

Appendix A

Glossary

Access Management

The regulatory or physical control of the location, design, and operation of all driveways and public street connections to a roadway.

Accessibility

A measure of the ability or ease of all people to travel among various origins and destinations.

Active Transportation

Travel accomplished by bicycling, walking, skating, or using a wheelchair or other mobility devices not involving a motor vehicle.

Advanced Public Transportation Systems (APTS)

The use of technology — electronics and communications — to manage transit operations and provide real-time information to transit users.

Alternative Fuels

Sometimes referred to as “clean fuels,” this category includes any motor fuel other than ordinary gasoline, which may result in lower levels of air pollutants or more efficient use of resources. Alternative fuels include natural gas, liquid propane, biodiesel, ethanol, methanol, electricity, and some gasoline blends.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Federal legislation mandating significant changes in transportation, building codes, and hiring practices to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities. The ADA also mandates accessible streets and roads, including installation and maintenance of elements such as ramps and complementary paratransit service on fixed routes. Changes to roadways may necessitate upgrading ADA amenities to current standards.

Arterial

A class of street characterized by high vehicular capacity and used primarily for through traffic rather than for accessing adjacent land.

Biodiesel

A clean burning alternative fuel produced from domestic, renewable resources such as recycled oil from the food industry.

Capacity

The number of people or vehicles or amount of goods that a transportation facility or program can serve. The term is most often used to describe the number of vehicles a roadway serves.

Capital Facilities Plan (CFP)

The part of a jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan that includes an inventory of capital facilities, and the location and funding of future construction projects.

Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)

A federal program that funds projects and activities which reduce transportation emissions — specifically, carbon dioxide — from on-road highway sources. TRPC awards funds to projects that support funding priorities established by the Council.

Carpool

An arrangement where two or more people travel together in the same private vehicle.

Clean Air Act (CAA)

A federal law that identifies sources of air pollution and calls for specific strategies to attain and maintain federal air quality standards.

Collector

A roadway linking traffic on local roads to the arterial road network. A collector balances the need for mobility and throughput with the need for access to adjacent land uses.

Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Law

Washington state legislation requiring major employers in certain counties to implement measures to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by their employees during the peak travel periods. Thurston County is one of the affected counties, with all state agencies in the urban areas affected, no matter their size. (RCW 70.94.521-551)

Commute Trips

Regular trips made from home to a fixed work or school location, regardless of the distance or mode used.

Commuter

A person who travels regularly between home and work or home and school.

Commuter Rail

Also called metropolitan or regional rail, a passenger railroad service designed mainly for commuters that serves a heavy traffic volume, generally within and between metropolitan and high-density suburban areas.

Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan)

A long-range plan to guide all development activity mandated by the Growth Management Act.

Concurrency

Under the Growth Management Act, jurisdictions must ensure that new development does not outstrip the jurisdiction's ability to support the growth. Either supporting infrastructure must be in place ("concurrent with the development") to accommodate transportation impacts, or a financial commitment must be in place to provide the improvements or strategies within six years.

Conformity

The intergovernmental process in which transportation plans and spending programs are reviewed to ensure that they comply with federal clean air requirements.

Congestion

A condition that prohibits movement on a transportation facility at optimal legal speeds.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program

A federal program that funds projects and activities which reduce congestion and improve air quality. TRPC awards funds to projects that support funding priorities established by the Council.

Corridor

A linear segment of land that connects major residential areas and destinations. A corridor may span multiple jurisdictions and contain streets, highways, and transit routes, and may follow an interstate, freeway, or major roadway.

Environmental Justice (EJ)

Refers to a federal Executive Order that requires agencies to avoid or minimize the adverse effects of policies, programs, projects, and other activities on minority and/or low-income populations. The order implies that no population should be forced to shoulder a disproportionate share of negative environmental impacts of pollution or environmental hazards due to a lack of political or economic strength.

Express Bus Service

Fixed-route transit service with a limited number of stops.

Facility

How a transportation mode is provided or supported. A facility may refer to a road, sidewalk, park-and-ride lot, or High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

An agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation with jurisdiction over highways.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

An agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation that funds and regulates transit planning and programs.

Federal Transportation Legislation

Major federal law that provides a level of funding security for states and local governments to move forward on projects and programs. Typically spanning several biennia, the law provides funding and emphasis areas. The current law, “Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act,” was enacted in 2021.

Fixed Route

Transit service that is regularly scheduled and repeatedly operates over a set route.

Growth Management Act (GMA)

State legislation passed in 1990 that requires urban counties and their associated jurisdictions to cooperatively develop and periodically update plans related to issues such as land use, infrastructure, services, and housing.

High Capacity Transit (HCT)

Transit systems operating on a fixed guideway, dedicated right-of-way, or freeway/express facility, designed to carry a large number of riders at faster speeds than conventional transit. Express bus service, Bus Rapid Transit, passenger ferries, and rail are examples of HCT.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)

A passenger vehicle that carries at least one passenger in addition to the driver, such as a carpool, bus, or vanpool. HOVs may utilize HOV lanes — travel lanes dedicated exclusively for their use.

High-Speed Rail

An intercity passenger rail system operating on exclusive rights-of-way. This form of rail serves densely traveled corridors with high operating speeds (up to 300 miles per hour) and limited stops.

Highway System Plan (HSP)

Washington state’s 20-year plan for Interstates, US Routes, and State Highways. The HSP identifies program needs, determines financing needs, and recommends specific and financially realistic improvements. The purpose of the plan is to preserve the structural integrity of the state highway system; ensure acceptable operating conditions; and provide for enhanced access to scenic, recreational, and cultural resources.

Impact Fee

A fee imposed on new development activities to partially finance public improvements such as public streets and roads, publicly owned parks, and school facilities.

Infrastructure

The physical underpinnings of society at large, including, but not limited to roads, bridges, transit, waste systems, public housing, sidewalks, utility installations, parks, public buildings, and communications networks.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

A wide range of electronics and communications technologies that improve the safety and operating efficiency of existing and future transportation facilities or services.

Intercity Rail

Passenger rail service provided for occasional business and leisure travel between cities, typically with a single stop in each city served. Usually shares or leases track from freight railroads.

Intercity Transit (IT)

IT is a municipal corporation that provides public transportation in the more urban areas of Thurston County, generally Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Yelm.

Intermodal

Multiple types or “modes” of transportation working together in an interconnected, efficient, integrated system. The ability to connect and make connections among various modes of transportation, such as automobile, motorcycle, truck, bus, train, plane, bicycle, pedestrian, boat, and ship.

Jurisdiction

The authority of government to conduct activities and generally refers to tribal nations, states, counties, and cities. For purposes of this plan, the term also includes federal and state agencies, and port and transit districts.

Land Use

The way that specific portions of land or the structures on the land are used, such as commercial, residential, retail, and industrial. A land use plan establishes strategies for the use of land to meet identified community needs.

Level of Service (LOS)

A mechanism used to determine how well a transportation facility operates from a traveler’s perspective. Typically, six levels of service are defined, and each is assigned a letter designation from A to F, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions, and LOS F the worst. The term is most often used as a performance measure for automobile traffic.

Light Rail

An electric-powered rail system that can operate in a variety of places — from on the street with automobile traffic to separate rights-of-way. Also known as street cars, trams, or trolleys. Does not include metro or subways which operate on a completely grade-separated right-of-way with high operating speeds.

Local Street

A street intended solely for access to properties contiguous to it.

Maintenance Area

Any geographic region designated “nonattainment” under the Clean Air Act, and subsequently redesignated to attainment — subject to the requirement to develop and implement a maintenance plan.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

An agency designated by the governor to administer the federally required transportation planning in a metropolitan area. MPOs provide continuing, coordinated, comprehensive transportation planning in urbanized areas and serve as a forum for cooperative decision-making.

TRPC serves as the designated MPO for the Olympia-Lacey, WA Urbanized Area. Thurston County’s MPO boundary covers all of Thurston County.

Mobile Source

Under the Clean Air Act, the pollution caused by mobile sources such as motor vehicles, aircraft, seagoing vessels, and other transportation modes. Mobile Source pollutants are carbon monoxide (CO), hydrocarbons (HC), or volatile organic compounds (VOCs), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), and small particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}).

Mobility

The ability of people or goods to move or be moved from place to place. Mobility also refers to the ease and safety with which desired destinations can be reached.

Mode

A particular form or means of transport — such as walking, traveling by automobile, bus, or rail, or riding a bicycle. Some modes avoid trips, such as compressed work weeks or telework.

Mode Split

The proportion of total trips using distinct modes of transportation such as the percentage of people carpooling, driving alone, or riding the bus.

Multimodal

The availability of multiple transportation options, especially within a system or corridor. A concept embraced by federal legislation, a multimodal approach focuses on the most efficient way of transporting people or goods from place to place — combining truck, train, bicycle, automobile, bus, or foot.

National Highway System (NHS)

The federal transportation system designated by Congress, which includes nationally significant interstate highways and roads for interstate travel, national defense, intermodal connections, and international commerce.

Nonattainment Area

Any geographical area, as defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), whose air quality does not meet federal air quality standards (NAAQS) designed to protect public health.

Olympic Region

One of six Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) geographic regions that deals with state transportation issues. The Olympic Region includes Thurston County and is headquartered in Lacey.

Origin

The point or location where a trip begins.

Park & Ride Lot (Park & Ride)

A parking facility for individuals to transfer from one mode to another — usually from a private vehicle to a carpool, vanpool, or public transportation.

Park-and-Pool Lot (Park-and-Pool)

A parking facility for individuals to transfer from one mode to another that is not served by public transportation.

Particulate Matter (PM), (PM10)

Any material that exists as solid or liquid in the atmosphere. Particulate matter may be in the form of fly ash, soot, dust, fog, or fumes. Small particulate matter, PM10, is less than 10 microns (one millionth of a meter) in size and is too small for the nose and lungs to filter.

Peak Period

The time of day when the maximum amount of travel occurs.

Pedestrian

A person who travels on foot or who uses assistive devices, such as a wheelchair, for mobility.

Performance Measure

A measure of how well a program, project, activity, or system is functioning.

Public Transportation

Transportation by bus, rail, vanpool, or other conveyance, either publicly or privately owned, serving the general public or special service on a regular and continuing basis (not including school buses, or charter or sightseeing services).

Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA)

A municipal corporation created under state law to provide public transportation services within a specific geographical area. May also refer to the area in which a transit agency provides service.

Ramp Metering

Traffic-responsive regulation of vehicle entry to a freeway, typically via sensor-controlled freeway ramp stoplights.

Regionally Significant Project

A project for which the Regional Transportation Model can show a change in the transportation system's capacity.

Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)

Federally required document produced by TRPC that identifies all federally funded and regionally significant projects for the current four-year period. Any federally-funded project must be included in the RTIP and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) before obligating funds.

Regional Transportation Model

See Travel Demand Model.

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

The long-range transportation strategy for the Thurston region.

Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO)

State-designated agency created to ensure regional transportation planning is consistent with county-wide planning policies and growth strategies for the region. TRPC is the Planning Organization for Thurston County, which is a single-county RTPO.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW)

The laws or statutes of Washington state, as enacted and amended by the Washington State Legislature.

Roundabout

A circular intersection with a curved design that is engineered to keep all travel modes moving safely.

Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV)

A vehicle carrying only one occupant — the driver.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)

The framework under which state and local agencies consider the environmental consequences of a proposal before taking action. "Action" may be related to issuing permits for private projects, constructing public facilities, or adopting regulations, policies, or plans.

State-Owned

The portion of the state transportation system that is owned and/or operated by the state, including state highways, Washington State Ferries, and state airports.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Federally required document identifying all federally-funded and/or regionally significant projects in the state. Projects must be included in the STIP before applicants can use federal money awarded to their projects. For a project to be included in the STIP, it must first be included in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program

The primary federal funding program that provides money for a wide range of transportation projects. TRPC awards funds to projects that support funding priorities established by the Council.

Sustainable Thurston

Also known as *Creating Places Preserving Spaces: A Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region* (December 2013). The Thurston Region's vision for a vibrant, healthy, and resilient future.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Advisory body to the Transportation Policy Board and Thurston Regional Planning Council on transportation issues, primarily technical in nature. All member jurisdictions are eligible to participate.

Telework

The use of telephones, computers, and other technology to work from a location other than the conventional office. Teleworking or telecommuting substitutes technology for a trip to work. Also known as "mobile work."

Thurston Thrives

A community initiative that brings together local jurisdictions, businesses, and nonprofits to "improve the health and safety for all people in Thurston County." Thurston Thrives began as a 2013 initiative of the Thurston County Board of Health; as of 2025, the Thurston County Chamber Foundation serves as the initiative's Fiscal Agent.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI)

This federal legislation prohibits discrimination, denial of benefits, or exclusion from participation on the grounds of race, color, or national origin. Title VI bars intentional discrimination as well as unintentional discrimination resulting from neutral policies or practices that have a disparate impact on protected groups.

Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside

A set-aside from the Surface Transportation Block Grant, a federal funding program that provides money for a variety of generally smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities. TRPC awards funds to projects that support funding priorities established by the Council.

Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ)

A census-designated geographic area that ranges in size from a few blocks to several square miles. TAZs are characterized by population, employment, and other factors, and serve as the primary unit of analysis for transportation modeling purposes.

Transportation Benefit District (TBD) (RCW 36.73)

The Washington State Legislature enacted this funding mechanism to allow local jurisdictions to respond to local transportation needs. Cities, towns, and counties may form these quasi-municipal corporations and levy taxes for a specific set of transportation projects, usually through vehicle license fees or sales taxes.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

A way to increase the transportation system’s capacity by conserving transportation resources and improving operating efficiency. TDM encompasses two types of strategies intended to support personal travel choices:

“Incentive” programs such as employer-subsidized bus passes, compressed work weeks, and/or telework options.

“Market measures” such as employee-paid parking and variable-rate toll roads.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

A six-year list of projects developed by each jurisdiction or tribal government, in compliance with state or federal requirements. A project is ineligible for funding unless included in the TIP.

Transportation Policy Board (TPB)

Advisory body to the Regional Council that focuses specifically on regional transportation issues. The TPB includes representatives from TRPC, the public, businesses, WSDOT, and other state government representatives. Washington State Legislators representing the 2nd, 20th, 22nd, and 35th Legislative Districts serve as Ex-Officio, non-voting members.

Travel Demand Model (Regional Transportation Model)

A system for analyzing a regional transportation network. The model is typically a software program that simulates or represents choices people make when traveling. The model also analyzes the performance of existing and future transportation facilities under a variety of scenarios.

Trip

A one-way, non-stop journey between a single origin and a single destination, such as from home to work. For modeling purposes, each trip segment counts as a trip. For example, stopping at the grocery store on the way home from work constitutes two trips (work to shopping and shopping to home).

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

A federally-required biannual report describing TRPC's regional transportation work program and budget, detailing the various state and federal funding sources that will be used. It reflects the state fiscal year (July 1–June 30) and is developed in the third quarter of the fiscal year for the ensuing fiscal year.

United States Department of Transportation (DOT)

The principal direct federal funding and regulating agency for transportation facilities and programs. FTA and FHWA are contained within the DOT.

Urban Growth Area (UGA)

Under the Growth Management Act, those areas designated by cities and counties where urban growth will be encouraged.

Vanpool

A vanpool refers to an organized ridesharing arrangement in a van occupied by five to 15 people traveling together for their commute trip.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

The number of miles traveled on roadways by a vehicle for a specific time period, usually per year. VMT is calculated by multiplying the total road section length by the total number of vehicles that traveled over that section within a given time. VMT does not consider the number of passengers those vehicles are carrying.

Volume-to-Capacity Ratio (V/C Ratio)

Demand (volume) compared to the estimated capacity of a roadway.

Washington Administrative Code (WAC)

A source of primary law in Washington state, including agency rules and regulations as well as detailing how state agencies must organize and adopt rules and regulations.

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

The agency responsible for transportation at the state level.

Zoning

The regulation by a city, town, county, or tribal nation of the use of land within its jurisdiction, and of the buildings and structures located there, in accordance with a general plan.

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