

Public Involvement

“...to provide opportunity for appropriate broad-based, early, continuous, and meaningful public participation in all planning, programs and projects. TRPC further intends to encourage an on-going forum for the discussion of regional issues, striving for an open exchange of information and ideas. The plan calls for a broad range of public information and participation opportunities supplying complete information, timely public notice and full access to key decisions.”

TRPC’s Public Participation Policy is available at www.trpc.org

This excerpt from Thurston Regional Planning Council’s Public Participation Policy clearly defines the region’s belief in the importance of public involvement. Since adoption of the 2020 RTP, TRPC continued to ask the public their views about transportation – the system in general or specific elements and concepts.

- A series of focus groups on Transportation Finance resulted in excellent insight on what the public wants in the transportation system and who should finance those desires.
- An informal “opinionnaire” was widely distributed, asking: “What elements of the transportation system are important to you and your family,” and “What elements are important to the community?”
- “Getting There” and “Planning to Stay,” two open, televised forums discussed many aspects of the interconnections between land use and transportation, and helped participants understand the impact of policies on the community.
- The COMPASS Community Assessment, a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional effort asked transportation, land use and environmental questions in the larger context of health, safety, education and other community issues. It consisted of written surveys to elected officials and community leaders; random telephone surveys; more than 25 targeted focus groups around the region; and special outreach efforts to minority residents through translation, group seminars and one-on-one interviews.

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- As a follow-up to the COMPASS project, TRPC participated in the Facing our Future Forum, with a work group on transportation, land use and environment.
- Special outreach to the tribal communities, through surveys administered as part of a community event and one-on-one interviews.

In addition to the public, TRPC seeks partnerships on specific issues and regularly convenes forums to discuss topics such as Intelligent Transportation Systems, Transportation Insurance, and Context Sensitive Design. TRPC also monitors meetings and activities of jurisdictions within and around the Thurston region, listening for ideas and concerns that might have relevance at the regional table.

2025 Regional Transportation Plan

Policy makers recognize that members of the public have busy schedules, busy lives, and little time to attend meetings. They also realize that the 2025 RTP is not a radical departure from the current community vision. Certainly, the format has changed and expanded with a few more projects on the list. However, this Plan poses many questions that will shape TRPC's work over the next few years. The Council brought the Plan to the public, but also will encourage residents to participate in the TRPC work program priorities – tactical aspects of how we determine if the system is working, what constitutes equitable development fees, where the trail system connects to the community and the role of rail in the Thurston region.

In preparing the 2025 RTP, TRPC met all public involvement requirements, including timely legal notice, posting the Draft Plan on www.trpc.org, distributing copies to all Thurston County Timberland Regional Libraries, and providing copies, in appropriate form, as requested. Thurston County residents commented in a variety of ways: Online, by phone, fax, e-mail, website or regular post. All public comment was considered and many changes resulted from this important input. Written public comment and responses begin on page F-5.

All meetings of the Transportation Policy Board and the Thurston Regional Planning Council are open to the public and include opportunity for public comment. TRPC routinely posts meeting notices and agendas on the agency website and notifies the media, a self-identified mailing list, and all Council and TPB members. The RTP was a regular item on both group's agendas until final adoption.

Much of the early work on this Plan was performed by a work group comprised of members of the Council, TPB and the Technical Advisory Committee. The RTP work group meetings were open to the public and any policy maker was welcome to attend. At each TRPC and TPB meeting, the work group reported on their efforts and discussed the status of the Plan.

Specific Outreach Efforts

TRPC's strategy for public outreach was to bring the Plan to the public, not the public to the Plan. Policy makers and staff traveled around the region and sought to integrate transportation issues into other discussions.

At the beginning of the 60-day public comment period, TRPC notified hundreds of individuals and groups about the availability of the Draft Plan and methods for receiving more information and commenting. Overview materials and Draft Plans were provided in hard copy and electronic format as required by law and as requested. Copies were made available to all the libraries in the region and the Plan was posted on the TRPC website. A special email account and phone line were established for easy access to Plan information.

During the public comment period, TRPC presented Plan overviews to 16 groups – over 300 individuals – representing policy makers, jurisdictional staff and the public. These presentations ranged from school boards to state agencies and Rotary Clubs to the Board of County Commissioners. Participants were supplied with handouts about the Plan, urged to discuss the issues and encouraged to submit written comments.

In addition to these full presentations, TRPC also added the 2025 RTP to the meeting agendas of social service, transportation provider, planner and citizen groups, including representatives from minority, low income and rural communities. These “mini” presentations to approximately 100 individuals brought high level awareness of the Plan's issues to a broad audience.

TRPC hosted three public meetings and a public hearing on the Plan. The events were held at various times of day and in varied geographical areas of the region. Although sparsely attended – approximately 25 total – good discussions ensued on a variety of topics, resulting in a range of comments. As in the case of all public outreach, events were held at venues accessible to persons with disabilities. Every effort was made to select locations with transit service.

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Local media supported public outreach efforts, with several stories in the local daily newspaper and regular information on local radio about the Plan, emphasizing public meeting dates and methods for comment.

Public outreach does not end with adoption the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan. The RTP lays out an ambitious set of priority work programs – land use, system performance, funding, system efficiency, rail, freight, trails – all enriched by public dialogue. One element specifically calls for increased efforts to bring more people into the transportation decision-making process.

Public Comment

Comment on the Draft Plan took many forms – discussion at public presentations and meetings, informal phone and email conversations, and formal written comment in letter, email and handwritten form. While the Plan was modified through all these avenues, only the written comment and response is included in this section. TRPC appreciates the time the public took to read the Plan, expressing their concerns and support.

Commenter: Andrea Fontenot, Public Works Director, Port of Olympia
Date: January 9, 2004
Format: Letter



Commissioners
Steve Pottle
Paul Telford
Bob Van Schoorl

TRPC
JAN 12 2004

January 9, 2004

Thera Black
Thurston Regional Planning Council
2404 B Heritage Court SW
Olympia WA 98502-6031

Re: 2025 Regional Transportation Plan

Dear Thera:

The purpose of this letter is to comment on the October 2003 draft of the 2025 Plan. I understand that this document is now out for general public comment.

We suggest the following minor changes:

Aviation, Page 3-32

1. Why Aviation is Important. Please strike the phrase "and others flying short distances" as aircraft flying long distances frequent the Airport.
2. Please replace "search and rescue" with "helicopter med-evac".

Marine Transportation, Page 3-34

1. Policy 15.b. Consider expanding the suggested coordination to other stakeholders, such as "and respective stakeholders".
2. Challenges for Marine Transportation, first bullet. Please strike the discussion of the Port of Grays Harbor. This represents only one facet of the comparative competitive advantages and disadvantages between the two ports. This sentence does not do justice to the many distinctions between the Port of Olympia and the Port of Grays Harbor. We would suggest that this sentence be struck as the point is made sufficiently without it.
3. Second bullet, first sentence. Please strike "smaller" and replace with "breakbulk export logs or lumber".
4. Second bullet. Please replace "niche port" with "specialty".
5. Second bullet, last sentence. Please replace "smaller" with "breakbulk and project cargo".

Thank you for considering these comments. Please call if these suggestions need further clarification or discussion, 528-8020.

Sincerely,

Andrea Fontenot
Public Works Director

cc: Steve Pottle
John Wolfe
William Parker

Issue: Goals and Policies Chapter 3 – Aviation and Marine Transportation.

Response: Because of the early submittal of the Port of Olympia comments, all technical changes suggested by Ms. Fontenot were incorporated into the Draft Plan released in January 2004 and included in the Final Plan.

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Commenter: Jennifer Bowman, Community Planner, Federal Transit Administration
Date: February 10, 2004
Format: Email

Hi Thera,

Believe it or not, I read each and every page. I have a few comments that should be considered as comments from FTA to which your agency should respond (informal, email response is fine). They mostly concern air quality, fiscal constraint and environmental justice. After that, I have many general comments that should be considered as comments from a peer, rather than a federal agency.

First—good job. It's readable but doesn't talk down. The presentation is tasteful and clear, with good use of white space. TRPC's use of people pictures emphasizes that the plan is about people, not just roads.

Fiscal Constraint—do you have any documentation that a 5% balance deficit is acceptable? I generally see fiscal plans presented as balanced. If a gap is identified, a strategy is identified to close the gap. (Whether a truly balanced plan is realistic in the case of any MPO is another issue). Dave—do you have any thoughts on this topic? Thera—there are several detailed fiscal constraint questions mixed in with the rest below.

Air Quality

H-1 Rephrase 1st sentence to "...2025 Regional Transportation Plan conforms to the State Implementation Plan for..." CAA requires that your program not exceed the standards, but you "conform" to the SIP.

H-5 Are forecasts from 1999 really the most recent you have? They're 5 years old! After census data came out didn't TRPC go back and refresh the forecasts?

Environmental Justice

F Have you done any special outreach to the low income and other traditionally underserved?

F Does your agency have a public involvement plan? If so, tell the reader how to obtain a copy. (If not, I think you're required to have one.)

ES-5 Bottom of page, first bullet. Suggest rephrasing "Improving integration of transportation and land use planning."

ES-6 Top of page, last bullet. Suggest rephrasing "Increasing involvement of the regional ..."

ES-7 Cost>Rev I'm not sure this works for fiscal constraint in a AQ maint area. Does the CAA give us any guidance?

1-2 1st full para. "Recent changes to the region's air quality attainment status under the Clean Air Act changed both the..."

1-3 Overlapping box. "Comply with Air Quality rules" or "Conform to the SIP"

1-3 State box. Currency or consistency review?

1-3 Bottom line. "... air quality attainment status..."

1-4 Above Combined. Currency or consistency?

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2-2 Second to last bullet. You must demonstrate conformity to the horizon of your LRTP. Going beyond the 20 year requirement has created problems for some areas and projects.

2-3 Last bullet. The reference to SEPA is left hanging. Consider adding explanation “...relies primarily on SEPA for....add text here.”

2-5 Freight. Does TRPC participate in the Freight Mobility Round Table organized by PSRC? I would guess you have many of the same issues since Olympia and Seattle are pretty close as far as freight is concerned.

2-3 1st para. Locally significant projects, if federally funded, need to be included. Sometimes we see “consistent with the plan” rather than specifically “included in the plan”.

2-7 You’re dancing around a Congestion Management System. Although it is a requirement for TMA’s, you might think about organizing your efforts along the lines of a CMS.

2-16+ Several projects do not include estimated cost. How have you done fiscal constraint? There must be some numbers somewhere.

2-18 A4+ I would think the total estimated cost of a regionally significant project should be listed. You’ll also list the private contribution in revenue.

2-33 For consistency, include \$ estimates here too. Even a range would be helpful.

2-44 Are all HSP projects included in your plan? If so, it can’t be fiscally constrained. You could have a separate section of “unfunded” projects.

3-1 First line. “...into a more detailed...”

3-1 lower case “...transportation relationships...” and “...relationships: between...”

3-17 Third bullet from bottom. Transportation Management Areas have specific meaning in federal planning regulations. They are urbanized areas with greater than 200,000 population. Suggest finding another term.

3-25 IT cannot take over school bus routes and provide transportation strictly to students. Any federally assisted bus that they operate must be available to the public.

3-26/7 Kudos for bike investments. I’m in the bike lane all the time. It’s never congested.

3-28/9 It’s surprising to see the contrast between public comments for bikes and peds.

3-39 Kudos on outreach to other neighboring counties.

3-40 18.h Consider adding FTA/FHWA/EPA.

Chapter 4—Suggest adding a narrative summary. Currently the reader is left hanging. Help the reader understand the relationship between the book ends, recommended projects in Chapter 2, the various alternative scenarios. Appendix G provides good summary information and the presentation seems clearer to me—maybe pattern after that? I find the pie charts confusing, partly due to page flipping and not really being clear what was trying to be demonstrated. Maybe a table showing all variable factors? Help the reader understand how the AA gave you the 2025 recommendations.

Appendix I Good consumable description.

I hope this is helpful. Please let me know if you have any questions on any of the comments.

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Issue: Fiscal Constraint

Response: The Recommendations and Finance chapters were reviewed and modified to reflect satisfy Federal Transit Administration concerns.

Issue: Environmental Justice

Response: Modifications were made to the Executive Summary and Public Involvement Appendix F to emphasize the region's strong commitment to Environmental Justice and public involvement, with a link to the agency's Public Participation Plan.

Issue: Air Quality

Response: TRPC modified Air Quality Conformity Appendix H to resolve outstanding issues. Updating the forecast entails several years of effort, which is underway for the 2030 horizon, incorporating the 2000 census data. This updated forecast should be available for the next Plan update.

Issue: Technical Suggestions

Response: Many of the informal technical suggestions were incorporated into the Final Plan.

Commenter: Michael Boyer, Environmental Planner, Washington State Department of Ecology

Date: February 11, 2004 (2 Emails on same date)

Format: Email

Email 1

Hi Thera,

I have five specific clarification-type comments, primarily associated with the “who does what” and conventional terminology used in the AQ regulatory environment. Also, I liked the maps that are included in the plan, and the on-line interactive map was a hit among several of us. Good work on putting all of this together! My comments should be non-controversial, but I copied everyone on your list in case anyone has objections or additional comments.

1. Page H-1, first paragraph, first sentence: You want to say that the Transportation Plan conforms with the PM10 Maintenance Plan, not with the federal standards for PM10. The maintenance plan is the document that demonstrates conformity with the federal standards for PM10. I would say, “This appendix documents that the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan conforms with the requirements of the Thurston County PM10 (particulate matter less than 10 microns in aerodynamic diameter) Maintenance Plan.”
2. Page H-1, last paragraph, 4th sentence: Add “tailpipe” to sentence to say, “Components of mobile source particulates include vehicle tailpipe emissions ...”.
3. Page H-2, first paragraph, first sentence: I would substitute “PM10” for “particulate matter”, since we also have standards for PM2.5, and we used to have standards for TSP (total suspended particulate).
4. Page H-2, last paragraph, 2nd sentence: I should say, “EPA’s Transportation Conformity Regulations required that the maintenance area ...”, rather than just “EPA”.
5. Page H-3, top of page paragraph (from previous page): Substitute “Thurston County PM10 Maintenance Plan” for “EPA”. EPA regulations and guidelines define the required elements in a maintenance plan, such as evaluating the need for transportation control measures (TCMs). The local air authority, as the lead for

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developing the plan, determines whether TCMs are actually needed to meet or maintain the AQ standards. The state submits the plan to EPA for approval. The maintenance plan actually identifies the required or not required TCMs.

Email 2

Thera: I missed one other comment in my notes – Mike

1. Executive Summary, page ES7, 4th sentence, Add a comma to statement to read, “Air quality is generally very good in Thurston County, improving ..”

Issue: Air Quality Terminology

Response: TRPC modified Air Quality Conformity Appendix H to resolve outstanding issues.

Issue: Technical Suggestions

Response: Many of the informal technical suggestions were incorporated into the Final Plan.

Commenter: Denis Curry

Date: February 12, 2004

Format: Comment Sheet/Handwritten

I am concerned that there is a preconceived view that trails & bike lanes meet transportation needs. They are beneficial for a number of reasons – safety, exercise, etc. However documentation as to actual use does not appear to be available. Before starting an expansion, efforts should be made to gather usage data at various times of day, days of week and periods of the year. Using interns for origin destination studies is a possibility. It is really important to:

a) document usage

b) determining the reasons for the use, to see the extent, if any, that walking or biking contribute to transportation

Issue: Trails and bike facilities as transportation elements.

Response: No Change

The Regional Transportation Plan recognizes and values biking and walking as legitimate and important modes of transportation, and supports appropriate bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

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Commenter: Andrea Lipper

Date: March 2, 2004

Format: Comment Sheet/Handwritten

Note: See Appendix G – Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement – for Response to environmental portion of comments.

I was impressed by TRPC's presentation at our (City of Olympia) Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee meeting. (BPAC)

Thank you for working on trails projects. The development of non-motorized trails and their interconnectedness will bring more recreation-minded people to our county. While also improving our quality of life.

I am also in favor of expanded passenger rail. If Amtrak comes into downtown Olympia this will encourage much more walking, biking, and less reliance on the automobile. Many people liked the idea of taking the train up to Seattle or Portland; but once we're in the car driving to the Amtrak way out in Lacey – it's almost not worth it.

I grew up in Montreal, which for a city of 2 million people has little traffic congestion problems. This is due to extensive public transportation, including the subway system, commuter trains, busses, etc. As roads become congested in Thurston County (and elsewhere), commuting by rail becomes a much more attractive option.

I support your values and emphasis on environmental impact, efficiency. And integrating land use planning. I would support impact fees on new developments of off-set costs for road expansion and maintenance.

Additional comments about the 2025 RTP will be compiled by our BPAC group.

Issue: Trails, Rail, Public Transportation

Response: No Change.

The Plan contains an appropriate balance of recommendations and policies for all modes. The Priority Work Program in Recommendations Chapter 2 calls for work to better define the region's rail and trail visions and to investigate equitable transportation development fees.

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Commenter: Stephenie Kramer, Assistant State Archaeologist, Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

Date: March 4, 2004

Format: Letter

Note: See Appendix G – Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.



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STATE OF WASHINGTON

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

1063 S. Capitol Way, Suite 106 • Olympia, Washington 98501
(Mailing Address) PO Box 48343 • Olympia, Washington 98504-8343
(360) 586-3065 Fax Number (360) 586-3067

March 4, 2004

Ms. Karen Parkhurst
Thurston Regional Planning Council
2404 Heritage Court SW #B
Olympia, WA 98502

In future correspondence please refer to:
Log: 030404-14-TN
Re: Thurston Regional Transportation Plan DSEIS

Dear Ms. Parkhurst:

We have reviewed the materials forwarded to our office for the proposed project referenced above. We appreciate the opportunity to comment upon the *Regional Transportation Plan*. We are surprised to see that cultural resources have not been considered as a matter of policy in this plan. Archaeological and historic sites have great potential to be adversely affected by road construction and re-alignment projects.

The Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA, RCW 43.21C) and implementing rules contained in Washington Administrative Code (WAC 197-11) apply to these projects. The Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation is considered an agency with special expertise as provided for under WAC (197-11.920) for review of undertakings that may adversely affect cultural, archaeological or historical resources. These rules require the identification of historic, archaeological, and cultural resources listed on or eligible for the national, state, or local registers. Mitigation measures must be considered to reduce or control effects to historic properties adversely affected by the proposed undertaking.

Currently the *Draft 2025 Regional Transportation Plan: Guiding Our Future Appendix G Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* does not address the possibility for cultural resources being present in the project areas and does not offer mitigation measures to control impacts.

Therefore, we recommend impact analysis and mitigation measures for archaeological and cultural sites and historic properties be added to the DSEIS and the RTP to address possible impacts and avoidance to these sensitive and important resources.

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Ms. Karen Parkhurst
Thurston Regional Planning Council
2404 Heritage Court SW #B
Olympia, WA 98502
Page 2

These comments are based on the information available at the time of this review and on behalf of the State Historic Preservation Officer. Should additional information become available, our assessment may be revised.

Sincerely,



Stephenie Kramer
Assistant State Archaeologist
(360) 586-3083
StephenieK@cted.wa.gov

cc: Rhonda Foster
Matt Ojennus
Shanna Stevenson

Issue: Archaeological and cultural sites and historic properties were not addressed in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

Response: The Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement in Appendix G was modified to address the Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation's recommendations.

Commenter: Chris Hawkins (3 comments)

Note: See Appendix G – Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement – for Response to environmental portion of comments.

Date: March 4, 2004

Format: Comment Sheet/Handwritten

Consider: Developing a multi-modal level of service in addition to adjusting levels of service on roadways in U.G.A.s and unincorporated county.

Why: LOS standards should support desired land use, not create an incentive to develop/live in areas that we expect to have lower density (level of Service D in UGA and LOS C in county are higher than our urban core (LOS E).

Complete the streets: In addition to routine accommodation for bicyclists and pedestrians in all new roadway projects, I think the plan should emphasize means of addressing existing deficiencies in safety and convenience for these modes of transportation and provide this as guidance for local transportation facilities programming as well as development of priority bicycle/pedestrian projects.

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Date: March 15, 2004

Format: Oral Public Testimony at Public Hearing

Mr. Chris Hawkins said, “I have been following regional transportation planning for quite some time. I think I commented at the last hearing that was held as the Regional Transportation Plan was updated back in 96 or 97. So, I have a few comments and a little perspective to offer. First off, I want to acknowledge it is an incredible plan and there obviously has been a lot of good work done here and this is a very impressive document and a lot of good thinking has gone into it. I think it is a big improvement, in general, over the previous Regional Transportation Plan. I do have some constructive criticism. I think it’s a little disappointing that there is not more of a distinction or difference between the different options that are included in the plan. And, from my perspective in particular, I am concerned that there is not a strong qualitative difference. Generally, when you are looking at options, you want to see some matter of choice involved in those options. But, it appears this plan is assuming that we are going to have an incredible increase in vehicle miles traveled, that our use of automobiles will continue to increase into the future, which translates into more traffic congestion and more air pollution in our local area. I think that is something that we need to come to terms with because it really is a matter of our quality of life here in Thurston County. So, I would like to see a little more attention given to some other options or perhaps more emphasis given to such things as really looking at how land use interacts with transportation and seeing how we can retool our land use to make our transportation demand less on our overall system.

I think another key option to consider is that some projects are too costly. If you look at the contrast in one particular indicator between the full build and the preferred alternative to the no build option, you will see there is one indicator where there is a big qualitative difference and that is in the total impervious area. This is something that has a huge impact on our water quality and salmon habitat and other wildlife habitat. So that is one distinction between the three different options. Yet, the preferred option is definitely tilted way to the side of the full build option in terms of the total impervious area that is created by a new road. Another thing that if we must acknowledge there is going to be increased demand on our transportation system and we know that we are going to need new capacity, I hope that the policy board and the plan will do something that I think was recommended by people across the spectrum at the last hearing about the Regional Transportation Plan, and that was to focus closely on key intersections, because we can’t afford to always widen roads. (If) we focus on key intersections and come up with strategy around those intersections, we might find it is a lot more cost-effective in terms of congestion relief, in terms of quality of life in the neighborhoods nearby those roadways that are experiencing traffic congestion. I think the plan has some great points of emphasis on fixing on what we have first. But it leaves a lot of the details of that up to the local jurisdictions. I think the plan is laudable and it is focusing on wringing out as much efficiency from the existing system that we have as it possibly can, but I think the regional plan can give more guidance to local jurisdictions about how to do that. And, in particular, I am thinking of examples from the place where I live, which is Olympia, and how the City of Olympia has been able to piggy back onto its road maintenance projects as least cost road maintenance strategy. It has been able to piggy back onto that improvement in sidewalks and bicycling that have made the system function better for a whole host of modes not just moving more automobiles. And so, that’s been done with simple investments in putting down striping paint on roadway to create a larger shoulder for a bike lane and that allows more people to use that roadway and it becomes a more efficient roadway as a result. So that is where a cost-effective thing could be more emphasized in the Regional Transportation Plan and passed along to the local jurisdictions as kind of policy guidance.

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I wanted to also make a point that in discussions at the Olympia level, we talked a lot about the need to try to come up with new ways of measuring the capacity of a roadway than just the motor vehicle level of service. This was something that some of us that are involved in that discussion had hoped would come as part of regional transportation plan process. This is something that I would like the policy board to consider too. I think it is actually mentioned in the plan, but there is not really a project dedicated to it yet but I want to see some emphasis there on developing multi-modal level of service that allows us to measure what's the total capacity of a corridor including all modes, not just movement of motor vehicles. Because, what we are really talking about in transportation is creating better access for people to places they want to go – to school, to work, places to shop. We can accomplish that in a number of different ways and it doesn't always have to involve moving large vehicles. There are more efficient ways in accomplishing that.

And, finally in addition to the multi-modal level of service, I noticed a few things in the bicycling section of the goals and policies that was a little disturbing to me. There is some inclusion of comments there that I think could be construed as pretty inflammatory. I am not used to seeing those right in a section that is talking about the goals and policies. I am wondering if the policy board had considered putting those in an appendix along with all the other comments rather than them right in there with goals and policies. Because, when you include comments like that it seems like the policy board wants to emphasize this kind of negative perspective on one particular mode and I know that there are a lot of people in this community that could share some similar thoughts about motor vehicles and how they think that is a very damaging aspect for our community and should be restricted. So, I think that is something the policy board could consider is trying to move those into a more appropriate place – an appendix in the Regional Transportation Plan.

So quickly to summarize, I will submit some written comments as well. But, I think the plan is doing well and it's heading us in some good direction but I think it needs to be considering a few more options than what you are seeing in front of you. Among those options should be a heavy emphasis on fixing things first and getting the maintenance down making it cost effective investments during that maintenance in improving the streets for all users and completing the streets. Finally, looking at new ways of measuring our overall capacity in the transportation system by using a multi-modal level of service. Thanks very much I appreciate your time.”

Date: March 25, 2005

Format: Email

To: Thurston Regional Planning Council

From: Chris Hawkins

Re: Comments on the 2025 RTP for Thurston County

Date: March 25, 2004

Dear Thurston Regional Planning Council members and staff,

Please consider these comments on the draft Thurston Regional Transportation Plan 2025. I hope they assist in moving us toward the goal of an efficient, safe and multi-modally integrated transportation system, a huge benefit to this and future generations.

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I offer the following thoughts about the plan as a whole: Improved Content and Specificity - Overall, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is an improvement, especially in that there is further detail on the specific strategies that will be pursued on various modes of transportation.

I appreciate the inclusion of the separate chapters considering bicycling, walking and other modes that may have been lumped together in previous plans. These modes often require different treatments and have unique forms of accommodation. They should be treated with the additional specificity that your new format allows.

I agree with many of the suggestions made in the second chapter of the RTP (the Work Program Priorities regionally to make improvements to measures are good). However, I think the rubber may not be meeting the road here when I look at the resulting projection of the recommended alternative in terms of its impact on our quality of life here. The project list still seems to point us toward auto-dependency long into the future.

Troubling Lack of Progress -

It's disappointing that there is not a more pronounced contrast among the options that are considered by the plan, particularly in terms of automobile miles traveled (which translates into more traffic congestion and more air pollution).

I think the options should include a more assertive land-use and transportation shift, including drawing in Urban Growth boundaries to a size that truly reflects a 20 to 25 years-of-growth planning horizon rather than the 50-75 years which is currently the case. Another key tool that appears not be given much discussion yet is modifying the level of service standards (see below). I hope these points will be addressed early on and be part of the vision-reality disconnect workshops and discussion over the next few years.

Some Other Options

Level of Service: modifications and a needed new tool -

It seems that our Level of Service (LOS) standards may be working counter to the land-use goals of growth management when we have higher service standards in UGAs, the unincorporated County and on edges of the Urban Growth boundaries (at least in northern Thurston County). There should be some projects identified to address this change in performance measure, and since we frequently hear that such changes need to occur at the regional level, this plan appears to be the place for such a discussion.

I had hoped, given the interest that individual jurisdictions such as Olympia have shown in developing a Multi-Modal LOS and aforementioned reasoning that this requires regional coordination, that there would be more development of the concept in this edition of the RTP. At the very least this should be included among the "Measures to Support Multimodal Transportation System Objectives" under goal #2 (p. 3-9). This will help our region begin to measure the capacity of our roadways in more than the terms of the current motor vehicle-based LOS. The Recommendations under "System Performance Measures" (p. 2-3) are a good start in this area, but the region needs to hasten its movement in this direction, preferably with modification in this plan or at any rate before the updating for the 2030 RTP.

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Complete the streets -

The plan should include greater emphasis and policy direction to individual jurisdictions to steer roadway investments so as to, as the plan states in Policy 9.a., (p. 3-22) “Support design and construction of multimodal streets and roads.” I think there are excellent models of jurisdictions seeking to fix gaps and discontinuities in the facilities for non-motorized transportation as part of routine maintenance projects. I’m thinking particularly about Olympia’s Bicycle Facilities Plan, wherein a small expenditure is added from capital facilities programs in bicycle facilities and sidewalks to finish missing portions of these non-motorized elements when a street is being overlaid. Costs are saved when work is done on these facilities at the same time that equipment and crews are already mobilized.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Citizen Oversight -

Convening a regional bicycle advisory committee, perhaps accompanied by those who can also speak to pedestrian needs, will be an effective way to generate an updated project list of regional improvements. Often, for pedestrians and other non-motorized modes, their facilities are overlooked (except for trails), but there are numerous intersections and corridors that are true regional facilities that should be considered for their importance as regional non-motorized connections. I think the plan should include guidance to local jurisdictions to form advisory committees of this sort for their local facilities planning.

Summary

The Regional Transportation Plan for Thurston County should acknowledge as a highest priority the current lack of connectivity for non-motorized modes between jurisdictions. These modes (including bicycling, walking or skating) are the ones accessible to all and cheapest to provide facilities for. They have the added benefit of providing healthy physical activity. The public health dimension of our transportation choices, and the fact that some provide us with much more healthy physical activity as part of our daily lives, is one that I do not find adequately addressed in this plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this plan, and I hope you find these suggestions useful in your deliberation toward a final 2025 RTP.

Issue: Alternatives Analysis – Cost of Projects and Distinction Between Options

Response: No Change.

Analysis pointed to issues that are identified as TRPC work program priorities in Recommendations Chapter 2.

Issue: Performance Measures (Multimodal Level of Service)

Response: No Change.

The Recommendations in Chapter 2 enable policy makers to explore alternate system performance measures for use in subsequent plans and evaluations.

Issue: Complete the Streets

Response: Language was added to the “Measures to Support Biking Objectives” in Goals and Policies Chapter 3 (Biking) to emphasize inclusion of biking and walking improvements as part of the street/road pavement programs where appropriate.

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Issue: Bicycle Advisory Committee

Response: No Change.

The Bicycle Goals and Policies element includes “reconvene a regional bicycle advisory committee” as a measure to support biking objectives.

Issue: Biking – Health Impacts

Response: No Change.

The Plan acknowledges the importance of transportation choices to human health in Goals and Policies Chapter 3 (Environmental and Human Health) and Environmental Considerations Chapter 6.

Issue: Biking – Importance as Mode

Response: No Change

From Recommendations for a Regional Trails Plan, to Goals and Policies supporting a multimodal system, to “an interconnected grid of local streets and roads to increase individual travel options,” the Plan recognizes the importance of connectivity for all modes. The Plan contains an appropriate balance of biking recommendations and policies relative to other modes.

Issue: Bicycles – Public Comment

Response: No Change

Quotes used in Goals and Policies Chapter 3 were gathered through TRPC outreach. Their purpose throughout the Chapter is to provide context for the issues and opportunities facing each mode or policy element, with comments representing the diversity of public opinion. The region’s commitment to biking often provokes strong response – both positive and negative.

Issue: Key Intersections

Response: The Recommendations in Chapter 2 were modified to specifically call out key intersections as part of the corridor studies, sub-area plans and assessment areas that focus on exploring options. Most intersection projects are best identified and addressed through local processes.

Issue: Cost Effectiveness

Response: No Change

The Finance Chapter includes a policy encouraging cost and benefit consideration in the allocation of transportation funds. In addition, the Recommendations Chapter contains a work program priority to develop appropriate benefit/cost analysis tools for use in regional and local analysis.

Commenter: Priscilla Terry

Date: March 15, 2004

Format: Comment Sheet/Handwritten

- 1) I would like to go on record as a supporter of rail. We should tackle the congestion problem now. We will lose economic vitality if we do not.
- 2) I’m concerned about seniors – they shouldn’t drive, but they have no option – the solution may be cheaper and easier than we think.

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Issue: Rail

Response: No Change

The Plan has an appropriate balance of rail recommendations and policies relative to all other modes and issues. Recommended work over the next several years will better define the region's rail vision for the 2030 Plan.

Issue: Seniors

Response: No Change

The Goals and Policies Chapter 3 (Barrier-Free Transportation) addresses this issue.

Commenter: Taylor Pittman

Date: March 15, 2004

Format: Comment Sheet/Handwritten

- Emphasize rail use
- Emphasize public transportation
- Key intersections important to focus on, don't widen roads
bike lanes whenever possible
- Complete streets in progress
- Take out inflammatory remarks re: bicycles

Bicycling is a contribution to community health!

Thank you for your work –

Issue: Rail

Response: No Change

The Plan has an appropriate balance of rail recommendations and policies relative to all other modes and issues. Recommended work over the next several years will better define the region's rail vision for the 2030 Plan.

Issue: Public Transportation

Response: No Change

The Plan contains an appropriate balance of transit recommendations and policies relative to other modes.

Issue: Key Intersections

Response: The Recommendations in Chapter 2 were modified to specifically call out key intersections as part of corridor studies, sub-area plans and assessment areas that focus on exploring options. Most intersection projects are best identified and addressed through local processes.

Issue: Complete the Streets

Response: Language was added to the "Measures to Support Biking Objectives" in Goals and Policies Chapter 3 (Biking) to emphasize inclusion of biking and walking improvements as part of the street/road pavement programs where appropriate.

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Issue: Bicycles – Public Comment

Response: No Change

Quotes used in Goals and Policies Chapter 3 were gathered through TRPC outreach. Their purpose throughout the Chapter is to provide context for the issues and opportunities facing each mode or policy element, with comments representing the diversity of public opinion. The region’s commitment to biking often provokes strong response – both positive and negative.

Commenter: Brady Clark

Date: March 15, 2004

Format: Oral Public Testimony at Public Hearing

Mr. Brady Clark thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak and be part of the process. “I am a student at The Evergreen State College and I am involved there in promoting alternative commuting. So I can appreciate how difficult it is to consider some of the things on a very small level. I was working through the plan and didn’t get a chance to really read it over. But, I wanted to share with you some of the things that I have experienced since I moved here a year ago, and I wanted to start by saying that they are mostly positive. I previously lived in Portland, which I have come to understand, is somewhat of a model for bicycling and public transport in the region. I also understand it is a quite a bit larger than the area here. So, when I came to Olympia I was I impressed with the efforts that are underway here. I was able to put my bike on a bus and get around pretty easily. So, I want to thank you for that. However, I have noticed a lot of things don’t connect up and I am interested in the multi-modal aspects of the plan and encouraging work on that. So, just personally, one thing I enjoy doing is – I don’t have a car – and I just have a bicycle. I am one of those fully committed people and I think that it is a luxury right now to have the time to do that. With more bike lanes and integration of the rail, I really feel like it’s something I will continue to do in the future as I get out in the working world. So, that’s a concern of mine because it is one of the few things that I can do in my schedule towards maintaining good health. It’s not only transportation for me but it’s also keeps me healthy and allows me to think about things. So, I guess the only comments that I really had on the plan was I was surprised by some of the negative comments from motorists towards bicycles, which is certainly understandable. It’s understandable, but I guess I question about it being in the plan because it seems like wanting to represent a lot different of opinions is one thing but I guess I wanted to put out a more positive approach. I guess I will close with that. Thank you for your time.”

In response to a question from Mayor Clarkson, Mr. Clark said he travels mostly in Olympia and Lacey. He also travels by Amtrak. Mayor Clarkson asked if had any experience with traveling in bike trails and bike lanes and if he has had any problems. Mr. Clark said he is a seasoned biker but there are a number of instances where a lane will end all of a sudden and cars will not know what to do with that. Generally, he finds people pretty respectful. But, he said he also felt that he holds up traffic because he often he rides in the road rather than on the sidewalk.

Issue: Biking – Importance as Mode

Response: No Change

From the recommendation for a Regional Trails Plan, to Goals and Policies supporting a multimodal system, to “an interconnected grid of local streets and roads to increase individual travel options,” the Plan recognizes the importance of connectivity for all modes. The Plan contains an appropriate balance of biking recommendations and policies relative to other modes.

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Issue: Bicycles – Public Comment

Response: No Change

Quotes used in Goals and Policies Chapter 3 were gathered through TRPC outreach. Their purpose throughout the Chapter is to provide context for the issues and opportunities facing each mode or policy element, with comments representing the diversity of public opinion. The region’s commitment to biking often provokes strong response – both positive and negative.

Commenter: Mike Behler

Date: March 15, 2004

Format: Oral Public Testimony at Public Hearing

Mr. Mike Behler said he was representing himself. “I want to mention based on the previous speaker’s comments about the multi-modal thing that is the issue I am concerned about. I also volunteer at the Amtrak Station as one of the volunteers twice sometimes three times a month and I too would echo the concern about the multi-modal connections that I think are possible that we could even create today and not wait until 2025. The I.T. schedule out here does not really sync out well with the arrival of the Cascade service. I realize the Starlight is infamous for its being late out of Los Angeles. I live, by the way, right down the tracks and I am well aware of the frequency of the trains and whether they are on time or not. So, I think multi-modal connections even with the existing corridors is an important issue. I too, looked at the plan but did not read the whole plan, unfortunately. But, I got a sense that the rail wasn’t spoken to the level that I think it should be for 2025. Just about 30 years ago I was on an advisory committee in a different county transportation committee down in another state. And, they struggled with what was in essence another I.T. system at that time. They were struggling with how to finance it as it was at the height of the oil situation back in the early-middle 70s. And, they worked their way through that and I what I was struck with then and also now is that 2025 seems to be a long way but if you look in time realize that 20 years is not a great length of time especially for those of us who have been around for a while. So I would strongly encourage the staff and the Council to still keep their eye on building on existing capacity. Now, we can leverage those connections between bikes and buses and cars, the park and ride lots. There is a wonderful opportunity out there at the Amtrak Station that was taken advantage by local citizens when they built that facility using park and ride money, etc. That is a good example is how we can leverage that for the future. I am concerned that we also preserve corridors whether for roads or for bike trails.

In 1986, I wrote a letter to Les Eldridge when he was County Commissioner advocating that we preserve rails to trails possibility for the old road out to Gate, the old railroad. It was a little activity I was engaged in at that time advocating that. So, I think trying to preserve capacity for the future is another important thing for the plan to try to encourage jurisdictions to do, again, whether it’s for rail or for bikes. We don’t know what the future might hold for us.

The third thing I would like to comment on I was also seriously suggesting that we look at the demographics of the population. That is, where the older population might be locating or what kind of housing for the different kinds of ages of population. As we know, folks my age and perhaps older will be going into retirement years not too many years from now. The population, I suggest that we are going to be serving, will perhaps be a different proportion of the population that might require more public transportation or more accessible transportation and may not be as able to drive vehicles as they once

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were and where we locate those or where we allow those locations to be existing will also drive it. I think the lady said from the staff, in terms of the relationship between housing and transportation they feed each other. So the mix of housing and the mix of the population, not just the location of the population, is something that should be looked at perhaps a little more. Maybe it has been, and I apologize if it's in the plan and I just haven't picked it up.

But overall, I was pleased with the general theme and tone and the very difficult job to encompass a wide range of existing problems, and try to work your way through again given the constraints of funding. Because it seems to me that one of our major constraints in this area as in the state is not the lack of ideas, but the lack of money to pay for those wonderful ideas. But, in closing I want to thank the Board, the Council, and the staff and I realize it was a lot of effort and energy that has gone into putting this plan together and it will be again in another year and half to start the next five-year plan. So again, thank you for the opportunity and I will make more comments once I read the whole plan, but again I think it's a good job and with those comments I'll stop."

Issue: Rail

Response: No Change

The Plan has an appropriate balance of rail recommendations and policies relative to all other modes and issues. Recommended work over the next several years will better define the region's rail vision for the 2030 Plan.

Issue: Preserving Choices

Response: The Region has a strong commitment to preserving abandoned rail lines, which is expressed through policy and funding. The Rail Plan called for in Recommendations Chapter 2 will address preservation.

Issue: Seniors

Response: No Change

The Goals and Policies Chapter 3 (Barrier-Free Transportation) addresses the transportation side of this issue, while the emphasis on better integrating Land Use and Transportation Planning, mentioned throughout the Plan explores the land use side, including residential.

Commenter: Henry Hollweger

Date: March 15, 2004

Format: Oral Public Testimony at Public Hearing

Note: See Appendix G – Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement – for Response to environmental portion of comments.

Mr. Henry Hollweger said he has lived in the area for about 25 years or so. "I have seen major changes in my time. Perhaps, I am a little picky because I am use to driving down this little road to town and it was very easy at one time to get through this town and now it's becoming more and more difficult with the traffic. About a year ago I was walking through Lacey as I had to get some work done on my car and as a pedestrian, I kind of like to walk. I found it rather difficult to get through Lacey and I have also had the same trouble in parts of Olympia also, just walking. It doesn't seem to very pedestrian-oriented. Just getting across the streets with those lights is very, very difficult sometimes for me. Living out in the rural community like I do on South Bay where I live, I have a house there, its nice and we have a bicycle path there and there really is no problem as far as pedestrians walking in that area. But when you get off that

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main drag there ah, boy, I think the bicyclists and the people that walk in the road, kind of take there life in their hands. It's so difficult. And I don't know just how you would approach to remedy a problem like that because it seems to be awful expensive because you have the waterways going through there so your roads are rather narrow. But still, with a concept that you are trying to approach here, perhaps there are some innovative ways to make a reasonable approach so that we people out in the rural areas where we kind of enjoy the birds and things like (that) could walk on the road without jeopardizing ourselves I think.

I kind of volunteer for the parks quite a bit and one of the parks and also the trails, evasive plants is one of my things. I was walking on the Olympia trail and was talking to a friend of mine, which is right next to the freeway there, and she could not stand where that new trail is going in there because of the sounds of the freeway. I consider it kind of like a white sound, like maybe the ocean or something like that. I have become very used to it. But, she did mention one thing that made an impression on me and that was the road kill. Road kills is the wild creatures. And, I was thinking, that with these trails they are talking about bridges going over some of the highways over here and I was wondering if there was some kind of design maybe a fence that you could direct the wildlife that would go over the bridges instead of having them killed so much. Oh, and another thing in the parks. It's just fantastic it seems like more and more everybody has to have a dog or two dogs. And, they are not little tiny dogs anymore, they are dogs for protection in a lot of cases, and these people need, they need room for these dogs to maneuver. With the new subdivisions going up there has to be some kind of provision for not only pedestrians, but you have these dogs. Otherwise you have a major problem. Thank you."

Issue: Walking

Response: No Change

The Plan has an appropriate balance of walking recommendations and policies relative to other modes and issues, stressing that "Every traveler is a pedestrian at the beginning and end of the trip." Local agencies are working steadily to enhance pedestrian safety.

Issue: Wildlife and Animals

Response: No Change

The Plan's Goals and Policies encourage context sensitive design and minimize road crossings through habitat corridors to protect wildlife. Wildlife crossing issues and dog-walking concerns are highly site and project specific, and are best addressed at the local level during project design.

Commenter: Hugh O'Neil (3 comments)

Date: March 16, 2004

Format: Comment Sheet/Handwritten

Make new growth pay 110% of the transportation costs associated with itself.

Please take the comments about "those darn bikes" out of the Plan.

More bike trails.

More rail freight.

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Date: March 23, 2004

Format: Email

Dear Thurston Regional Planning Council Folks:

I read the draft plan and it has many fine-sounding goals. We have a fine vision and we seem to recognize that in reality we are falling (tragically for our fair County) well short of this vision. I wish our electeds, staff, and others (and hopefully some citizens will be involved) in the Vision-Reality Disconnect process every success and loads of courage and wisdom, because frankly, we ain't gonna get to our vision with this 20 year plan.

When I review the project lists I see a very different picture from the vision. With the exception of the 4th Avenue Bridge project (which is nearly complete and shouldn't be on the list) the vast majority of the money and projects are concentrated on the periphery of our urban area. This is a fatal flaw many times over. Most of the capacity projects seem perversely designed to allow just what we say we don't want — to encourage sprawl into the suburban and rural areas. If we continue to spend millions of dollars and add road capacity right up to the urban growth boundaries (and in some cases across it) wouldn't we expect to see more people living on the fringes and beyond? Won't this just exacerbate our transportation problems and costs in the future?

If we build it (capacity on the fringes), they (we) will come. The question is, where are we to live? Do we want a compact urban area that can support multiple modes or do we want a sprawling suburbia (aided and abetted by peripheral capacity projects) that gobbles up every farm and forest area in the County?

I support your efforts to bridge the vision/reality disconnect, to make consistent development and transportation expectations, and to lengthen the planning horizon. That effort, once completed, would be the basis of an effective plan. I ask that you do not adopt a regional transportation plan nor approve a project list until that vision/reality process is complete.

Date: March 23, 2004

Format: Email

Karen:

Thanks for coming out to Ecology and presenting the draft plan and patiently answering questions. One issue I wanted to follow up on was my comment on the anti-bicycle comments (e.g. "those damn bikes" etc.) contained in the chapter on bikes. You suggested that I read the plan (which I have done) and see if it contained a balance of comments.

I cannot see how the plan could contain a balance of comments, since there isn't a chapter on cars. The dominant mode is just assumed. There would be nowhere to put a comment such as "those damn cars."

This comment aside, good luck with your work. It is very important to our community. Thanks for all you do.

Issue: Finance – Growth Pays for Growth

Response: No Change

Recommendations in Chapter 2 on Funding Measures call for an exploration of equitable fee structures, within the confines of current law.

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Issue: Bicycles – Public Comment

Response: No Change

Quotes used in Goals and Policies Chapter 3 were gathered through TRPC outreach. Their purpose throughout the Chapter is to provide context for the issues and opportunities facing each mode or policy element, with comments representing the diversity of public opinion. The region’s commitment to biking often provokes strong response – both positive and negative. While the Plan does not contain a Goals and Policies section on automobiles, some Goals and Policies include comments that reflect frustration with cars: “We’ve got to make people a higher priority than cars” and “If we value clean air we’re going to have to ask whether we can really continue to rely on the gas-guzzling car.”

Issue: Biking – Importance as Mode

Response: No Change

From the recommendation for a Regional Trails Plan, to Goals and Policies supporting a multimodal system, to “an interconnected grid of local streets and roads to increase individual travel options,” the Plan recognizes the importance of connectivity for all modes. The Plan contains an appropriate balance of biking recommendations and policies relative to other modes.

Issue: Rail

Response: No Change

The Plan has an appropriate balance of rail recommendations and policies relative to all other modes and issues. Recommended work over the next several years will better define the region’s rail vision for the 2030 Plan. The Plan specifically recommends exploring all aspects of freight mobility, convening “regional freight interests to examine issues in freight modes like truck, rail, aviation, marine and pipelines.”

Issue: Land Use and Transportation

Response: No Change

References to the importance of better integrating land use and transportation planning and policies are included in many sections of the Plan. The Vision/Reality Disconnect Project called for in Recommendations Chapter 2, seeks to “better align marketplace realities with the visions and obligations spelled out in Comprehensive Plans.” That discussion will include “fringe” development.

Commenter: Jesse Barham

Date: March 17, 2004

Format: Email

Thurston County Regional Planning Council,

Having reviewed portions of the draft 2025 Regional Transportation Plan, and am disturbed by some of the public comments quoted in the bicycling section of the Goals and Policies portion of the plan. The negative comments contained in this portion of the plan are inflammatory and have no place in a document of this type. In no other section of the plan did I see any plainly biased and inflammatory language. As a frequent bicyclist, I realize that some people have a negative view of bicyclists, but including negative language in this document validates and may encourage discrimination against bicyclists. Safe bicycle and pedestrian access is vital to developing livable communities and encourages human-scale interaction with the environment and between its inhabitants. An inordinate proportion of my local tax dollars go to

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subsidize automobile infrastructure, while at the same time bicycle and pedestrian access is routinely neglected and under-funded. Human-powered transportation should not be placed at a lower priority than automobiles. I would appreciate a more balanced approach to these issues in regional planning documents.

Sincerely

Issue: Bicycles – Public Comment

Response: No Change

Quotes used in Goals and Policies Chapter 3 were gathered through TRPC outreach. Their purpose throughout the Chapter is to provide context for the issues and opportunities facing each mode or policy element, with comments representing the diversity of public opinion. The region's commitment to biking often provokes strong response – both positive and negative.

Issue: Biking – Importance as Mode

Response: No Change

From the recommendation for a Regional Trails Plan, to Goals and Policies supporting a multimodal system, to “an interconnected grid of local streets and roads to increase individual travel options,” the Plan recognizes the importance of connectivity for all modes. The Plan contains an appropriate balance of biking recommendations and policies relative to other modes.

Commenter: Jim Lazar, Chairman, Olympia Safe Streets Campaign

Date: March 20, 2004

Format: Email

Comments on Draft Regional Transportation Plan
Jim Lazar, Chairman Olympia Safe Streets Campaign Box 1423
Olympia, WA 98501 360-786-1822

The Draft Regional Transportation Plan contains some excellent policy guidance for future transportation decisionmaking in our community.

It ties the linkage between land use and transportation more closely. It discusses least-cost transportation planning concepts. It recognizes the importance of certain regional projects which might not get the standing they deserve on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis.

However, in each of these areas, the RTP merits improvement. These comments are intended to focus policy-maker attention on certain continuing problems which a decade of regional transportation plans have not yet adequately addressed.

First, the RTP remains too focused on expenditures for major road-widening projects that are unaffordable, regardless of whether they have merit otherwise.

Second, the RTP does not provide for adequate study of alternatives to road capacity additions. These can include land use changes, new analytical approaches, or in the form of new transportation technologies.

Third, there is a bit of discussion of cost-effectiveness and least-cost planning, but few tools to actually implement these concepts.

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Fourth, the RTP recognizes multi-jurisdictional motorized projects and trail projects, but not the importance of multi-jurisdictional non-motorized transportation planning.

Finally, the RTP backs away from technological substitutions for physical travel addressed in the 2020 RTP. These must be given greater standing.

Major Road Widening is Infeasible

The RTP identifies dozens of new road widening projects. Experience over the past decade tells us that the funding to achieve these is not feasible. Policy makers will not impose, and the regional building industry will not support tax and fee increases to achieve the financing for these projects.

The 2020 RTP assumed that both a local Motor Vehicle Registration Surcharge and a local Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax would be approved by 2002. Neither was achieved, and neither is currently proposed.

The City of Olympia has failed to complete most of the road widening projects listed in its 1996 Capital Facilities Plan. Harrison Avenue Phase 2, Fones, 18th Avenue, and others were planned for completion by 2002. These projects remain pretty much where they were nearly a decade ago.

Doug Deforest, representing the Olympia Master Builders, testified during consideration of the 2020 RTP that the region should “focus on key intersections.” This remains good counsel today.

The most egregious example of this failed thinking is the continued inclusion of Yauger Way Extension in the RTP, at page 2-20. This is a \$10 million project. However, it requires both the City of Olympia and WSDOT to do separate portions of the project, as shown on Map 2-2. WSDOT made it clear that funding for this project was dependent upon R-51 passage. It did not pass. The project is NOT listed as a WSDOT project in Table 2-9 of the Draft 2025 RTP. However, it is STILL listed as a project for Olympia at Page 2-20. Yauger extension should be deleted as a local project unless and until it is included in the WSDOT project list; the City of Olympia cannot connect this road to SR-101 without state participation, and certainly cannot afford the \$10 million project cost on its own.

The deletion of this project, of course, creates more severe potential congestion in the area. This probably means it is necessary to downzone much of the remaining undeveloped area in West Olympia. The RTP must provide this guidance to the City.

Each of the proposed road widening projects needs to be examined to see if state participation is required, and if so, if state participation is funded within existing state revenue sources. Those that do not pass this test – such as Yauger Way Extension – should be deleted, and land use adjustments made accordingly.

Specific Recommendations:

- Remove all road widening projects for which funding is less than “probable” meaning a 50% likelihood that the adjusted level of service will be exceeded during the first 14 years of the Plan (meaning that construction would be required during the 20-year plan period).
- Remove any projects which are dependent upon State participation, such as Yauger Way, if the projects are not identified in the WSDOT 20-year project plan.

Alternatives to Road Widening

There are many alternatives to road widening that need to be explored in a coordinated, regional fashion.

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Each road proposed for widening should be examined to determine if intersection improvements alone can provide needed congestion relief. At the time of the 2020 RTP, the modern roundabout was just entering the lexicon of transportation planning. Today it is an important tool in congestion relief. Each of the corridors identified for capacity enhancement should be examined for feasibility of single-lane roundabouts, to ascertain whether this change alone will provide improved traffic flow. Again, the counsel of Doug Deforest: “Concentrate on key intersections” should be observed.

Modifying the Level of Service in the peripheral areas of the cities is another important tool in bringing project needs and available funding into balance. There are two different tools that should be considered. First, a reduction of the LOS in the peripheral areas from “D” to “E” to be consistent with that in urban areas should be adopted. Second, tools to implement multi-modal level of service (MMLOS) methods should be developed.

The Olympia City Council considered a reduction in the level of service for Mud Bay / Harrison Rd. during consideration of its current Capital Facility Plan. It was advised by its staff that such a change would need to be done “at the regional level” as part of this RTP update. Apparently that interest of the Council was not communicated to the drafters of the RTP update, as this adjustment the LOS is not included.

The relationship between land use, transportation investment, and LOS is fairly well understood. At Page 4-16, the draft RTP shows the relationship between infill and drive-alone travel. This tells us we should be concentrating our efforts on infill, rather than on sprawl. By reducing the LOS in the peripheral areas to match that in the core areas, we are at least removing the bias in favor of sprawl that currently exists.

Corridor analysis is discussed at page 4-25, but it needs to consider not only the motor vehicle capacity of a road, but also the transit, pedestrian, and bicycle capacity of those roads. A roadway that fails to meet motor vehicle needs, but adequately serves all other modes may be at least as great an asset to the community as one that permits unconstrained motor vehicle travel, but is hostile to non-motorized modes. A paper on MMLOS, presented to the Olympia Planning Commission several years ago, is attached to these comments. It discusses how to prepare corridor analysis, and how to properly credit each mode in computing a corridor level of service.

While the RTP recognizes the importance of walkable communities, neighborhood identification, and land use density, it does not make concrete recommendations to actually change existing policies that are leading us the opposite direction.

Specific Recommendations:

- Reduce the level of service in the UGMA from D to E, at least on the west side of Olympia.
- Provide language reading: “Nothing in this Plan precludes an individual jurisdiction from adopting a multi-modal level of service methodology that considers modes other than motor vehicle congestion in determining a corridor level of service measurement.

Cost-Effectiveness

The draft RTP gives lip service to cost-effectiveness and least-cost planning, but does not actually propose the use of any tools to achieve these. Least-cost planning (also known as Integrated Resource Planning) was originally developed in the electric utility planning field, and spread to transportation about a decade ago through the efforts of Chuck Collins (Northwest Power Planning Council) and Dick Watson (Washington State Energy Office).

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First and foremost, the jurisdictions need to start measuring the “congestion-relief per dollar of expenditure” for each proposed project they identify. Currently, the practice of the jurisdictions is to take a population forecast, plug it into a transportation model, predict congestion points, and identify projects to resolve the congestion. The critical next step should be to then compare those alternative projects, and determine which are “cheap” and which are not. Those which can be implemented cheaply (primarily intersection improvements) should be planned for construction. Those which are expensive generally should not, and those areas should be considered candidates for land use adjustments to prevent congestion from developing.

A simple example demonstrates this. The City of Olympia has identified both Harrison Avenue Phase II and Boulevard Road as areas for congestion mitigation based on projected land use and development. The former has a projected cost of about \$5 million for less than a mile of roadway, and the latter about \$2 million for intersection improvements at three intersections. Both would provide about the same person-hours per day of congestion relief. Therefore, the “cost” per person-hour of the Harrison Avenue project is about two and one half times as great as the Boulevard Road project. Prioritizing alternatives on a “bang-for-the-buck” criteria was recommended to the City by the Olympia Planning Commission many years ago. In this particular case, it comes back to the counsel of Doug Deforest: “Concentrate on key intersections.”

The RTP should provide for a “cost per person-hour” calculation of the congestion mitigation cost for each identified project. Given constrained funding, those which are lower in cost should proceed, and those which are more expensive should become candidates for land use reassessment.

Specific Recommendations:

- Utilize a cost-effectiveness measure for all congestion-related projects, that measures the number of minutes of misery relief (congestion for motor vehicles; exposure to traffic for bicyclists and pedestrians) provided per dollar of expenditure. Utilize this information in ranking the priority of projects.

Non-Motorized Projects

The draft RTP lists multi-jurisdictional trail projects in Table 2-7, but fails to include priority regional non-motorized transportation projects other than trails.

Sometimes a bicycle or pedestrian project at the intersection of two jurisdictions is more important to the combined community than it is to either of the individual jurisdictions. Two (of many possible) examples make this point:

The bicycle and sidewalk improvements to 18th Avenue, between Boulevard Road and Fones Road would connect the entire SE Olympia bikeway network to the Chehalis Western Trail (the portion from Fones to the Trail is funded and in design currently). This is the east fringe of Olympia, and the west fringe of Lacey. This was identified as a Priority Regional Bicycle Project as early as the 2015 RTP. It is still a needed improvement.

A bicycle/pedestrian connection between the west side of the Ken Lake neighborhood and 13th Avenue SW would permit bicycle traffic from the Black Lake and South Sound Community College area to reach the Kaiser Road overpass, and bypass the congested Black Lake / Cooper Point intersection. This is the west edge of Olympia, and unincorporated Thurston County.

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Eight years ago, TRPC convened a Regional Bicycle Advisory Committee (REBAC) to identify priority bicycle connections. The good news today is that half of the projects they identified as priority projects are now complete. Many remain to be completed. Having a list of these projects provides guidance to jurisdictions in applying for Enhancement grants. The REBAC list should be restored to the RTP.

Further, a group such as the REBAC should be reconvened to look at all non-motorized improvements in the same context as the REBAC looked at bicycle improvements.

Specific Recommendations:

- Reconvene the Regional Bicycle Advisory Committee to develop a prioritized list of regional bicycle improvement needs.
- Add bicycle and pedestrian connections to locations such as 13th Avenue SW, that would permit bicycles to avoid highly congested locations such as Black Lake / Cooper Point.

Alternatives to Physical Travel

The internet has changed our way of life. Since the 2020 RTP, broadband internet facilities have been extended into the areas where about half of the Thurston County population lives. More and more of us are working from home one or more days per week, attending meetings by video or audio teleconference, and filing reports and legal papers electronically.

At the time of the 2020 RTP, the Olympia City Council agenda was a 500-piece mailing job each week. Today most of that is handled by a single email. The entire packet is posted to the web each week, saving citizens (me) the need to visit City Hall to pick up documents. The Olympia Planning Commission agenda and attachments are posted on the web.

A serious TRPC project needs to be dedicated to “virtual” transportation planning, with the same level of expertise and the same level of funding that goes into “concrete” transportation planning. The RTP needs to get serious about electronic alternatives to physical travel. Examples of this would include:

Specific Recommendations:

- Requirements that new residential developments be “wired” for broadband internet access to facilitate virtual transportation;
- Requirements that public agencies webcast their meetings; TRPC and the TPB could be pioneers in this regard.
- Providing equal access to transportation funding for “virtual” transportation projects as is provided for “pavement” transportation projects.
- Identify and map the existing and proposed “electronic highway” network in the County, and the segments that need development in the 6-year and 20-year plans in order to have every population center fully wired.
- Incorporate internet capacity enhancements as a criteria in evaluating transportation grant applications.
- Incorporate internet capacity in the calculation of “level of service” recognizing that in some areas people can get their needs met without having to physically go anywhere.

Appendix F

I hope that these recommendations are considered by the TPB and TRPC, and incorporated into the revised RTP. It's time to move forward on redefining our transportation goals to focus on measures that improve people's lives – including modifications to the measurement of Level of Service to include bicycle and pedestrian movements, and recognizing that virtual transportation is increasingly an alternative to physical transportation. Respectfully Submitted,

Issue: Road Widening

Response: To comply with state and federal requirements, the long-range plan must look at and plan for growth over a 20+ year horizon, not a 14 year horizon. This is a financially feasible plan, especially when viewed in light of funding issues that are beyond local and regional control. The 2020 RTP included 87 construction projects for road widening and new connections, and relied on two new road-supportive tax increases. The 2025 RTP includes 42 construction projects for widening and new connections, and no new tax increases.

Regarding coordination of regional and state project lists, Mr. Lazar's comments as well as questions raised elsewhere in the public process about other state-partnership projects have resulted in the inclusion of other projects on "duplicate" lists in the Final Plan, including the Lacey project for a feasibility study of a potential Carpenter Road / I-5 interchange and the Chehalis-Western Trail.

Issue: Alternatives to Road Widening

Response: The RTP includes a work program recommendation to evaluate alternate system performance measures, providing an opportunity to revisit UGA service standards in a coordinated manner, if appropriate. Any changes approved to adopted regional performance measures could be reflected in future RTP amendments and updates.

Regarding Mr. Lazar's concern that the Plan might preclude certain strategies, Final Plan language was modified to clarify the RTP supports local agencies trying innovative approaches to address the unique needs of individual strategy corridors, including considering alternatives to motor vehicle congestion when defining LOS.

Issue: Cost Effectiveness

Response: No Change

The Finance Chapter includes a policy encouraging cost and benefit consideration in the allocation of transportation funds. In addition, the Recommendations Chapter contains a work program priority to develop appropriate benefit/cost analysis tools for use in regional and local analysis.

Issue: Non-Motorized Projects

Response: No Change

The Bicycle Goals and Policies element includes "reconvene a regional bicycle advisory committee" as a measure to support biking objectives. However, as with street and road analysis, a different level of analysis is needed for the regional network than for the finer-grained local network, where analysis and decisions are best made locally.

Regional network needs should be the focus of a group such as a regional bicycle advisory committee. Such needs could then be included in future RTP amendments and updates.

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Issue: Alternatives to Physical Travel

Response: No Change

Mr. Lazar suggests several new development and public agency requirements for use of technology. These decisions are best addressed at the local level, although there is nothing in the RTP that precludes jurisdictions from doing this.

The 2025 RTP places increased emphasis on technology in both policy and projects, building on previous investments in developing a Regional Intelligent Transportation Systems Architecture. The RTP project list identifies regional transportation technology priorities that build on the ITS architecture and partnerships established in compliance with federal law. If need for mapping is warranted, there is nothing in the project recommendations or policies to preclude it.

Regarding incorporating Internet capacity into LOS calculations, the recommended work program element to evaluate alternate system performance measures could allow exploration of this option.

Commenter: Karen Messmer

Date: March 22, 2004

Format: Email

Note: See Appendix G – Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement – for Response to environmental portion of comments.

Comments on 2025 Regional Transportation Plan
Submitted March 22, 2004 by Karen Messmer
Regional Issues

‘Selecting performance measures that best evaluate the entire multimodal system.’

The transportation system needs to provide for all types of users. While we are hoping to encourage increasing use of transit for some trips, we must also build a system that supports walking. For most users, a trip on the bus will also require some travel on foot to get to or from the bus stop to their destination. This is why it is critical that all parts of the system are built with future increased use of transit – and walking – in the design. Building more lanes and increased motor vehicle capacity without appropriate consideration for future transit/walking could actually work against our aim to increase transit use. (by making high traffic areas in-hospitable to pedestrians)

It is very important that we not only ‘study’ – but also actually adopt and begin to employ a much more inclusive view of ‘level of service’ for transportation planning. (multi-modal level of service) This needs to be implemented at the regional and local levels.

There are examples of measures being used in other locations, so we don’t need to invent this here.

‘Designing and building a regional trails system’

The same comment can be made about trails as the comment above about transit. In order to use the trail system for transportation or recreation, residents will need to make their way to the trail from their home or business. The trail ‘system’ will serve many more users if it is supported by a safe street system nearby.

Since our trail system is reaching far into the rural areas - perhaps we should be developing ‘park and bike ride’ lots at strategic trail junctions. (Secure parking for your car while you ride into the urban area on your bicycle.)

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Level of service and ‘assessment areas’

The concept of “strategy areas” – now called ‘assessment areas’ – needs to be approached more aggressively. We cannot simply ‘watch and study’ these areas. We should be looking for the most promising methods for commute trip reduction and traffic management and employing them in these areas. The cost for more active programs such as encouragement of flextime and ride sharing seems trivial compared to the costs from traffic problems in these areas. From an environmental perspective, the pollution from idling cars is enough to cause alarm such that we should be working harder on alternatives for these problem areas.

Meanwhile, not far from some of our most congested ‘assessment’ areas, we should be reducing level of service to a more realistic acknowledgment of urbanization. Specifically the western portion of Harrison Avenue should be reduced to level of service E in order to align it with the rest of that corridor.

Other areas should be re-examined for a realistic level of service. As we face continuing funding constraints for the transportation system, we should be making a more realistic plan for what we can achieve in the urban growth and near-urban areas. It just does not seem feasible to continue to provide very high levels of service in the ‘urban fringe’ areas while we cannot even find the means to resolve failing parts of the system inside the urban area.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Issue: Performance Measures

Response: No Change

Recommendation on Performance Measures in Chapter 2 enables policy makers to explore alternative system performance measures, for use in subsequent plans and evaluations.

Issue: Regional Trails System

Response: No Change

Recommendation on Regional Trail Strategy in Chapter 2 enables policy makers to explore all aspects of this part of the region’s multimodal system.

Issue: Level of Service

Response: No Change

The RTP did not include analysis of changes in LOS and it would not include a “spot change” without coordinated, detailed operational level of analysis with the affected jurisdictions. The RTP does include a work program recommendation to evaluate alternative system performance measures, which would provide an opportunity to revisit service standards in a coordinated manner, if so desired. Any changes approved to adopted regional performance measures would be reflected in future Plan amendments and updates.

Issue: Assessment Areas

Response: Final Plan language was modified to clarify that the RTP supports local agencies trying innovative approaches to address the unique needs of individual strategy corridors, including considering alternatives to motor vehicle congestion when defining LOS.

Appendix F

Commenter: Pat Carlson

Date: March 22, 2004

Format: Email

Dear Council Members:

Please consider the plight of College Street.

The older, established neighborhoods between Pacific Ave. & 45th are suffering because turning left onto & off of College is DANGEROUS! There is not a middle lane such as found south of 45th. College Street has become a constant flow of cars, with massive growth still in the making.

Pedestrians choosing to ride the bus or even someone wanting to walk across College St. to Harry's Market, take their lives in hand. I've seen a kid fall off his bike into College St., & have twice seen cars plow onto the sidewalk to hit a fence & utility pole. We're talking about a straight-stretch of supposed 35-m.p.h. road here.

The only saving grace is the walk lights at Mountain View Elementary & Komachin Middle School, which gives those tiny breaks in traffic.

The City of Lacey told me more round-a-bouts are one option; another is to take out a row of houses. They are very aware of this problem, but nothing is in the works.

Surely, something can be done to make this road more residential/pedestrian/bike/bus rider friendly!

Thank you for your consideration.

Issue: College Street

Response: No Change

The RTP recognizes the challenges on College Street, characterizing it as both a strategy area and an assessment area. This analysis, best done at the local level, will likely address multimodal and safety aspects of this important corridor.

Commenter: Dennis Bloom, Planning Manager, Intercity Transit

Date: March 24, 2004

Format: Email

Note: Mr. Bloom's comment references concerns expressed orally by Tumwater City Council Member and Intercity Transit Authority Member Karen Valenzuela at several RTP presentations.

Thera

Attached, please find a suggested edit to the Transit paragraph (p ES-3) of the Executive Summary. Tumwater Councilmember Karen Valenzuela has expressed a concern at a couple of our recent Transit Authority meetings with the last sentence of the text. She felt that it had not conveyed the fact that Intercity Transit has begun a process of re-establishing services (starting in February 2003) from the time a

Appendix F

few years ago when the loss of local revenues (2000 - 2002) had a significant impact on the level of transit service in Thurston County. Over those few years the question became the viability of public transit to meet even some of the basic community needs, let alone the projections stipulated in the previous Regional Transportation Plan.

As you know, many of those concerns were abated with voter approval of an increase in local sales tax for transit. Those funds began to be collected in 2003 and I.T.'s first service increase in years went into effect February 2003. Councilmember Valenzuela therefore suggested that re-wording of the sentence was in order to let others know that public transit had re-bounded and was actively re-establishing service. In short, she was looking for clarity to what she felt might be some ambiguity about transit's future. Hopefully the suggested edit I've attached works for you as well. Please feel free to share any thoughts you have if you feel it should be altered/edited again.

I would also suggest that under the TDM section of the Executive Summary (pg ES-3) that "vanpooling" would be an appropriate addition to the list of alternative modes.

One final (but small) note is that the map of IT routes (pg D-5) has a number of routes that are hard to distinguish due to line weight. I found from speaking to others that they had mistaken the lines as roads, and wondered why the route wasn't shown. In reality the line they were looking at was the route. I think you'll see what I mean when you look at the map.

Thanks again for all the hard work you and others at the TRPC put into the plan's update. Very impressive!

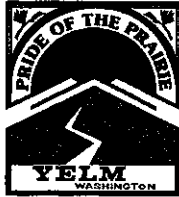
Regards,

Attachment: **(Transit)** Also during this time, transit increased substantially in the region, only to lose 40% of its funding base through state initiatives and legislative actions. While service continued, it was necessarily reduced. The service area was refocused to the urban core of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater, with connecting service to Yelm. Local support for transit, in the form of a voter approved sales tax increase, improved transit service although it will be some time before service returns to previous levels has helped to re-establish service that had been cut. On going efforts to rebuild the fleet, improve passenger amenities and bring service back to previous levels is under way.

Issue: Transit

Response: These technical suggestions were incorporated into the Final Plan.

**Commenter: Grant Beck, Director, Department of Community Development,
City of Yelm**
Date: March 24, 2004
Format: Letter



City of Yelm

Community Development Department
105 Yelm Avenue West
P.O. Box 479
Yelm, WA 98597

TRPC
MAR 26 2004

March 24, 2004

Karen Parkhurst, Senior Planner
Thurston Regional Planning Council
2404 Heritage Court SW #B
Olympia, WA 98502-6031

Karen:

The City of Yelm appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft 2025 Regional Transportation Plan.

In particular, Yelm appreciates the continued support in the regional plan for Widening Yelm Avenue West (C21), the 510/507 Loop (A9 and A10), review of SR 510 and the 510/507 Loop (L15 and L16), and the proposed SR 510 widening (O2).

The City is also very supportive of the recommended public transportation projects and studies and, in particular, that the draft RTP starts the process of reviewing rail for freight and passenger travel. As the owner of a rail corridor, the City is hopeful that it will help achieve the rail goals in the draft plan.

Sincerely,

Grant Beck, Director
Department of Community Development

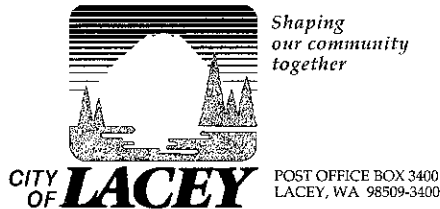
c. Yelm City Council

(360) 458-3835
(360) 458-3144 FAX
www.ci.yelm.wa.us

Issue: Support for Plan
Response: No Change.

Appendix F

Commenter: Dennis Ritter, Public Works Director, City of Lacey
Date: March 25, 2004
Format: Letter



T.R.P.C.
MAR 26 2004

VIRGIL CLARKSON
Mayor
NANCY J. PETERSON
Deputy Mayor
ANN BURGMAN
JOHN DARBY
MARY DEAN
THOMAS L. NELSON
GRAEME SACKRISON

CITY MANAGER
GREG J. CUOIO

March 25, 2004

Mr. Lon Wyrick
Thurston Regional Planning Council
2404 Regional Planning Council
Olympia, WA 98502-6031

SUBJECT: Draft 2025 Regional Transportation Plan Comments

Dear Mr. Wyrick:

The Draft 2025 Regional Transportation Plan has been reviewed and comments are attached. In general, the plan was readable and informative. It was somewhat concerning, however, as to the general vision of the plan towards an emphasis on public transportation and alternative modes. Given our history of mode split, local weather, topography and a “western” mentality for the automobile, it could be a “cloudy vision” at best. The fiscal table in the Executive Summary seems to say, as a region, we will emphasize transit, as that is where the largest percentage of dollars will be expended. I’m not sure that’s the message trying to be delivered, but it was the first comment I received from several of our staff.

It also appears that in several areas, the Plan addresses the need for “barrier free transportation choices”. Although the concept sounds interesting, from a local perspective, it is not a concept which has much been discussed let alone embraced in *our* regional transportation plan.

Lacey, like all jurisdictions, is required to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). But like many jurisdictions, it can be confusing. Requirements associated with the ADA seem to change regularly. As an example, WSDOT changed their ADA ramp standards several times over the last few years to accommodate changing ADA *guidelines* published by the Department of Justice. Implementing ADA, let alone trying to *ensure the transportation system investments support the special travel needs of youth, elders...those with literacy or language barriers, and those with low incomes*, could be a significant investment on the local level. This is especially worrisome when our local plans are supposed to *comply* with the regional plan for grant purposes. While we understand there are many needs in our community, we need to ensure the Plan balances local choices and needs with regional policies, both philosophically and monetarily.

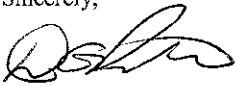
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Plan. If you have any questions regarding the comments, please don’t hesitate to call.



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TRPC RTP Comments
03/25/2004
Page 2

Sincerely,



Dennis Ritter
Public Works Director

cc: Jerry Litt, Director of Community Development
Roger Schoessel, City Engineer
Martin Hoppe, Transportation Manger
[Read File](#)

Appendix F

TRPC RTP Comments

03/25/2004

Page 3

City of Lacey Regional Transportation Plan Comments:

1. ES3 — Flashing beacons were installed at North Thurston Crosswalks not in-pavement lighting.
2. ES3 —TDM section. These statements are not true in all circumstances as identified.
3. ES5—Key Issues section, states, “Overall, these changes had little affect on future regional travel, *although increasing density in urban areas shifted a significant number of trips to walking, biking and transit in those areas.*” Has this statement been documented and is the data available?
4. ES6—Recommendations: Regionally Significant Projects section. Please remove the editorial comment “*the usual list*” language as it seems to trivialize capacity related projects.
5. ES7 – Expense Table. Is it true that we spent almost as much in administration as spent on regionally significant projects? If true, please show what is included in administration.
6. GP2—In general, we are supportive of all the guiding principals outlined in this section. The question is, given the dollar outlays identified in the Expense Table shown on page ES7, it would seem the “safe, efficient, affordable travel choices” would be necessarily skewed towards transit as that’s where the bulk of the dollars seem to flow. This could be construed as a forced outcome.
7. I-4—Combined section. What does the second bullet mean with respect to local agencies and compliance with a regional transportation plan?
8. 1-9—last sentence, first paragraph. While knowing the State total for commute trip reduction is interesting, it would be more informative if you had the trips for Thurston County as it pertains directly to the Plan and trip choice.
9. 2-3—Funding measures, second bullet. The intent of this bullet is not clear, please clarify.
10. 2-7—first paragraph, last sentence should read, “*TRPC in conjunction with local agencies will analyze these areas and determine why congestion exists and, if possible, propose solutions.*”

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TRPC RTP Comments
03/25/2004
Page 4

11. 2-7—third paragraph, first and second sentences should read, “*Every construction project must meet certain requirements before construction begins such as appropriate environmental regulations, ..., access studies, right-of-way acquisition, etc.*”
12. 2-8—General comment for Table 2-2. What does the star like symbol in the each of the boxes mean?
13. 2-8—General comment for all Tables. How were the estimated costs calculated? Is the methodology consistent from jurisdiction to jurisdiction? As these are planning level estimates, and this is a financially constrained plan, we need to make sure these project costs are at least in the ball park.
14. 2-8—Project C-3, what does the “1” mean at the end of Yelm Highway Widening?
15. 2-22—Lacey is currently studying College Street corridor from I-5 to 37th Ave SE. The study is looking at access, congestion, safety, mobility and capacity needs. This project is not on the current list.
16. 2-24—Why is project S8, Marvin Road Extension, not included in the New Alignments/Connections category? It’s been identified as a future connection in the regional plan for years.
17. 2-29--Why is the project L8, Mullen Road/Log Cabin Extension, not included in the New Alignments/Connections category? It’s been identified as a future connection in the regional plan for years.
18. What happened to the 26th Avenue NE connection from Sleater Kinney to Marvin Road (New5 in 1992 Plan)?
19. 2-34—Table 2-6. Would any of these public transportation projects compete against other capital projects noted on previous tables for grant dollars or does IT’s current revenue already account for them?
20. 2-37—Project B1. Does/should this project also include the replacement of the existing bridge at 14th Ave/Elizabeth Road?
21. 2-40—Project F2. Should this project be under “Public Transportation”? Why is this a regional project and not a capital item in IT’s budget (see comment 21)?
22. 2-43—Project F8. Does this duplicate portions of F2?

Appendix F

TRPC RTP Comments

03/25/2004

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23. 2-48—Project O8. Does this duplicate B1?
24. Maps 2-1 through 2-7. Most of the projects identified in Plan are located in the urban areas of north Thurston County. A blow-up of those projects (as done on Map 2-4) should be included for all maps.
25. 3-1—Transportation Relationships, 3. Barrier-free Transportation. Complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act is not a goal, but the law. Does this goal go beyond what is required in the Act?
26. 3-7—Measures to Support Transportation and Land Use Consistency Objectives. All the bulleted points in this section seem to push the choice from auto oriented choices to an alternative mode. In general a good idea, but this gets back to *reality versus vision disconnect issues*. Predicted mode splits must match reality to allow this to be supportable or viable.
27. 3-10—Policies. How does 3.b differ from 3.a? If it does, what is the criteria or standard applied to implement such a policy?
28. 3-10—Policies. 3.c and 3.d seem to be much broader than the ADA. Given the difficulty in monitoring and complying with the ADA currently, broadening the scope of services offered/required, will be especially challenging if not impossible.
29. 3-12—Challenges for System Safety and Security Section. First bullet. This statement is incorrect and inflammatory, especially to transportation officials responsible for safety!
30. 3-24—Policies. 10.d, This should be a decision based on real needs and which improve our RTPO region. Should we promote long distance commuting? Could be a very expensive alternative to driving or HOV if ridership is low.
31. 3-36—Challenges for Public Involvement section, second bullet, last sentence. Is this a requirement? It would seem to be unusually burdensome on local government. Given the very scarce dollars for transportation projects, in general, adding layers of administration will not help to efficiently build a transportation system or move people and goods.
32. 3-41—Measures to Support Environmental and Human Health Objectives section. Biodiesel is a very intriguing fuel alternative and, in general, we support the use of such fuels. It does, however, cost 20-40% more than petro diesel. This should be factored into the operating costs for public transportation.

Appendix F

Issue: Land Use Options

Response: No Change

Analysis of alternative land use scenarios was conducted in summer of 2003 at the direction of the RTP Work Group, as an important part of the Draft Plan development. Alternatives Analysis Chapter 4 documents this analysis. Mode split in the defined city centers increased significantly in the “Infill” scenario.

Issue: Administrative Costs

Response: No Change

Long-range regional transportation forecasts are based on Budgeting and Accounting Reporting System (BARS) data using codes established by the Washington State Auditor’s Office. Data is submitted by local agencies as a part of their required annual cost and revenue reporting. Administrative costs for the 25-year long-range regional forecast, based on local experience, account for 13% of total street and road costs. As an example of local experience, the City of Lacey’s administrative costs ranged from 18% reported in 1998 to 9% reported in 2000.

Issue: Transit

Response: Finance Chapter 5 supplies full detail of the issues summarized in the Executive Summary. Transit accounts for 37% of the regional transportation revenue forecasted for this plan, supported by funding generated by transit-specific sources. The Executive Summary language was modified to clarify expense details.

Issue: Compliance with Civil Rights, Americans with Disabilities Act and other Laws

Response: The RTP must... “Comply with laws governing civil rights; respect the needs of older Americans and persons with disabilities; and foster social equity.” This summarizes the intent of the many federal and state laws that apply to Thurston Regional Planning Council and most local agencies. These include the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 {P.L. 101-336}; Federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century {P.L. 105-178}; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 {42 U.S.C. 2000d}; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 {42 U.S.C. 6101}; the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 {P.L. 100-209}; and Executive Order 12898 – 59 Fed. Reg. 7629 (Environmental Justice – 1994).

Barrier-free transportation is a phrase that refers not just to providing facilities as required in the Americans with Disabilities Act, but also the special mobility and participation needs of others. TRPC’s plans and processes are reviewed for how they support applicable laws and directives.

Language was modified in Goals and Policies to recognize the cost of these requirements and the Plan’s intent to support implementation of state and federal regulations.

Issue: Commute Trip Reduction Benefits

Response: No Change

Readers interested in the effect of investments and land use on trip choice – whether for work trips, as intended by the Commute Trip Reduction law or for all trips – are encouraged to look at Chapter 4, Alternatives Analysis. Various alternatives were evaluated for their effect on this region’s transportation system and this Plan. Details specific to this region are summarized for each alternative.

Appendix F

Issue: Funding

Response: No Change

This recommended work program priority will allow the region’s policy makers to explore issues regarding funding of capacity projects.

Issue: Congestion Analysis

Response: Language was modified to clarify that TRPC and local agencies will analyze these areas to determine why they show congestion and identify appropriate solutions. The Plan does not assume that all assessment areas will necessarily point to a congestion problem. It is possible that model refinements may be needed to more accurately reflect future congestion.

Issue: Project Costs

Response: No Change

The RTP provides planning level estimates except where more detailed local estimates are available. Where possible, costs for regionally significant projects were taken directly from adopted 2003-2008 local plans, since those costs reflect the most current local, detailed estimates. Costs for projects that were included in the 2020 RTP and estimated for that effort were adjusted to 2000 – the Plan’s base year – costs. A methodology was developed by the TAC for projects that were “new” to the 2025 RTP, reflecting a somewhat more streamlined and generalized approach than that used in the 2020 RTP. A standard generic cost was used for assessment areas, with the understanding that some would be more expensive and some would be less when they actually occur. The TAC’s work during Plan development validated that the different estimation processes used by local agencies were roughly comparable.

Issue: Project List – College Street corridor from I-5 to 37th Ave SE

Response: No Change

This is still designated not as a project, but as a “strategy corridor,” consistent with its designation in the 2020 RTP. Strategy corridors indicate areas where local agencies will look at a range of mobility and access solutions to address congestion issues, not simply road widening. Each corridor will necessitate its own strategy to address its unique conditions. When specific measures or projects are identified, they will be included as appropriate in subsequent plan updates, or addressed directly through locally significant projects identified through the local planning process.

Issue: Project List – Project S8, Marvin Road Extension

Response: No Change

TRPC staff recommended, and the TAC concurred, that until a specific feasibility study has been completed, no construction costs will be identified for any of these new connections. This approach was applied to all new connections with the exception of the “Yauger Way Extension,” for which a preliminary feasibility study was done as part of the Value Engineering Study for the Crosby Boulevard/Cooper Point Road/US 101 interchange. The intent is to not presume that a corridor will be built until after a local agency has determined that it is actually feasible, recognizing that several corridors have been identified for many years, even though they face significant barriers. When the local agency completes a feasibility study and moves a project from a tentative concept to something more definite, it could move to the construction project category in future RTPs.

Appendix F

Issue: Project List – Project L8, Mullen Road/Log Cabin Extension

Response: No Change

Project L8 is not the Log Cabin/Mullen Road Extension, which is included as a construction project. L8 refers to the resulting levels of congestion that appear to be generated when that connection is completed. Demand for that facility, when completed, appears to exceed the capacity intended in its preliminary design. The TAC generally agreed that the RTP should not recommend a widening of the future Log Cabin/Mullen Road Extension at this time. Instead, by identifying this as an assessment area, the Plan acknowledged that a closer look at southeast urban area mobility issues is needed to better understand what these levels of congestion indicate and how to best address them.

Issue: Project List – 26th Avenue NE connection from Sleater-Kinney Road to Marvin Road

Response: No Change

The TAC recommended that this project be combined with the 31st Avenue Connection feasibility study (Project S7). This will result in a coordinated corridor strategy for improving east-west mobility between Sleater-Kinney Road and Marvin Road.

Issue: Project List – Transit Funding

Response: No Change

Although a limited amount of potential transportation revenue in this region is available for any type of project, for purposes of this long-range forecast most transit revenues are assumed to be generated from transit-specific sources.

Issue: Project List - Project B1 and 14th Ave/Elizabeth Road Bridge

Response: No Change

The “Bridging the Gap” project is specific to the physical gap between the north and south segments of the Chehalis-Western Trail, not to retrofitting existing facilities. Retrofit of this bridge was not suggested during development of the project list.

Issue: Project List – Project F2

Response: No Change

Federal direction requires that the RTP address Intelligent Transportation System needs, represented here as “Transportation Technology Projects and Studies.” Project F2, like most transportation projects, serves multiple functions.

Issue: Project List – Relationship Between Project F8 and F2

Response: No Change

Project F2 addresses bus transit services provided by Intercity Transit and some special needs transit providers. Project F8 addresses public agency fleet management – municipal vehicles – such as pool cars and maintenance equipment.

Issue: Project List – Relationship Between Project O8 and B1

Response: This is a joint local/state effort as equal partners. As such, it is identified on both lists.

Questions raised elsewhere in the public process about state partnership projects have resulted in the inclusion of three other projects on “duplicate” lists, including the Lacey project for a feasibility study of a potential Carpenter Road / I-5 interchange. The Final Plan reflects this change.

Appendix F

Issue: Mode Split

Response: No Change

This plan is balanced and pragmatic in its approach to mode split and travel choice. Predicted mode splits do not reflect the optimistic “60/40” splits suggested in earlier plans. The policy maker initiative to look closer at this perceived “vision reality disconnect” and its implications is already underway.

Issue: Long Distance Commuting

Response: No Change

This policy reflects the large number of commuters who leave Thurston County every day to go to work, and an increasing number who commute into the region. This policy is consistent with current direction and practice, as evidenced by the Pierce, Grays Harbor, and Mason Transit buses that provide connections to Thurston County every day; I.T. connections to the north; and support for a “regional pass program” that promotes seamless transit transfers.

Issue: Public Involvement

Response: No Change

Regional policy makers recognize state and federal requirements for supplying alternative formats and languages when requested and the value of accessible processes, which ensure that language and format are not a barrier to participation.

Issue: Alternative Fuels

Response: No Change

A 25-year transportation plan necessarily reflects a high level budget overview, so does not speculate on the detail of relative costs of different fuels. The Plan assumes that fuel will continue to be roughly the same percentage of transit’s operating cost over the life of the plan as it is today. If that assumption changes significantly, it will be modified in future RTP amendments and updates.

Issue: Technical Changes

Response: Many of the technical suggestions were incorporated into the Final Plan.

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Commenter: C. Jonathan Neel

Date: March 25, 2004

Format: Letter

Note: See Appendix G – Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement – for Response to environmental portion of comments.

C Jonathan Neel

Thurston County Regional Planning Council
2404 Heritage Court SW #B
Olympia, WA 98502-6301

Comments on Draft 2025 Regional Transportation Plan
Carpenter Road Improvements – Martin Way to Pacific – A High Priority
March 24, 2004

Dear Thurston County Regional Planning Council Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft 2025 Regional Transportation Plan. I own a 3.5 acre property located at 612 Carpenter Road, SE. I strongly recommend that you make the planned Carpenter Road improvements from Martin Way to Pacific a top priority.

There are many reasons why this road segment needs to be widened and realigned both horizontally and vertically as soon as possible. These reasons include:

Public Safety – During rush hour commuter traffic is nearly bumper-to-bumper in this road segment. The hill crest South of Motors and Controls is a particularly serious hazard. The sight lines are very bad, especially with the apartment complex access across the road from my property. I have personally seen several near and 3 actual accidents at that location. In one case there were serious injuries caused by an accident at the apartment house. I was the first person on-scene and helped divert traffic and assist Medic I personnel stabilize injured people.

Divert Commercial Traffic from Critical Arterials – Improving Carpenter Road would take considerable commercial truck traffic strain off of the 3 existing North-South arterials – Marvin, Rd, College St, and Sleater-Kinney.

North County Economic Development – This roadway improvement is also important because it will help facilitate growth within the planned growth area from Hawks Prairie through the entire Britton Parkway commercial corridor.

Transportation Management – This project is a keystone to the eventual construction of freeway ramps at the Carpenter Road/I-5 Bridge. It is also important that this arterial improvement be completed soon because it will help take the traffic load off of Martin Way by allowing Britton Parkway to accommodate the traffic for which it was designed.

Environmental Protection – I recognize that expediting the planned Carpenter Road improvements from Martin Way to Pacific Avenue will cost quite a lot of money and will require some finessing and accommodation of the important environmental values that will be impacted by widening the causeway across the small lake (Lake Lois?).

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However, this environmental impact should not be a huge problem. There is enough public property to use material “cut” soil from the lake shore to compensate for any habitat loss. The cut material could be used as either fill for the expanded Carpenter Road bed or possibly disposed of on my property just a short distance up the hill. Also if there was an excess material balance from the vertical road realignment it could also be disposed of on my property just a couple of hundred feet away – if that would help facilitate the project.

In summary, I believe that public safety concerns and economic needs demand that the proposed Carpenter Road improvements from Martin Way to Pacific Avenue be made a Top Priority in the regional plan.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. Please call me if I can answer any questions or if I can help expedite the project.

Sincerely,

Issue: Carpenter Road

Response: No Change

The Plan recognizes Carpenter Road as an important regional corridor, which is included in the project list. Detailed planning and project prioritization will occur at the local level.

Commenter: Lucia Perillo

Date: March 25, 2004

Format: Email

Dear TRPC people:

I have reviewed the regional transportation plan electronically and have a few comments. I am the theoretical representative of the “disabled community” on the city’s bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee, but I’m writing now as just a citizen (the committee’s comments will be formalized and passed on to the city council.)

I typed “bicycle,” “pedestrian,” and “disabled” into the web version of the plan, and got relatively few hits—the bicycle component of the plan pretty much sent me to Climate Solutions. Since trip reduction and mass transit services would seem to be critical to the development of the region, the non-automotive component of the plan seems insubstantial.

In connection with this, I was also interested in whether there was a development limit on what are called the old “farm to market” roads—can these collectors keep expanding indefinitely? (I couldn’t find this answer.)

I was impressed by the inclusion of the plan—I found information on West Bay, for example (I’m interested on the development of the shoreline because I live near it.) Some of this info was well out of date, however.

The issue of isolation of disabled rural residents is an important one that was mentioned once—there are no transit options past the limited service area for Dial-a-Lift, and it’s pretty much impossible now to get to Seattle (where specialized medical care is available that disabled people tend to need.) I didn’t find much on the linkage of Olympia to points north for those of us who don’t drive.

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Or, for that matter, for people who do. My husband, for example, commutes to Seattle. Because he works odd hours, there are no viable alternatives for him but to drive solo in a car (this seems a real lack to me, since I grew up in the suburbs of New York where train service to the city is available almost round the clock.) I know there are pragmatic reasons why the rail lines around here are not upgradeable, but the regional plan ought to prevent a vision, paper and ink being inexpensive commodities.

What would have also helped me as I searched the plan electronically is more live links—that I could have clicked on an acronym, for example, and obtained its meaning. This is a simple web site design comment that could be easily fixed (I assume) by a good tech person (more hypertext.) That person would also (presumably) keep the site better updated.

With much appreciation for all the hard work that went into preparing this document, Lucia Perillo

Issue: Multimodal System

Response: No Change

The Plan includes language in Goals and Policies Chapter 3, which specifically promote “non-automotive” initiatives. Policies and measures support a multimodal system, barrier-free transportation, travel demand management as well as a commitment to public transportation, biking and walking.

Issue: Rural Concerns

Response: No Change

One of the Recommendations calls for an evaluation of rural roads, recognizing that perhaps the 5-lane maximum regional standard may not fit the character of these rural areas.

Issue: Persons with Special Needs

Response: No Change

The Barrier-Free Transportation Policy language speaks to this issue, calling for increased coordination activities and other innovative transportation choices for persons with special needs, especially in the rural areas. The region is currently working with public and private entities on transportation options for rural residents.

Issue: Rail

Response: No Change

The plan has an appropriate balance of rail recommendations and policies relative to all other modes and issues. Recommendations call for work over the next several years to better define the region’s role vision for the 2030 plan.

Issue: On-line Access to Plan

Response: No Change

TRPC will explore ways of improving on-line access to documents.

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Commenter: Caroline
Date: March 25, 2004
Format: Email

I just returned from a visit to London and Paris.

We are at least 30 years behind in transportation choices. Also, citizens in these dense cities are resorting to two wheeled vehicles and extremely small and compact cars that get good mileage. What are we doing in the good ole US? Getting fat and lazy...how can we possible even consider two wheels or a small car...and buying Humvees with cool colors.

Our transportation issues are almost hopeless until the 'average' citizen...GETS the message & wakes up to the fact that we are heading down a self destruct road with our greed and our egomania.

Construct needs to begin TODAY.

Gas prices need to go OUT OF SITE.

People need to WANT to change.

Issue: Comparison to European Transportation Systems

Response: No Change

These issues are referenced in the RTP in many ways:

Public Transportation & Land Use – In addition to various cites in the Goals and Policies Chapter, the Land Use recommendations call for examining the connections between transportation and land use including achieving the density needed to support public transportation strategies such as transit and rail.

Environmental and Human Health – In the Goals and Policies Chapter 3 the Plan recognizes how certain land uses and a multimodal transportation system support physical activity and human health. This same section also promotes the use of alternative fuels and technologies.

Public Information – The importance of public outreach and education is another strong recommendation in the Plan, calling for innovative methods of highlighting the array of transportation choices, and the impacts of those decisions.

Commenter: Dorothy Gist
Date: March 25, 2004
Format: Email

Dear TRPC staff:

I have reviewed the five year regional transportation plan and am responding with a quote from today's New York Times editorial, titled "The Path to A Healthier America":

"Expending calories instead of gasoline flattens stomachs and strengthens legs. Having fewer cars on the road would also lead to cleaner air. The nation would be thinner and healthier and would breathe easier. Perhaps lawmakers should take a walk and think it all over."

I am distressed that the five year plan suggests widening Littlerock Road, Tumwater Blvd, and Yelm Highway. This is not a transportation plan; it is a automobile and truck plan. Transportation means creating a system in which people can safely go where they want and need to go: work, school, play, social. A

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good plan would give us options and safe routes to where we need to go: sidewalks, bike lanes, bus routes, and streets. The proposed plan is very focused on cars and not on people getting places on foot, by bike or by bus or train. The proposed plan encourages sprawl and low-density development. Where are the new bike paths? Where is a light rail system connecting to the Sounder? Where is the West Bay trail?

I hope you'll add the human element to the regional transportation plan and decrease the emphasis on motor vehicles.

Issue: Multimodal System for Human Health

Response: No Change

The RTP is a long range 20-year plan that includes traditional road projects, but equally emphasizes the need for a multimodal system. This Plan looks at modeled future congestion in a unique way, with further exploration of alternatives in many areas, rather than an assumption that the solution is a capacity project. The Recommendations, and Goals and Policies chapters call for a continued focus on bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as well as safety and environmental and human health. Recommendations include exploration of rail and specifically call for a Trails Plan to address important multimodal connections.

Commenter: Victoria Blazejewski

Date: March 25, 2004

Format: Email

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am curious as to your position on the proposed NASCAR Track in Yelm and how it will affect the overall planning of transportation.

An 80,000 seat spectator arena is being planned on 14,000 acres in a residential area of the incorporated City of Yelm.

How will that impact transportation? Are there provisions set aside for the construction of roads to accommodate this influx? As a resident of unincorporated Yelm, I understood our traffic situation to be fairly bad and that no money was available for road improvements. So how can a track be proposed within the City Limits?

Your insight would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Issue: Sports Facility in Yelm

Response: No Change

While the Plan does not specifically comment on this proposed project, it does recognize the importance of integrating land use and transportation planning efforts in Recommendations Chapter 2. Future updates of this plan will address the Yelm development if it actually occurs.

The Plan also includes projects that support mobility options in the Yelm area.

- New Connections or Alignments: 510/507 Loop (Y2 and Y3)
- Corridor Studies and Sub-Area Plans: Marvin Road Extension – Connection Study.
- Assessment Areas: Rural Corridor Strategy.

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Commenter: Enrico Baroga

Date: March 25, 2004

Format: Letter

Comments on the Draft Regional Transportation Plan.

Submitted by: Enrico Baroga

Page 3-1: The basic operation of the transportation system is not included as a policy element under system management; it should be. Items such as running traffic signals, sweeping, and snow and ice control are critical for the operation of the transportation system. Some of these operational activities are very important to bicyclists and pedestrians as well as motorized transportation.

Page 3-2: Under System Components, a list of transportation modes is listed. However, the first item (streets, roads, and bridges) is not a mode in the same way that all other listings are. To be consistent, it should be something like “private-use motor vehicles”. The language describing this mode would need only slight revisions to reflect the corrected heading.

Page 3-3: Under Environmental and Human Health, the sole focus is on minimizing adverse impacts. Some mention should be made how the modes of bicycling and walking actually add value to human health.

Page 3-13: In addition to exploring innovative signing options, innovative pavement marking and improved visibility of traffic signals should be included.

Page 3-15: Policy language should be included that states that maintenance and preservation of the existing infrastructure is the top priority and adequate funding of these activities shall take precedence over capacity or mobility improvement projects.

Page 3-26: Policy 11c. Language describes some key dedicated corridors to form the backbone of the non-motorized system. If one views the “backbone” as the main part of a transportation infrastructure, then our backbone should be roads that accommodate motorized and non-motorized transportation. Siting and constructing new non-motorized trails is too costly and challenging to ever have enough to support bringing bicycling and walking up to a level of utilization similar to motorized transport. Separate trails are great, but they are mostly for recreational use.

Page 3-26: Under Challenges for Biking. There is a negative tone for bicyclists (cyclists who don’t obey the law exacerbate negative opinion) and a decidedly different tone for motorists (don’t see bicyclists and inadvertently crowd them). These should be balanced. Some bicyclists intentionally and knowingly don’t obey the law which causes problems. Other bicyclists just don’t think about driving laws or their surroundings which also leads to problems. Similarly, while there are a lot of drivers who inadvertently crowd or cut-off bicyclists, there are plenty who intentionally disregard the rights and safety of bicyclists out of a non-willingness to share the road.

Page 3-27: Under Measures. Seems like something is missing regarding something that can be done for due consideration of bicycle travel as roads are designed, constructed, and preserved (overlayed).

Page 3-28: Under challenges: Similar to my comment on bicycle challenges. There are some walkers who cause their own problems (both inadvertently and on purpose) and motorists that do the same thing. This should be added as a challenge:

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Page 3-29: Under Measures. I fully support the last bullet regarding public funding of sidewalks. The more I think about this, the more I think that maintenance of sidewalks should be a public responsibility instead of the individual landowner's responsibility. As we try and increase walking as a mainstream transportation mode, we should be providing the upkeep of the basic pedestrian infrastructure through public financing instead of relying on landowners for this.

Page 3-29: Under Measures. A bullet should be added to evaluate some type of modest property tax incentive for the homeowner who makes the choice to purchase a home in close proximity to their workplace and walks to work on a regular basis. The same would apply to other non-motorized transport such as bicycling.

Issue: Operation of the System

Response: No Change

Basic operation of the system is implied in many Goal and Policy statements. Goals 4 (System Safety and Security) and 5 (System Maintenance and Repair) set forth the Region's policy of safety and preservation as the highest priorities. One example specific to the comment is "ensure sweeping and maintenance activities are adequately scheduled and address the entire curb-to-curb or shoulder-to-shoulder need, including bike lanes and multiuse shoulders."

Issue: System Components

Response: No Change

While "Streets, Roads, and Bridges" is not a mode, per se, it addresses the network that supports many modes. Policies such as 9.a which emphasizes a multimodal street and road network and 9.g which calls for interconnected streets to increase individual travel options illustrates the region's commitment to a transportation network that supports all modes.

Issue: Human Health

Response: No Change

Policy 18.f recognizes this connection: "Use compact urban development and the non-motorized forms of transportation it supports as a means of encouraging overall physical activity and community health." In the Biking Goals and Policies Chapter 3, the "clean" nature of biking is recognized under "Why Biking is Important," as well as a similar notation on walking. Chapter 6 Environmental Considerations includes an entire section on personal health as relates to transportation choices.

Issue: Signage

Response: Language was modified in the Plan to broaden the discussion of signage.

Issue: Maintenance and Preservation Priority

Response: No Change

Policy 5.a clearly states the high priority of "maintenance, preservation, operations and repair of the existing transportation system."

Issue: Multimodal "Backbone"

Response: No Change

The Plan calls for a mix of non-motorized facilities, including separate trails as well as accommodation on streets, roads and bridges. The Plan consistently calls for a multimodal network in design, construction and preservation. One example: Goal and Policy 9.a Streets, Roads and Bridges: "Support design and construction of multimodal streets and roads."

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Issue: Driver and Bicyclist Behavior

Response: While the actions of both drivers and bicyclists are addressed in Chapter 3, modifications were made to this section to include reference to these behaviors.

Issue: Finance

Response: No Change.

Recommendations on Funding Measures call for an exploration of equitable, sustainable transportation finance.

Commenter: Karen Brown

Date: March 25, 2004

Format: Comment Sheet/Handwritten

Note: See Appendix G – Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement – for Response to environmental portion of comments.

First, I admit I have only read the Goals & Policies of this Draft 2025 Regional Transportation Plan. I appreciate that it includes Public Transportation, biking & walking & rail. These alternative modes of transportation are so important. In order to get people out of their cars, particularly the SOV, we must provide good facilities for alternative modes and efficiency for public transportation.

The plan focuses too much on accommodating cars. Instead of “designing safe & efficient facilities that can carry growling numbers of vehicles through neighborhood corridors,” we should be working to significantly reduce the number of SOV trips made by all of us so that the number of vehicles using the roads in not a growing number.

In the Biking Section (11. 3-26) I would like to see more positive comments about biking. Yes, I am one of the “die-hards out there who’ll ride their bikes in any kind of weather,” and I think a goal of this community should be to get the average Jane or Joe to ride, if not in any kind of weather, then somewhat periodically.

In the Walking Section (12. 3-28) signal timing could be addressed. As a pedestrian, it would be wonderful to walk up to a crosswalk, push the button, & have the walk signal come on soon, rather than having to wait for the signal to go through its cycle.

Also, I’d like to see more in pavement lighting at crosswalks to signal drivers there is a pedestrian in the crosswalk (at unsignalized crosswalks). These measures send a message to the pedestrian that he/she matters and h/she is encouraged to walk more.

In the Environmental & Human Health Section (18 3-40) – I don’t think we can plan for more cars and think we are going to maintain a healthy environment & human health. As a society, we don’t factor in the true cost of a project. The environmental damage in the future is not factored in today – the present. Then, when the future comes & is here, we now can’t afford to repair the damage. Presently we say we can’t “afford” to pay for salmon recovery. If today’s costs to the salmon had been factored in – way back when – then maybe those projects could not have been “afforded” to be built. But our salmon would be much better off today.

Thank you for all the efforts & thoughts that went into the plan and thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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Issue: Reducing SOV Trips

Response: No Change

The Plan balances all modes and supports design and construction of multimodal streets and roads (Policy 9.a) as well as support for Travel Demand Management goals. The streets and roads carry transit vehicles, school buses, service vehicles, and bikes, and single occupancy vehicles.

Issue: Bicycles – Public Comment

Response: No Change

Quotes used in Goals and Policies Chapter 3 were gathered through TRPC outreach. Their purpose throughout the Chapter is to provide context for the issues and opportunities facing each mode or policy element, with comments representing the diversity of public opinion. The region’s commitment to biking often provokes strong response – both positive and negative.

Issue: Pedestrian Amenities

Response: No Change

The Plan calls for a “direct, safe, interconnected pedestrian network” which could include elements such as signal timing and in-pavement lighting, but does not dictate a one-size-fits-all approach for all facilities. Many of these design decisions are best made at the local level.

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Commenter: David Leighow, Urban Planning and Right of Way Program Manager, US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration
Date: April 6, 2004 (oral comments submitted prior to March 25, 2004)
Format: Letter (received via Email)

T.R.P.C.
APR 08 2004



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Washington Division

Suite 501 Evergreen Plaza
711 South Capitol Way
Olympia, Washington 98501-1284
(360) 753-9480
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April 6, 2004

HRW-WA/730.25

Thera Black, Planner
Thurston Regional Planning Council
2404 Heritage Court SW
#B, MS: 0947
Olympia, Washington 98502-6031

Comments on 2025 RTP

Dear Ms. ^{Thera}Black:

We have completed our review of the draft 2025 Thurston Regional Transportation Plan and commend you for developing such a fine document. We found it to be very well written and organized, and it is definitely "user friendly". We have just a few comments to share with you:

1. The RTP emphasizes a comprehensive and well-balanced multimodal transportation system, and we commend you for this effort.
2. The document evidences a very collaborative effort, which is essential to the ultimate success of your planning effort.
3. The concept of "assessment areas", introduced on page 2-7 and detailed in table 2-5, is a good approach to focusing on congestion and appropriate solutions.
4. We commend you for addressing safety and security in the RTP. These are key areas of emphasis and you are being proactive in addressing them.
5. The RTP makes an excellent linkage between environment and human health.
6. Reduction of "drive-alone rate", addressed on pages 3-42-43, would be a good performance measure; the Plan can address actions to achieve improved rates.
7. You are addressing the concern we have about fiscal constraint, as evidenced in the attachments to your email of April 5th.
8. You are also addressing our concern about service to low income and traditionally underserved communities.

Again, we commend you for a strong and well-presented plan.

Sincerely,

DANIEL M. MATHIS, P.E.
Division Administrator

By: David A. Leighow
Urban Planning and Right of Way Program
Manager

Appendix F

Issue: Fiscal Constraint.

Response: The Recommendations and Finance chapters were reviewed and modified to satisfy Federal Highway Administration concerns.

Issue: Environmental Justice.

Response: Modifications were made to the Executive Summary and Public Involvement Appendix F to emphasize the region's strong commitment to Environmental Justice and public involvement, with a link to the agency's Public Participation Plan.