

# Appendix H

## Safety, Security, and Preparedness

*“Safety doesn’t happen by accident.”*

A safe and secure transportation system is essential for the mobility of people and goods, directly impacting the well-being of our communities. Major disruptions—whether from traffic accidents, hazardous material spills, natural disasters, civil disturbances, or deteriorating infrastructure—can lead to injuries, fatalities, delays, and significant economic losses. Ensuring transportation safety, security, and preparedness is a collective responsibility shared among all stakeholders involved in the transportation system’s operation, maintenance, and utilization. Numerous federal agencies oversee and investigate safety and security across highways, public transportation, rail, aviation, and maritime sectors.

Key organizations such as the United States Department of Transportation, Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Traffic Commission, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, state and local law enforcement agencies, TCOMM 911, the fire service, and local public works departments collaborate to maintain a robust transportation framework and enforce relevant regulations.

The *Washington Strategic Highway Safety Plan: Target Zero* establishes clear statewide priorities, aiming to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. This ambitious goal is supported by local agencies, including the Washington State Patrol and the Thurston County Prosecutor’s Office, which play vital roles in implementing targeted strategies.

The statistics are alarming: In 2023, approximately 40,990 individuals died in motor vehicle crashes across the United States, with Washington state reporting 810 fatalities, including 35 in Thurston County. Notably, 57 percent of local traffic fatalities involved impaired drivers, underscoring the urgent need for effective interventions (Washington State Traffic Safety Commission).

## Metropolitan Transportation Planning

The Federal Transportation Act emphasizes performance planning to create a nationwide framework for assessing and improving transportation safety outcomes. This includes evaluating investments and programs aimed at substantially reducing traffic fatalities and injuries on public roads. The Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC), as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO), plays a crucial role in coordinating transportation safety initiatives with federal, state, and local agencies. Through the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), TRPC prioritizes safety across all modes, integrating public safety considerations into planning, infrastructure development, and community education.

## Key Regional Plans

Several regional plans address transportation safety, security, and preparedness, including:

- **Regional Safety Action Plan:** Funded by a federal Safe Streets for All grant, this plan will inform future transportation priorities and investments to make roadways safer for all users in the Thurston region. The goal of this project is to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on roadways. This plan will build on existing work, integrating available data and community and partner experience to identify regional safety needs, then develop relevant and achievable local actions, with a focus on supporting solutions for underserved rural and tribal communities.
- **4<sup>th</sup> Edition Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region:** Approved by FEMA, assesses potential vulnerabilities from storms, earthquakes, volcanism, wildfires, and other hazards and proposes actions to create more disaster-resilient communities. The plan focuses on critical infrastructure, evacuation routes, emergency notification systems, essential community services, and continuity of operations.

- **Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan:** Contains over 90 actions to make communities resilient to climate change impacts, such as flooding and wildfires.
- **Emergency Incident Management Detour Route Improvements Study:** Scheduled for completion in 2025. This project aims to enhance the operational efficiency and safety of nearly 50 emergency detour routes, improving the region's resilience during significant incidents that shut down Interstate 5 and US 101.
- **Freight Goods and Services Mobility Strategy:** Will focus on the unique needs of freight movement, addressing infrastructure bottlenecks and safety concerns while supporting the region's growing demand for goods and services.
- **Transportation Resiliency Strategy:** Will identify and mitigate vulnerabilities within the transportation system due to earthquakes, landslides, and climate change impacts. The plan will assist local, tribal, and state governments for mitigating and managing both pre- and post-incident transportation recovery priorities.

## Other Local Transportation Safety and Security Planning Activities

Local government initiatives create safer environments across all transportation modes.

- **Systemic Transportation Safety Plans** are developed by county and city governments to reduce crashes, fatalities, injuries, and promote overall community wellbeing. These plans typically involve data analysis, stakeholder engagement, risk assessment, targeted countermeasures, performance metrics, and funding strategies.
- **Joint Base Lewis McChord I-5 Congestion Relief Action Plan** identifies corridor infrastructure improvements and transportation demand management strategies to relieve congestion on I-5. Congestion relief on this corridor is critical to supporting military readiness and bolstering JBLM's role as national defense power projection platform.

- **Thurston County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan** establishes a countywide framework for emergency management including response and recovery activities to all major hazard events. It outlines agency roles for 20 emergency support functions such as transportation, communication systems, logistics, public safety, search and rescue, and firefighting.
- **Puget Sound Catastrophic Preparedness Plan: Transportation Recovery Annex** identifies recovery strategies and mitigation actions for short- and long-term recovery phases following catastrophic disasters within the Puget Sound region. It also provides a framework for prioritizing the recovery of transportation facilities and decision-making processes. Thurston County stakeholders, six counties, ports, the Coast Guard, WSDOT, Departments of the Army, Airforce, and Navy, and other transportation partners participated in this planning process.
- **Healthy Kids Safe Streets Action Plan** provides a strategy for local governments and school districts to promote youth and student traffic safety through education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement, and evaluation.
- **Walk N Roll** is a youth education program managed by Intercity Transit that encourages walking, biking, and riding the bus to school to reduce congestion and promote health. Key activities include safe routes to school maps, bicycle and pedestrian safety education, bike skills training, and events involving local officials and community organizations. The program features walking school buses, after-school programs, bike fairs, and community forums. In 2024, services were expanded to include basic adult bicycle riding skills training.
- **Thurston County Bicycle Map**, produced by TRPC in partnership with member jurisdictions, informs community members about the best routes to ride a bike for commuting or recreation. The 2023 map (7th edition) expanded bicycle safety information on traffic laws, safe riding behavior, courtesies, and links to additional resources. Available in print and online, the bicycle map is TRPC's most popular and widely distributed publication.

# Priority Transportation Grant Funding

Since the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) was enacted in 1991, TRPC has allocated over \$130 million in federal transportation grant funding to local transportation projects, prioritizing safety alongside system preservation and efficiency. These grant programs, including the Surface Transportation Block Grant, Transportation Alternatives, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, and the Carbon Reduction Program, have funded numerous safety-enhancing initiatives. These investments highlight the region's commitment to fostering a safe, secure, and resilient transportation system for all users. Key projects include:

- Installing traffic cameras, variable message signs, ramp meters, and security cameras to better monitor and manage traffic and system security.
  - Replacing aging traffic signal controllers and constructing roundabouts to provide safer mobility and circulation through intersections and major corridors.
  - Performing pavement management programs, bridge inspections, debris removal, and repairing aging infrastructure to maintain safe operating conditions.
  - Replacing or upgrading public transportation service vehicles and equipment that has exceeded their life span.
- Transportation Safety Studies
  - Constructing sidewalks, bicycle lanes, paved trails, street crossing improvements, and transit shelters to promote safe travel.
  - Upgrading infrastructure to meet current safety standards for people with disabilities.
  - Realignment and enhancement of roadways to improve visibility and recovery zones.

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