

Transportation
is a means not an end.
The end is access.

--Gordon Price

2007 Notable Projects in the Thurston Region

Chehalis Western Trail I-5 Bridge Project (completed construction of a pedestrian bridge over I-5) *WSDOT*

Martin Way Pedestrian Lighted Crossing with Island (allows Chehalis Western Trail users to more safely cross Martin Way) *Thurston County & City of Olympia (with partners City of Lacey & TRPC)*

Olympia Woodland Trail Phases I and II (paved off-street trail from Eastside Street to East City Limits, including a crossing island at Fones Road and landscaping) *City of Olympia & Woodland Trail Greenway Assoc.*

45th Avenue Trailhead (new parking area on the Chehalis Western Trail) *City of Lacey*

Hawks Prairie Road Upgrade (Carpenter Road to Woodland Creek Bridge) *Thurston County*

Fleet Replacement and Expansion (13 replacement and 5 new service low floor coaches, 3 new Dial-a-Lift vehicles and 27 new vanpool vehicles) *Intercity Transit*

Niederman Road Sidewalk Project (construction of .4 miles of sidewalk on the Chehalis Reservation) *Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation*

Tumwater Boulevard Improvements (I-5 to Capitol Boulevard adds traffic lanes, sidewalks, dedicated bike paths, street lights and a roundabout) *City of Tumwater*



Journeys

2007 Regional Transportation Planning Highlights

Volume 5

February 2008

Thurston Region Draws Federal and State Funding

In statewide competitions:

- Two projects in the Thurston Region were awarded a combined \$1.7 million in the statewide competitive **Transportation Enhancements** funding – the Yelm Prairie Line Trail and the Chehalis Western Trail [Bridging the Gap](#) Martin Way Pedestrian Over-Crossing.
- The [Transportation Improvement Board](#) (TIB) awarded \$2.5 million total to Lacey for Carpenter Road widening right-of-way acquisition, Tenino for reconstructing Central Avenue, and Yelm for Coates Avenue NW widening with sidewalk additions.
- Olympia received \$300,000 from the **State CTR Board** to implement its Growth and Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC) proposal to better manage transportation demand in downtown and on the Capital Campus (one of seven funded proposals statewide).
- TRPC and TOGETHER! received \$1.2 million in **state and federal funding** for the biennium to continue the Rural and Tribal (R/T) tribal transportation service in rural Thurston County and on the Nisqually Tribe and the Confederated Tribes to the Chehalis Reservations.

TRPC and Transportation Policy Board policy makers worked with a new source of funding in 2007. The Thurston Region received \$2 million in federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (**CMAQ**) funding. A call for projects and project selection are expected in early 2008.

Busy Year for Regional and Contract Transportation Planning

TRPC staff prepared many regional and contract transportation plans and studies in 2007.

- [Coordinated Public Transit & Human Services Plan](#) – adopted by TRPC in 2007, improves individual service through increased mobility options, coordination and efficiency.
- **Commute Trip Reduction Plans** – regional and local – prepared in coordination under new state guidelines, along with a Growth and Transportation Efficiencies Center (GTEC) feasibility study and a funded GTEC proposal for the City of Olympia.
- [Regional Trails Plan](#) – released to public and policy maker praise, provides a comprehensive vision of the long-range Class I trail system for the Thurston Region.
- **Tribal Transportation Plans** – developing long range transportation plans for the Nisqually and Squaxin Island Tribes.
- **Yelm Planning Support** – including comprehensive plan amendments (with work in transportation, capital facilities, parks, and public facilities and utilities chapters), a draft sidewalk maintenance ordinance, and a new unified development code.
- [Thurston County Bicycle Map](#) – updated and published both in paper and online.

Forums and Workshops Shaping the Region's Future

TRPC sponsored three important discussions in 2007, focused on different aspects of how our communities develop.

In January, Understanding Residential Growth probed the residential market pressures and opportunities influencing the Thurston Region as it now functions as part of the greater Puget Sound economy, land use and transportation system.

At an August Active by Design workshop, policy makers looked at how patterns of development and land use regulations can impact Active Community Environments/Health & the Built Environment.

Then in September, policy makers held a regional discussion with representatives from the Association of Washington Cities and the Washington State Association of Counties on House Bill 1858 – Transportation Benefit Districts – a new local transportation funding option approved by the State Legislature in 2007.

Legislative Focus

TRPC's 2007 legislative educational efforts targeted on maintaining state commitments to previously-funded transportation projects (particularly the Grand Mound Interchange). Shortfalls in state funding jeopardize important regional projects already on the books.

The Council's [2008 legislative focus](#) during the short session is on:

- Pursuing state funding for the high capacity transportation study to address looming congestion and bottlenecks in the Thurston region that have statewide impacts.
- Developing community tools for residents, workers and visitors to support transportation choices and CTR.
- Allowing public-private cooperation in establishing and maintaining park and ride lots.
- Removing policy roadblocks for using reclaimed water.

Updates to Buildable Lands and Population Forecast

TRPC updated two key regional data resources in 2007. [Population allocations](#) were adjusted to address new growth trends in the Yelm and Grand Mound areas, bring the Rainier UGA household size into line with State projections, and reflect changes to Thurston County's zoning for Local Areas of More Intense Rural Development (LAMRIDs) and rural areas. These changes did not affect the county-wide population forecast.

Thurston County's [2007 Buildable Lands Report](#) was submitted to the State in the fall. The report incorporated the latest changes to Thurston County zoning and provided information on achieved residential densities, residential land supply and commercial/industrial land supply. Further updates to the population forecast and Buildable Lands Report may be required in this time of rapid changes in land use policy in Thurston County. Some anticipated changes include adjustments to the urban growth boundaries and changes to zoning in the Chamber Creek Basin in Olympia.

From the Executive Director...

Governing our Nation's Transportation Future

With the release of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission's report "Transportation for Tomorrow," the federal transportation reauthorization process has officially started. This Commission studied current conditions, future transportation needs, future revenue requirements and alternative approaches to ensuring the system continues to serve the needs of the U.S. In other words, they were directed to redefine the role of the federal government in transportation.

Business as usual regarding transportation is not going to cut it. This first document set the tone for future discussions by stating in its conclusions, "We must seize the opportunity to make fundamental changes to the way our system is built, maintained, and operated." The commission's recommendations include reprogramming federal highway trust funds, facilitating tolling and congestion pricing, and restructuring regulations to focus on efficiency and system performance.

This report is the first of many that will point to a new direction for the federal government in transportation. These changes will affect us all in how and when we initiate and construct federally funded transportation projects in our region.

If you would like a feel for the future reauthorization discussions, take a first look at this report: www.transportationfortomorrow.org/final_report/.

-- Lon D. Wyrick, Executive Director

TPB Appoints Three Additional Members

The [Transportation Policy Board](#) (TPB) adopted updated by-laws and filled three open positions in 2007, including two business and one citizen representatives. New members include –

- **Jim Boyde** (business representative) brings a wide range of private sector experience from managing shopping malls to building homes. He emphasizes a healthy balance between land use and transportation issues.
- **Tom Fender** (business representative), as a former Intercity Transit Authority board member, represented transit on TPB from 1999 to 2001 and is currently practicing law. He stresses better coordination between the medical community and transportation providers.
- **Pattie Betts** (citizen representative), a rural resident who owns a small farm, brings a strong background in environmental review, particularly as it applies to the complex nature of transportation – land use relationships. She underscores the importance of good process as a tool to understand complex issues and make good decisions.

Olympia Mayor Doug Mah served on TPB from 2002 through 2007, first as Intercity Transit's representative, then City of Olympia's representative. The past three years he served as TPB chair. Regarding the work of the TPB and its role in transportation planning, outgoing Chair Mah said, "Regional leadership and initiative are hallmarks of the TPB. Depth and breadth of experience, objectivity, and a shared commitment to regional objectives allow the TPB to convene policy discussions and work on an array of complex transportation and land use topics."

TPB Developing New Emphasis Areas

During 2007, the [Transportation Policy Board](#) (TPB) began investigating some new areas of focus that hold promise for improving efficiency, safety and environmental impacts of the Thurston Region's transportation system.

TPB is investigating the kinds of **technology** agencies like Intercity Transit and WSDOT Olympic Region are using. Looking ahead, TPB's innovative "Smart Corridors" proposal, part of the CMAQ funding discussion, looks to advance local, regional and state use of technology to improve mobility and environmental quality in the region's strategy corridors.

To better understand and manage **freight** aspects of the transportation system, TPB is looking at how growth in central Puget Sound is creating more freight trips by road and rail in our region. Freight is also increasing demand in the region for warehouse and distribution facilities to support both local and national freight management needs.

TPB commented on the potential impacts to the Thurston Region of Puget Sound Regional Council's **VISION 2040 long-range growth strategy**. Key issues include the cross regional impacts between PSRC and surrounding regions regarding residential and industrial development, military base opportunities and risks, and measures for monitoring progress towards achieving land use and transportation goals.

Bridges are under closer scrutiny across the nation following the I35W bridge collapse in Minnesota. TPB heard from Chris Keegan (WSDOT Olympic Region Operations Engineer) on the state of the region's bridges. Mr. Keegan indicated the Thurston Region has no bridges of immediate concern, and that the bridges that need attention on I-5 and US 101 in the region are scheduled for repair in the next few years. While a few older local bridges are narrower than today's standards would advise, none are unsafe.

2007 Notable Projects in the Thurston Region

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Rainier Road Widening (66th Avenue to south City limits with roundabout) *City of Lacey*

Expanded Transit Service and Ridership (service hours up 2% and ridership up 11%) *Intercity Transit*

McCann Plaza Resurfacing (Evergreen Parkway NW to the end of the roadway) *The Evergreen State College*

Gateway Boulevard (new roadway from Britton Parkway to Cabela's) *City of Lacey*

Scatter Creek Rest Area Truck Parking Expansion Project (adding 25 additional commercial truck and RV parking spaces - scheduled to advertise for bid in December 2007) *WSDOT*

Maytown and Scatter Creek Rest Areas Sewer and RV Dumps Project (upgrade sewer system - scheduled to advertise for bid in December 2007) *WSDOT*

Bus Stop Improvements (shelters, bulb-outs and ADA improvements at 17 locations) *Intercity Transit*

SR510 Pedestrian Crossing (connecting Nisqually Tribal government offices and housing to the senior center, daycare and convenience store) *WSDOT, Nisqually Tribe, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)*

Evergreen Parkway Transition (south end of the Evergreen Parkway NW realigned for safety at the transition from the College's road to the County's road) *The Evergreen State College*

I-5/Grand Mound to Maytown Stage One – Widening Project (widen I-5 from south of Grand Mound to north of Maytown interchange – scheduled to advertise for bid December 2007 with completion in 2010) *WSDOT*

2007 Notable Projects in the Thurston Region

Continued from Page 3

I-5/Marvin Road Interchange Widening (southbound off ramp additional left turn lane) *City of Lacey*

Decatur Street Path (short bicycle and pedestrian connection between Caton Way and Decatur Street) *City of Olympia*

New Bus Shelters (on order for R/T service on the Nisqually Reservation purchased through an Intercity Transit contract) *Nisqually Tribe*

Martin Way Park-and-Ride Expansion (design underway for construction in 2008) *Intercity Transit*

Quince Street Sidewalk (sidewalk on Quince from San Francisco to Ethridge, improving access to Reeves Middle School) *City of Olympia*

Yelm Loop Project (design and right-of-way acquisition for a new alignment for SR 510) *WSDOT*

Transit Advanced Communications System (supports computerized dispatching, real time bus location and traveler information, automated passenger counts, improved customer service tools, and more robust operations even during emergencies and disasters) *Intercity Transit*

6th Avenue and Baron Drive Realignment *City of Lacey*



Ongoing Endeavors

Three **interchange studies** are underway in the region, including the Lacey Transportation System Analysis and Alternative Evaluation, the [West Olympia Access Study](#), and the Tumwater Boulevard Interchange Study. It is unusual for a region, particularly the size of the Thurston Region, to have an interchange study underway, much less three at one time. This reflects the dynamic changes taking place in our community and in Western Washington.

The cities of Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater, and Thurston County continue their collaboration in a coordinated **Commute Trip Reduction (CTR)** program. This will continue with adoption and implementation of the local, regional and GTEC CTR plans during 2008.

Progress continues on [Bridging the Gap](#) in the Chehalis Western Trail. 2007 saw the opening of the I-5 pedestrian-bicycle bridge and completion of an at-grade crossing of Martin Way. In 2008, work includes construction of a grade-separated crossing of Martin Way, completion of the Pacific Avenue grade-separated crossing design, and pursuit of remaining funding needed for the Pacific Avenue crossing.

With ongoing state support, the **Rural and Tribal (R/T) Transportation Program** continues to provide affordable flexible route service to Tribal members, elders, youth, low income and physically challenged transit riders in rural Thurston County and on the Tribal Reservations outside Intercity Transit's service area.

More Services TRPC coordinates transportation program activities with our federal, state, and greater Puget Sound partners, harmonizing joint policy, legislation and program efforts. We also provide support and contract services for members and the public – concurrency reporting, internet and database tools development and maintenance, mapping, master planning, strategic planning, grants management, and traffic impact analysis support.

Anticipated for 2008...

- Awarding **CMAQ funding**
- Launching the **Smart Corridors** project
- Dedicating the Chehalis Western Trail **Bridging the Gap** Martin Way Over-Crossing and pursuing funds for the Pacific Avenue Crossing
- Holding an *Active Community Environments* policy maker forum relating **schools with health and the built environment**
- Updating and reporting on the **Vision/Reality Task Force** indicators
- Updating the **Federal Functional Class** designations for roads
- Conducting the **City of Rainier Traffic Circulation Study**
- Completing the **Incident Management Plan** of detours for major freeway snarls
- Continuing incremental work on the **High Capacity Transportation Study** while pursuing funds for comprehensive work
- Developing a regional **park-and-ride** strategy
- Launching a **regional freight mobility** discussion
- Transportation **modeling support** for cities
- Ongoing participation with Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater's **interchange studies**
- Debriefing on the **December 2007 storm impacts** to the region's transportation system

About TRPC

The Thurston Regional Planning Council – TRPC – is an intergovernmental board formed in 1967 to provide visionary leadership on regional plans, policies and issues. TRPC develops regional plans and policies for transportation, growth management, environmental quality, and other topics determined by the Council. TRPC provides data and analysis to support local and regional decision making, convenes local, state, tribal and federal policy makers to build community consensus on regional issues, and provides planning, historic preservation and technical services on a contractual basis.

TRPC's Role in Transportation Planning

- As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and state designated Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), the Regional Council ensures a continuing, comprehensive, and coordinated approach to local, regional and state transportation planning.
- The Transportation Policy Board (TPB) advises the Regional Council on issues ranging from the development of a Regional Transportation Plan to allocating federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding. In addition to jurisdictions represented on the Regional Council, TPB has representation from the state legislature, state agencies, business, and citizens.
- TRPC's standing transportation programs – the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP), Federal Functional Classification maintenance, Freight & Goods Transportation System (FGTS) updates, regional air quality conformance, regional Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding allocations, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture, and the Regional Transportation Plan – ensure regional compliance with state and federal requirements, enabling continued transportation funding from these sources.
- The regional transportation model and the regional population and employment (land use) forecast predict future conditions, supplying a variety of local and state data needs.
- Regional planning and programs address special needs transportation, commute trip reduction/ transportation demand management, the interdependence of transportation and land use, regional trails, performance measures, rail, transportation technology, and freight mobility.
- Contract transportation services aid local transportation planning, support regional coordination of services and information, and provide data for traffic impact analysis.

Getting Involved

The best way to track transportation issues at TRPC is to subscribe to the Transportation Policy Board's agenda packets. This will keep you abreast of the issues being tackled at the regional level. Public attendance and comment are always welcome at TPB meetings.

The TPB's agenda packet is available by regular post, or a monthly email notification directs subscribers to the material on the TRPC website. Register for either service by calling TRPC at (360) 956-7575.

Additional information on TRPC's transportation plans and programs is available on our website – www.trpc.org – by following the program links for transportation.

TRPC

Thurston Regional Planning Council

TRPC Staff

February 2008

Members:

City of Lacey
City of Olympia
City of Rainier
City of Tenino
City of Tumwater
City of Yelm
Town of Bucoda
Thurston County
Intercity Transit
LOTT Alliance
Thurston County PUD No. 1
Griffin School District
North Thurston Public Schools
Olympia School District
Confederated Tribes of the
Chehalis Reservation
Nisqually Indian Tribe

Associate Members:

Economic Development Council
of Thurston County
Lacey Fire District #3
Puget Sound Regional Council
Timberland Regional Library

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