 trips between Thurston and Pierce/King Counties)
Intercity Transit

Capitol Boulevard Reconstruction Design (“M” St to Deschutes River Bridge, construction expected in 2014)
City of Tumwater

FHWA Systemic Safety Pilot Study (County-wide assessment)
Thurston County

Boulevard Road and 22nd Avenue Roundabout Design (Single lane roundabout, construction expected 2014)
City of Olympia

Olympia Street Outdoor Event Space and Pedestrianization (Sussex Avenue (SR 507) to Central Avenue, enhance sidewalk, add utilities and art)
City of Tenino

Bike Friendly Business (Silver Level Award from League of American Bicyclists to one of the first transit systems in the country)
Intercity Transit

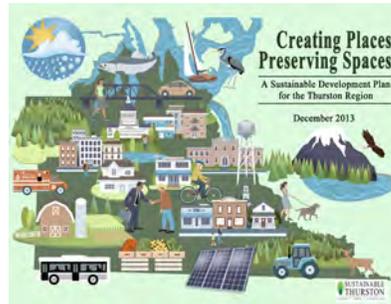
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Sustainability Plan Adopted



In December 2013, the Regional Council adopted *Creating Places Preserving Spaces: A Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region*. Balancing our needs today with those of residents in 2035, the plan aims to, in one generation, make the region a model for sustainability and livability. Key to achieving this is viewing every local and regional decision through the sustainability lens.

Transportation plays a fundamental role in reaching the plan’s goals and targets – in community, housing, economy, environment, basic needs, health, schools, and infrastructure. Transportation-specific actions focus on a robust multimodal system, reduced congestion and environmental impacts, freight mobility, and tight integration of land use and transportation policy, planning and projects.

[To learn more, click here.](#)



[Click here.](#)

The Policy Board and Regional Council are applying the sustainability lens to What Moves You, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update. Over the 10 years since adoption, elements were amended annually to keep the plan current. Now, policy makers are reviewing and refreshing the entire plan. Adoption is expected in 2015.

2013 South Sound Travel Study



TRPC’s regional household travel survey collected snapshots of daily travel patterns and behaviors for more than 2,500 households and 5,000 people in Thurston and south Pierce Counties. Survey results, gathered in fall 2013, will be used in the regional travel demand model, and to improve roads, reduce traffic congestion, improve walking and bicycle lanes, and enhance public transportation.

It’s been 15 years since the region’s last household travel study, and a lot has changed. The new data from the 2013 study will be used for many years to come, and by many partners in addition to TRPC – such as Thurston County, the region’s cities and town, Intercity Transit, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), and Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM). [Click here for more study details.](#)

30% Telework or Flex Schedules

Of the 2,800 workers responding to the South Sound Travel Study, 30% either telework or have a flexible schedule ... and, of those, a third of them did both. [Click here for more early findings.](#)

Linderson Way Sidewalks and Bike Lanes Design (W Lee St to Dennis St, construction expected in 2014) *City of Tumwater*

I-5/SR 510 to SR 512 ITS Fiber Optics and Conduit Installation (second of three projects designed to maximize network efficiency between I-5 and connections to JBLM) *WSDOT*

Chehalis Western Trail "Bridging the Gap" Phase 3 -Pacific Avenue (I-5 Bridge to 12th Avenue, design shared use path and bridge) *Thurston County*

Citywide Pedestrian Crossing Improvements Construction (Crosswalks, flashing beacons and a pedestrian island installed at 3 West Olympia locations) *City of Olympia*

Commuter Vanpools (new record for commuter vans on the road – operating throughout 6 counties) *Intercity Transit*

Capitol Boulevard Widening Design and Right-of-Way Acquisition (Tumwater Blvd to 73rd Ave, construction scheduled in 2015) *City of Tumwater*

I-5/93rd Ave SB Off-ramp - Signal Installation (Provides a safer opportunity for left-turning vehicles) *WSDOT*

West Bay Drive Sidewalk Design (west side of the street from Brawne Avenue to Schneider Hill Road, construction expected 2014) *City of Olympia*

Bike Partners (Program expanded to middle schools. Over 200 bicycles refurbished and distributed to 5th & 6th graders) *Intercity Transit*

US 12/Railroad Bridge - Seismic Retrofit (in vicinity of Old Hwy 9, modifies bridge columns to improve stability and reduce risk of catastrophic failure) *WSDOT*

Legislative Focus in Transportation



"All or nothing" language in the transportation benefit district (TBD) statute precludes Thurston County and some of the cities from working together to form such a district. TRPC continues support for a policy change to this legislation.

The I-5 Framework Plan from Lakewood to Tumwater is as yet incomplete. TRPC requests \$500,000 in state funds to match another \$100,000 in federal funds to finish the plan.

What feasible options do we have to extend Sound Transit services to Thurston County? TRPC requests \$75,000 to work with Sound Transit and Intercity Transit to define which services are actually viable.

The current Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program targets only 20% of rush hour trips. TRPC supports expanding the State's successful CTR program to focus to all trips, not just commute trips and to increase the CTR tax credit to incentivize employer partnerships. [For more details click here.](#)

New Approach to Regional Funding

In 2013, TRPC initiated an annual call for projects competing for regional transportation funds. The change was made in response to new WSDOT imposed "use it or lose it" requirements intended to better manage for the flow of federal funds to projects. TRPC (and other MPO/RTPOs) must now meet annual "obligation targets" for each source of federal funding. If the targets aren't met, funds remaining unobligated on August 1st each year will be taken away from the region and reallocated elsewhere. An annual project review and selection process is necessary to ensure the region satisfies its funding commitments.

In most respects, project selection still reflects the process TRPC established in 2001. Some important caveats have been added. Projects are funded on a phase by phase basis (design, right-of-way, and construction), requiring the completion of key milestones before subsequent phases will be considered for funding. Funded phases must be "ready to go" and project sponsors will be held accountable for meeting the obligation schedule agreed to when TRPC awards a grant – "use it or lose it". TRPC may need to reallocate funds, taking them off a stalled project and redirecting them to another project that can move quickly enough to meet regional obligation targets.

In 2013 TRPC programmed \$3.6 million in federal funds to priority regional projects. TRPC project sponsors succeeded in meeting all 2013 funding target deadlines, and are confident in their ability going forward to meet the 2014 targets. More information on the 2013 project selection process and the upcoming 2014 process can be found [here](#).



2013 Port of the Year

Port of Olympia was chosen "Port of the Year 2013" by the Washington Public Ports Association. WPPA Executive Director Eric Johnson cited the Port of Olympia's revenue growth, increase in ship calls at the marine terminal, work throughout Thurston County, and efforts to improve public input through the advisory committee.

Kathy McCormick Retiring

Senior Planner Kathy McCormick is retiring in February, 2014. Her 29 years with TRPC were spent shaping many key principles, plans and projects – touching on a vast range of issues like historic preservation, Heritage Park, the Profile, growth management and comprehensive planning, and transportation.



Kathy in her early years.

Kathy ushered in the regional transportation planning program by facilitating the development of the first regional transportation plan (RTP). In 1993, TRPC Chair Mark Foutch praised her support as policy makers "...faced the tough transportation and land use policy issues ... giving the local jurisdictions a road map to achieving the vision of 2010." She also led the

public process for the 2020 RTP update. These plans expressed key policies and concepts – like strategy corridors and five lane maximum width arterials – that still form the basis of today's plan.

Kathy's Many Contributions

- rail corridor preservation
- high density corridors
- multimodal levels of service
- connected streets
- school transportation
- street standards
- corridor studies
- commute trip reduction plans
- regional access studies
- parking and transportation studies
- transportation elements in comprehensive plans

Beyond the RTP, Kathy worked on a myriad of transportation issues, both regional and local. In recent years, she participated in the Governor's Climate Action Team – Transportation Work Group; played key roles in the Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC) plan, State Capitol Campus plan, and the Urban Corridors Task Force; and led development of the *Healthy Kids Safe-Streets Action Plan*, the *Walk-and-Roll* program, and *Creating Places Preserving Spaces* regional sustainability plan.

Thank you, Kathy, for helping us face tough issues and for a foundation of sound planning that reaches well into the future.

Telework's Potential

The Bottom Line on Telework for Thurston County Public Sector Employees provides a data-driven, in-depth analysis of telework potential for government worksites in the region. Created as part of TRPC's *Thurston Here to There* project, the report looks at a conservative scenario – 30% of the state and local government employees teleworking two days a week.

Right now less than 1% of public sector employees telework in the Thurston region. What will it take to move the mark? The report stresses the need for management leadership, a team of champions tasked to integrate the program, initial and ongoing support to employees, a readiness assessment by agency and program, and public advocacy for both private and public telework. [Click here to read more.](#)

Annual Benefits to Telework

- 14 million fewer vehicle miles traveled and 1 million vehicle trips avoided
- \$58 million in agency savings for real estate, absenteeism, turnover and productivity impacts
- \$900 saved by each employee
- 100,000 tree equivalent reduction in greenhouse gases
- 7 avoided traffic deaths and injuries

TPB Membership

In 2013, the Policy Board bid adieu to citizen representatives **Mike Beehler** and **Jackie Barret-Sharar**, and welcomed two new representatives. **Graeme Sackrison** served on the Lacey Planning Commission and on the Lacey City Council (3 terms as mayor). He has been a member of TRPC, TPB, Sustainable Thurston, and the Intercity Transit Authority. Graeme is currently board chair for Climate Action Team. He feels "strongly in citizen participation as public policy is developed." **Martha Hankins**, a 13-year resident of the region, is a long-time cycling enthusiast and advocate for bicycle and pedestrian awareness. She "applauds the efforts toward sustainable transportation choices...and brings a balanced, reasoned, and thoughtful approach to issues of growth management, land use, and economic development, and understands that transportation planning is key."

State Avenue Overlay Design
(Central Street to Plum Street/East Bay Drive, construction expected 2014) *City of Olympia*

Fare Increase (25% increase for Adult and Youth fare categories to help offset on-going reduction in local sales tax revenues) *Intercity Transit*

SR 510 - SE of Reservation Rd. – Roundabouts Construction
(intersections of SR 510 with Reservation Road and Yelm Highway, completion scheduled October 2014) *WSDOT*

District Planning Projects

* **Brewery District** (draft plan under review) *City of Tumwater*

* **Capitol Boulevard** (plan and development regulations adopted) *City of Tumwater*

* **Main Street 507** (underway) *Town of Bucoda, City of Rainier & City of Tenino*

* **Martin Way District** (underway) *City of Olympia*

* **Woodland District** (plan adopted) *City of Lacey*

Improving Travel on I-5

No easy fix is available to handle growing congestion on I-5 between Tumwater and Lakewood. But in 2013, WSDOT made substantial progress by completing a *Corridor Plan Feasibility Study* that evaluated factors contributing to chronic congestion in the vicinity of Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) and identified a range of scenarios to increase system efficiency and improve overall mobility. The top two scenarios were forwarded on for further analysis and prioritization, which gets underway in late February. The final preferred scenario will include a suite of measures that can be applied incrementally as needs change over time. TRPC and several of its members are active on the technical and policy teams involved in this work.

This framework planning process and the final strategies will provide a template for consideration north and south of JBLM. Corridor planning near JBLM is important, but there are other substantial challenges between US 101 and SR 512. In addition to the constraints associated with I-5 at JBLM, a comprehensive I-5 framework plan must address additional issues in order to improve I-5 reliability and system efficiency between Thurston and Pierce Counties:

1. The Nisqually River Bridge needs replacement if HOV or general purpose lanes are added to I-5.
2. I-5 crosses the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, a federally protected area.
3. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe mainline trestle (carrying 60+ trains per day) crosses I-5 and needs to be widened or replaced if I-5 is widened.
4. The Nisqually Indian Tribe considers the Nisqually River and its delta as culturally and economically significant.
5. The design of the I-5/US 101 Interchange is inefficient for the flows it must handle.

In 2014, TRPC is asking state lawmakers to make this comprehensive I-5 framework plan between Tumwater and Lakewood a WSDOT priority, and to leverage federal funding for the project with a state contribution.

Chehalis Western Trail Pacific Avenue Groundbreaking

Construction is underway on the third and final segment of the Chehalis Western Trail “Bridging the Gap” project! Policy makers and trail enthusiasts braved the cold on December 7, 2013 to launch this long anticipated milestone. Since

2001, Regional Council and Policy Board members have worked to connect the central urban portion of this premier regional facility. This final leg begins at the I-5 bridge, continuing over Pacific Avenue and on to 12th Avenue where it will intersect with the Woodland Trail at this region’s first bicycle roundabout. Construction will proceed throughout 2014 with final dedication anticipated before the end of the year. [Click here for more information.](#)



About TRPC

The Thurston Regional Planning Council – TRPC – is an intergovernmental board formed in 1967 to provide visionary leadership on regional plans, policies and issues. TRPC develops regional plans and policies for transportation, growth management, environmental quality, and other topics determined by the Council. TRPC provides data and analysis to support local and regional decision making, convenes local, state, tribal and federal policy makers to build community consensus on regional issues, and provides planning and technical services on a contractual basis.

TRPC's Role in Transportation Planning

- As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and state designated Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), the Regional Council ensures a continuing, comprehensive, and coordinated approach to local, regional and state transportation planning.
- The Transportation Policy Board (TPB) advises the Regional Council on issues ranging from the development of a Regional Transportation Plan to allocating federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding. In addition to jurisdictions represented on the Regional Council, TPB has representation from the state legislature, state agencies, business, and citizens.
- TRPC's standing transportation programs – the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP), Federal Functional Classification maintenance, Freight & Goods Transportation System (FGTS) updates, regional air quality conformance, regional Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding allocations, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture, and the Regional Transportation Plan – ensure regional compliance with state and federal requirements, enabling continued transportation funding from these sources.
- The regional transportation model and the regional population and employment (land use) forecast predict future conditions, supplying a variety of local and state data needs.
- Regional planning and programs address special needs transportation, commute trip reduction/ transportation demand management, the interdependence of transportation and land use, regional trails, performance measures, climate change, rail, transportation technology, and freight mobility.
- Contract transportation services aid local transportation planning, support regional coordination of services and information, and provide data for traffic impact analysis.

Getting Involved

The best way to track transportation issues at TRPC is to subscribe to the Transportation Policy Board's agenda packets. This will keep you abreast of the issues being tackled at the regional level. Public attendance and comment are always welcome at TPB meetings.

The TPB's agenda packet is available by regular post, or a monthly email notification directs subscribers to the material on the TRPC website. Register for either service by calling TRPC at (360) 956-7575.

Find additional information on TRPC's transportation plans and programs on our website – www.trpc.org – by following the program links for transportation.



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January 2014

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City of Olympia
City of Rainier
City of Tenino
City of Tumwater
City of Yelm
Town of Bucoda
Thurston County
Intercity Transit
LOTT Clean Water Alliance
Thurston PUD
Port of Olympia
North Thurston Public Schools
Olympia School District
Confederated Tribes of the
Chehalis Reservation
Nisqually Indian Tribe

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