

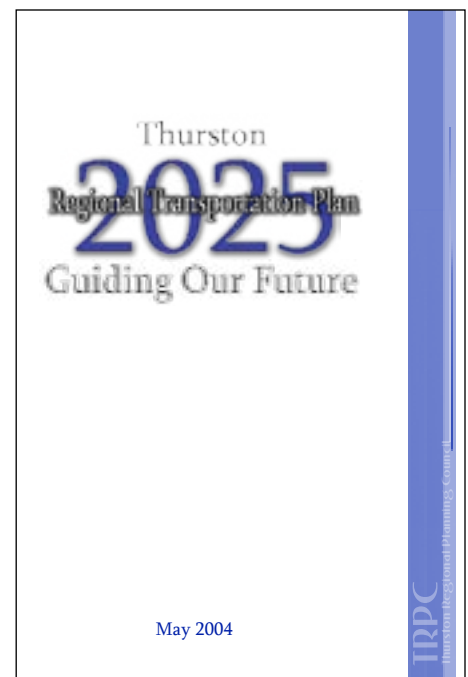
Goals and Policies

2025 Regional Transportation Plan Guiding Principles and Goals and Policies

The *Thurston Regional Trails Plan* identifies the trail component of the region's non-motorized multimodal transportation network and describes a planning process for developing this trail system. The intent and implementation of this plan is more effective when its relationship to the *2025 Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) is understood. The Trails Plan is influenced by the Guiding Principles and Goals and Policies found in the RTP.

The RTP's Guiding Principles direct local and regional short- and long-range transportation planning goals. They are common planning values and considerations that apply to urban, suburban, and rural communities. These guiding principles promote the planning and development of a transportation system that offers safe, efficient, affordable travel choices for people and goods, while supporting land use plans and long-term quality of life objectives, and transportation decisions and investments. The Guiding Principles are supportive, responsive, fiscally responsible, safety conscious, environmentally sensitive, and collaborative.

The RTP's Guiding Principles shape the regional trail network's Vision and influence the region's Goals and Policies for planning and developing the regional trail network. Eight major policies from the 2025 RTP that influence this plan are included here to link the relationship of *Thurston Regional Trails Plan* to the RTP. These policies also highlight the role trails fill as part of the region's multimodal transportation network. These policies also dispel a common misconception that trails only serve the recreating public.



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Selected Goals and Policies from the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan That Guide and Promote Regional Trail Planning and Development

Policy 1.a	Commit to the development and implementation of land use plans, development patterns and design standards that encourage non-motorized travel and use of mass transit, yet recognize the unique needs of the urban, suburban and rural communities in Thurston County.
Policy 2.a	Provide for quality transportation choices appropriate to existing and future land uses, including walking, biking, public transportation, rail, and motor vehicles.
Policy 2.c	Invest in individual travel modes in ways that meet mode-specific needs while contributing to the overall development of a seamless multimodal transportation system.
Policy 6.b	Improve access to public transportation, ridesharing, bicycling, and walking.
Policy 9.b	Encourage new regional connections for cross-town or cross-region travel that provide more direct routes and reduce vehicle miles traveled, where those connections do not promote sprawl or otherwise undermine adopted land use plans
Policy 11.a	Develop a continuous, safe, and convenient regional bicycle network that functions as an integral part of the overall transportation system.
Policy 11.c	Invest in a regional network of contiguous and connected north-south and east-west dedicated corridors to serve as the backbone of the non-motorized system.
Policy 12.a	Provide a direct, safe, interconnected pedestrian network that supports existing and desired land uses.

Regional Trail Planning Vision and Goals and Policies

The creation of the *Thurston Regional Trail Plan's* Goals and Policies, although influenced by the RTP, were also formed by regional policy makers and members of the Regional Citizens Trails Advisory Committee. In addition, this region's local agencies' parks and recreation plans and comprehensive plans offered support that led to the development of the Vision and Goals and Policies of this plan.

The six policy elements in this plan serve to:

1. Promote trail connectivity and functionality
2. Address trail user safety and maintain trail corridor security
3. Ensure consistency between trail use and land use
4. Promote intergovernmental coordination and trail system integrity
5. Protect and maintain trail investments
6. Promote public health

Regional Trail Network Vision

The Regional Trails Plan envisions a trail network that is accessible, expandable, and effectively connected with on-street facilities to connect all of the communities of Thurston County. The network will serve to provide safe and enjoyable non-motorized recreation and travel options for its users.

Goals and Policies

1. Multi-Use Path Connectivity and Functionality

Goal: Build a functional regional network of contiguous and connected north-south and east-west off-street shared-use trail corridors that will serve as the backbone of the non-motorized transportation system.

Policies:

1.1 Provide connected and direct routes that join communities and provide access to neighborhoods, schools, employment sites, parks, open spaces, and public and commercial services.

1.2 Acquire all railroad right-of-way (ROW) through Public Use Condition under 49 U.S.C 10906 and Interim Trail Use under Section 8(d) National Trails System Act in the event any railroad company files a Letter of Intent to Abandon with Surface Transportation Board.

1.3 Promote trails as public non-motorized transportation corridors for the purposes of commuting and promoting recreation.

1.4 Design and construct trailheads at locations that maximize the visibility of trails in order to increase the traveling public's awareness of the existence of trails.

1.5 Work toward providing a multi-modal transportation system that ensures mobility and access to trails for all residents, particularly those without access or the ability to drive a car.

1.6 Provide seamless connectivity between the trail network, sidewalks, bike lanes and other transportation facilities including transit centers and park and ride lots.

1.7 Design trails for use and accessibility for trail users of all levels of experience and ability, and provide benches for trail users to rest.



The Olympia Woodland Trail Trailhead not only offers great amenities for trail users, but is also a place to meet other people. Photo by Stacey Brewster.

1.8 Design trail widths to accommodate future capacity demands for more popular trail segments or highly used trail junctions.

1.9 Design trails and associated facilities to accommodate varying modes including walking, running, bicycling, skating, and equestrian use where feasible.

1.10 Design all shared-use trails (Class 1) to meet the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards and guidelines to ensure trails are accessible to people with physical and sensory disabilities.

1.11 Provide frequent on- and off-trail wayfinding signage and mile post markers to orient users to destinations, distances, and junctions.

1.12 Utilize public and private railroad ROW, utility easements and easements from new development, valleys, streams, and other corridors as much as possible for creating new trails or creating connections between existing trails.

2. Trail System Safety and Security

Goal: Promote the safety and security of all who use, operate, and maintain the trail system.

Policies:



The occasional appearances of police officers on trails can promote trail users' perceived level of safety.

Source: www.pedbikeimages.org / Dan Burden

2.1 Use a combination of education, enforcement, design features, maintenance, and investments in infrastructure to mitigate existing hazards and avoid potential hazards.

2.2 Use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to define useable spaces physically or symbolically to control access to property.

2.3 Coordinate a consistent mile post marker system region-wide for all trails so that users may readily identify their location to emergency responders.

2.4 Encourage collaboration between public works, parks, police, and fire departments for trail access, response, command, and control of emergency situations.

2.5 Foster a culture of trail civility and promote trail use through brochures, maps, kiosks, interpretive signs, and trail manager sponsored programs like Thurston County's Trail Days, the Bicycle Commuter Contest, and events like childrens' bicycle rodeos and handheld Global Positioning System (GPS) scavenger hunts (geo-caching).

3. Transportation and Land Use Consistency

Goal: Ensure that development and implementation of land use plans, development patterns, and design standards support trail development and non-motorized transportation.

Policies:

3.1 Ensure that future development along existing and proposed trail corridors supports mobility and accessibility for public trail users.

3.2 Foster public/private opportunities that promote trail use and identify compatible economic development opportunities associated with trail use such as tourism and orientation and access to businesses from trail access points and trail heads.

3.3 Build trails in an environmentally sensitive manner that protects water resources and the habitat of native wildlife while balancing the needs of the public for trail corridors that must traverse critical areas.

4. Intergovernmental Coordination and Trail System Integrity

Goal: Ensure that trail design, development, and programs function seamlessly across community borders and between regions.

4.1 Foster collaboration between the jurisdictions, tribes, and transportation providers for the planning, financing, and development of trail facilities.

4.2 Create an interdisciplinary approach to trail planning by capitalizing on the combined expertise of transportation, parks, public health, and public safety officials.

4.2 Commit to uniform trail design standards for signage, bollards, gates, and associated trail facilities.

4.3 Use TRPC as a regional forum for the exchange of ideas, information, and issues among local jurisdictions and tribal, state, and federal transportation authorities; to facilitate informed, reasoned decision-making processes.

5. Trail Maintenance, Repair, and Community Stewardship

Goal: Protect trail investments that have already been made and keep overall life-cycle costs as low as possible.

Policies:

5.1 Ensure trails planning consider life-cycle costs of maintaining trail infrastructure including pavement, bridges, and tunnels in perpetuity.

5.2 Manage and control the spread of noxious and invasive weeds within trail ROW.

5.3 Use native plant species as much as possible, where practical, and landscape with low maintenance, non-invasive plant species that will thrive within any given trail segment's environmental conditions.

5.4 Seek opportunities for inter-departmental or inter-jurisdictional maintenance agreements to distribute the long-term cost trail maintenance.

5.5 Use preventive maintenance programs like site visits and checklists to maximize the life-cycle of existing facilities.

5.6 Ensure trail resurfacing materials and repair work is compatible with all permissible trail modes.

5.7 Promote the development of and foster on-going programs to involve public participation and community group participation in trails maintenance programs and stewardship.

6. Health Promotion

Goal: Increase community and individual awareness that trails are safe, affordable, fun, and attractive places for physical activity.

Policies:

6.1 Advance the visibility of trails, trailheads and access points through on-street and neighborhood way finding signs, distribution of bicycle maps and parks and recreation maps and guides throughout the community, posting information on local government agency websites, and through health fairs and outdoor public events.

6.2 Explore opportunities to implement permanent or temporary mini-interpretive-fitness stations within trail corridors to diversify physical activities, provide exercise tips, and provide trail users convenient off-the-path spaces for stretching and performing calisthenics.

6.3 Foster dialog between local public health officials and local health practitioners to find effective means to educate health consumers about the location and availability of trail facilities and their proximity to recreational and other destinations associated with activities of daily living.