

Inventory of Facilities

The Regional Transportation Plan is required to inventory existing transportation facilities within the planning boundary (Map D-1). The Thurston Region hosts a plethora of inter- and intra-connected modes of travel. While the automobile remains the most common mode of travel, other viable travel modes are available and essential for an integrated transportation network.

Inventorying and mapping the Thurston Region's existing transportation and related capital facilities and services is a daunting task for all jurisdictions from the smallest cities like Tenino to the larger agencies like the Washington State Department of Transportation, however accurate information is essential to the transportation planning process. The RTP creates a big-picture view of the transportation facilities and choices available to users entering, traveling through, traveling within, or leaving the Thurston region. Transportation planning strives to integrate travel options seamlessly for the user, creating intermodal travel. Driving to the Hawk's Prairie Park and Ride Lot, taking the Intercity Transit Express Bus to Tacoma, and then walking 4 blocks across city intersections and sidewalks to work represents intermodal travel.

Federal law requires streets and roads to function as a hierarchal network to serve accessibility and mobility. Surface streets include our local neighborhood streets, arterials, and major highways like Interstate 5 and U.S. Highway 101 (Map D-2). The region is paved with over 1,950 centerline miles of connected streets and highways, allowing for movement of people, goods, and services via car, van, truck, bus, or non-motorized vehicle. The road network supplies accessibility to daily destinations such as schools, grocery stores, and employment sites; serves longer distances within our region; and connects to state and national highways.

Although most users of surface streets are auto drivers, other modes of travel occur with increasing frequency. Intercity Transit's routes serve the urban portions of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Yelm. Grays Harbor Transit and Mason Transit provide transit service to and from Grays Harbor County and Mason County respectively. Both Intercity Transit and Pierce Transit serve passengers traveling to and from Pierce County (Map D-3). Intercity Transit also maintains three regional park and ride lots that support the transition from auto to transit.

Appendix D

The number of bicycles using the road network is growing. In 2000, over 2,500 bicyclists commuted to work on an average day, by 2025 over 4,000 cyclists will pedal to work in the region. The cities, County, and the state continue to build or add bicycle lanes on the region's roadways. As new roads are created or old roads rebuilt, bicycle lanes become an integral component.

Rail, marine, and air transportation have a significant historical and current role in the Thurston region. The Centennial Rail Station allows local residents and tourists to travel via rail to Eastern and Western Washington – and the United States. Residents of south rural Thurston County observe the multiple daily occurrence of freight by rail. Travel by boat is also possible with private and public marine facilities dotting the shores of Budd Inlet. The Port of Olympia's Marine terminal supports water-borne freight movement. The Port of Olympia Airport supports national air travel and the Western Air Park provides private air travel facilities (Map D-4).

Several former rail lines have been converted or are in the process of converting to multi-use trails. The Chehalis Western Trail and the Yelm-to-Tenino Trail are versatile trail facilities, stretching across several jurisdictions and allowing residents to travel by walking, running, bicycling, horseback riding, or rollerblading. These stand alone trails take people to their destinations without the interference of vehicular traffic. The trail network provides a viable travel corridor for many destinations and purposes – recreation, commuting to work and school, and health and fitness. (Map D-5).

As more people use the transportation network, the existing infrastructure becomes strained with volume, accidents, and mechanical failures. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) will supply travelers with timely information on roadway conditions, allow emergency and law enforcement personnel to respond more rapidly, and help notify public works crews or tow truck drivers to clear roadway obstructions. Several projects, including traffic cameras, are planned for installation and operation in the near future (Map D-6). In addition, WSDOT, TRPC, local law enforcement agencies, and local public works/transportation departments jointly developed the I-5 Corridor Incident Management Detour Routes. The portion of I-5 from the south Thurston County border to south Tumwater is complete. The remaining northern urban portion of Thurston County is in development. These routes will be used when a major incident blocks all lanes in one direction and the blockage is expected to last for more than two hours (Map D-7).

Whether traveling by foot, bike, car, bus, train, boat, or airplane, the network functions to deliver passengers, services, and freight safely and efficiently.