

It is critically important for the United States to rebuild its national transportation infrastructure ... [to] ensure our economy continues to grow.

-President Obama

2008 Notable Projects in the Thurston Region

I-5 / Grand Mound to Maytown Stage One – Widening
(construction April 2008 to summer 2010, realign and widen I-5, improve ramp connections & flatten curve to relieve congestion and reduce risk of collisions)
WSDOT

Yelm Avenue West Local Improvement District (100% locally funded, widen and reconstruct Yelm Avenue from Cullens Road to 93rd, & Killion Road from Yelm Avenue to the future connection with SR 510 Yelm Loop) *City of Yelm*

Mullen Road Reconstruction (Ruddell Road to East Lacey City Limits) *City of Lacey & North Thurston Public Schools*

18th Avenue / Elizabeth Street / 14th Avenue Sidewalk, Bike Lanes, Lighting, Beautification and Paving (Fones Road to the Chehalis Western Trail) *City of Olympia*

North Street Reconstruction, Sidewalks, Bike Lanes, Lighting and Landscaping (Cleveland Avenue to east of Hawthorne Place) *City of Tumwater*

Martin Way Park and Ride Expansion (under construction in Lacey, more than doubling to 317 stalls) *Intercity Transit*

Bald Hill Road Alignment, Safety & Pavement Improvements (Vail Road to Smith Prairie Road) *Thurston County*

Continued on Page 4



Journeys

2008 Regional Transportation Planning Highlights

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Smart Corridors

Smart Corridors will use technology to improve operational efficiency along two key strategy corridors in the Thurston Region. The focus will be on two corridors connecting the urban cores of Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater. These include the Capitol Way and Capitol Boulevard corridor, and the Martin Way corridor, which becomes 4th Avenue and State Street. In addition to these cities, other key interests include Thurston County, WSDOT, Intercity Transit and FHWA.

In Phase I, the partners will investigate signal coordination, signal optimization and transit signal priority. Technologies will be evaluated to determine if they could work to ease congestion and improve air quality along the corridors. The design developed in Phase I will be implemented in Phase II. It may include upgrades in hardware, software and other operational features.

The Thurston Region received \$2.1 million in federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program grant funding to address transportation sources of particulate matter 10 microns or less in size (PM10). Policy makers considered a wide range of options. They selected this multijurisdictional, multimodal project as the best investment to generate long-lasting value for the community. The project kicked off in December 2008, with the Phase I design expected to last 18 months.

Strategy Corridors

In the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), TRPC identified a number of congested transportation corridors that cannot be widened to help ease congestion. These strategy corridors are limited by land use, environmental and/or policy constraints. The RTP calls for innovative, multimodal solutions to maintain access in these areas. Smart Corridors is just such a creative approach.

Economic Stimulus

With the significant national economic downturn, the Congress and President are preparing an economic stimulus strategy to create immediate jobs and benefit national infrastructure. A first initiative will focus on construction-ready transportation projects. Local, regional, and state transportation agencies worked together to prepare a comprehensive list of projects ready to 'turn dirt' within 120 days. In Washington State, this list was due to WSDOT January 5, 2009.

TRPC submitted a list of 28 street, road and trail projects totaling \$83 million, and 5 transit projects for \$16 million. This includes nearly \$20 million for a regional preservation program 'bucket' of 35 individual pavement preservation projects to protect existing infrastructure investment, and \$11 million for the 507 Yelm Loop, a longstanding TRPC legislative project priority.

Additional federal stimulus funding for other types of infrastructure – such as water, wastewater and green construction – is anticipated. Washington State is also considering a jobs stimulus bill. Early proposals include funding transportation and other essential infrastructure projects.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Model

TRPC is participating in a case study with FHWA, WSDOT, CTED, and Sonoma Technology. The goal is to develop modeling tools for small-to-medium metropolitan areas to evaluate the impacts of land use and transportation infrastructure changes on greenhouse gas emissions. In Phase I, which is underway, tools being developed will evaluate how regional land use changes affect travel and carbon dioxide emissions. A proposed Phase II would develop a complementary program for assessing emissions impacts of corridor-level changes to transportation infrastructure. These tools will be made available to MPOs across the country.

Sunde Joins TPB

The [Transportation Policy Board](#) (TPB) welcomed Reneé Sunde as a new Business Representative. Ms. Sunde brings a broad knowledge of business interests as Director of Marketing and Business for the Thurston Economic Development Council and as President of the Lacey Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Sunde says, "Transportation and land use are core topics and areas of emphasis for many of our local businesses as well as companies looking for expansion or relocation opportunities in Thurston County."

From the Executive Director...

Climate Change Action – Challenges and Opportunities

In late 2008, the state Climate Action Team (CAT) sent its final report to the Governor and Legislature. I am very proud to have been a part of this effort and amazed at the incredible work accomplished. This report will establish Washington as a national leader in climate change.

The CAT final report outlines strategies that will enable Washington to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create business opportunities and jobs, and make the transformational shifts necessary to strengthen our economy and secure our future. The report identifies many existing and successful state programs that can serve as a strong platform towards meeting the state's emissions goals. Preserving and enhancing these programs constitutes the "low hanging fruit" recommendations. The CAT also described many higher cost new programs, policies, and efforts for the longer term implementation. This multi-pronged strategy built shelf life into the final report, allowing for a phased implementation.

We must act – carefully and strategically. In the face of tough economic times, grabbing the "low hanging fruit" will effectively move the climate change effort forward and have a positive impact on our the environment. The new bigger ticket items will retain their importance and relevance, poised for implementation when funding from all sources is available. In its role as a regional convenor and facilitator, TRPC will keep the climate change effort moving forward by incorporating these important environmental issues and standards into TRPC's many work programs. As our nation now focuses on climate change, and initiatives become better defined, TRPC will continue to work to adopt and refine climate change strategies for the Thurston Region.


-- Lon D. Wyrick, Executive Director

Legislative Focus

During the 2009 legislative session, TRPC is focusing on requests that promote jobs and a vital economy, stable and expanding infrastructure, and a healthy environment. The [five areas of emphasis](#) are –

- **CTR, GTEC, Van Pool & Park and Ride** – Maintain and increase funding.
- **Rural & Tribal (R/T) Transportation Program** – Keep R/T running through existing grant programs.
- **Comprehensive Transportation Study** – Fund a regional origin/destination study and continue support for local I-5 projects.
- **Water Rights and Reclaimed Water** – Provide predictable, consistent and adequate policy and funding.
- **Local Funding Options and Economic Stimulus** – Maintain and expand local options, eliminate unfunded mandates and use established regional project selection.

These five priorities reflect continuing themes of Council priorities. In 2008, TRPC made great headway in CTR planning, with the establishment of a GTEC in the region (one of 10 in the state) and coordinated efforts in park and ride planning. Despite funding cuts, TRPC, with state support, kept R/T running, providing transportation to substantially underserved populations on Tribal lands and in rural areas. TRPC continues to struggle, along with communities across the state, with fundamental water issues and financing important local government services.

R/T Service Changes

The Rural and Tribal (R/T) Transportation Program is the lifeline transit service for south Thurston County, Nisqually Reservation and Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation residents. It is jointly sponsored by TRPC and TOGETHER! With the rise in gas prices, this popular program experienced even higher ridership, but also higher operating costs. In an attempt to keep the service going, a \$1 fare went into effect for all trips beginning August 2008, service was cut 20% and the contractor lowered overhead costs.

R/T is funded, nearly in its entirety, through grants. It is unclear, with current economic woes, if state and federal funding will continue, or at what level, for programs like R/T. With the exception of Tribal contributions, local funding comprises only a small percentage of operating costs. Many local governments do not contribute. In December 2008, TRPC submitted R/T as a candidate for public transportation grant funding for the 2009-2011 biennium. R/T is currently funded through June 2009.

Commute Trip Reduction Updates

In 2008, TRPC had multiple [Commute Trip Reduction](#) (CTR) activities underway.

- **State Role in CTR** – TRPC, through Resolution, requested the Governor issue an Executive Order stressing aggressive state agency implementation of CTR in daily operations, meeting environmental goals, and developing facilities. WSDOT, the State Department of General Administration and the Governor's office are following up on this issue.
- **CTR Plans & Program** – TRPC earned approval from WSDOT of the Regional CTR Plan, and, on behalf of the Cities and County, each local CTR Plan. TRPC, as lead agency, continues day-to-day program management of the CTR program on behalf of the affected jurisdictions.
- **CTR in Schools** – With a WSDOT grant, TRPC developed a demonstration [Walk and Roll](#) program to encourage students to walk, bicycle and ride the bus. Initially implemented at Madison Elementary and Avanti High School, the program recently won 3 additional years of grant funding to expand into other area schools.
- **Park and Ride Planning** – TRPC participated with WSDOT and Intercity Transit in their park and ride planning efforts.

Capital Campus High Capacity Transportation Study

In 2008, the State Legislature asked TRPC to study trip patterns, alternative modes of transportation for employees, access for visitors, interagency travel and commute trip reduction programs for the Capital Campus and satellite worksites in Thurston County. The study will result in strategies for improving the use, design and access to new and existing transportation infrastructure. TRPC reported some preliminary results and will complete the final report by June 2009.

2008 Commute Smart Awards

Washington State recognized 25 employers demonstrating commitment to encouraging employees to reduce drive-alone commuting. Of the five nominated worksites in the Thurston Region, three won awards:

- **Washington State Department of Ecology** (Lacey)
- **Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development** (Olympia)
- **City of Olympia**

Also nominated for their outstanding CTR work in our community were the **Washington State Departments of Health, and Labor and Industries**.

Transit Is Booming

Transit ridership experienced significant increases across the country in 2008, and Intercity Transit is no exception.

- **Record Ridership** – exceeding 4.2 million boardings (a 17% increase over 2007). Service hours increased 11% and the fleet expanded by 5 buses.
- **Vanpooling Grows** – increasing by 29% to 195 vans, averaging 77 miles per van each day with more than 1,500 people sharing the ride weekly.

AMPO Workshop

In June, TRPC co-sponsored an Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) workshop on effectively integrating transportation and land use planning. Participants from around the country learned about TRPC's Vision/Reality Task Force efforts, Portland modeling techniques and PSRC's Vision 2040 plan. They played the Land Use Game (developed by TRPC) and toured the developing Hawks Prairie area.

SR 510 Pedestrian Crossing
(pedestrian-activated flashing beacons at She-Nah-Num Drive)
Nisqually Tribe & WSDOT

Sleater-Kinney Road & 6th Avenue Overlay, Capacity & Safety Improvements (Sleater-Kinney Road: I-5 to Pacific Avenue; 6th Avenue: College Street to Sleater-Kinney Road)
City of Lacey

Grand Mound 10-Year Development Plan (a community-based vision for future development)
Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation

Yelm Prairie Line Trail (Yelm Avenue to Centralia Power Canal)
City of Yelm

West Olympia Access Study
(confirmed the need for modified access to US 101 in West Olympia, narrowing to two options for consideration in the Interchange Justification Report)
City of Olympia and WSDOT

Transit Service Increases
(service hours up 11%, fleet adds 5 buses, record high ridership up 17% and vanpool adds 44 vehicles)
Intercity Transit

Vail Road Alignment, Safety & Pavement Improvements (SR 510 to Bald Hill Road)
Thurston County

I-5 / Maytown / Scatter Creek Rest Areas – Sewer Hookup / Truck Parking (renovation and environmental improvement project)
WSDOT

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program Projects (3 projects underway funded by State grants)
Cities of Lacey and Olympia

Bus Stop Improvements (design completed for 30 stops, improving passenger amenities, accessibility and safety)
Intercity Transit

Niederman Sidewalk (a 2/3 mile sidewalk connecting the tribal center with the Davis Drive housing project)
Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation

Coates Road Reconstruction (Crystal Springs Road to Cullens Road)
City of Yelm

Long-Range Transportation Plan (update of 15-year old plan)
Nisqually Tribe & TRPC

Accomplishments and Ongoing Activities

- **Interchange Studies** – TRPC continues to participate in the Tumwater, Lacey, and Olympia/WSDOT interchange studies, and conducted an analysis of potential combined effects if all three studies result in modified highway access.
- **Olympia Walking Map** – Under contract with City of Olympia, TRPC is preparing a map of walking routes and trails that support a physically active built environment.
- **Regional Trail Plan Recommendations** – TRPC identified Chehalis Western Trail and Woodland Trail (Eastside Street to Capital Lake) as the top priority regional trail projects and selected other key follow-up measures to pursue.
- **Incident Management Plan** – TRPC facilitated completion of the Incident Management Plan for the I-5 corridor from Pierce to Lewis County and on the US 101 corridor from I-5 to Mud Bay.

WTGA Receives Award

Congratulations to the [Woodland Trail Greenway Association](#) (WTGA) which recently received a national merit award for their outstanding volunteer services and generous grants of other support. The award was bestowed by the National Recreation and Park Association, Pacific Northwest Regional Council.

Anticipated Efforts for 2009...

- Participate in discussions about the **next Federal transportation authorization**.
- Coordinate development of **Smart Corridors** Phase I design.
- Continue **Rural and Tribal (R/T) Transportation** service.
- Begin construction of the Chehalis Western Trail [Bridging the Gap](#) Martin Way Over-Crossing, and design of the Pacific Avenue crossing.
- Pursue the **Governor's Climate Action Team (CAT) transportation recommendations**.
- Update the [Vision/Reality Task Force](#) indicators.
- Establish a **Government-to-Government** agreement with the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation.
- Facilitate [Regional Trails Plan](#) stakeholder discussions and follow-up measures implementation.
- Continue development and testing of the **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Model**.
- Complete the **City of Rainier Circulation and Mobility Study**.
- Begin updating the **Regional 2035 Population and Employment Forecast**.
- Continue coordinated **Commute Trip Reduction (CTR)** program implementation.
- Complete the **Capital Campus High Capacity Transportation Study**.
- Facilitate participation in a Puget Sound **Transportation System Recovery Plan**.
- Using FTA support, continue work on the regional **High Capacity Transportation Study**.
- Develop a **regional freight profile**.
- Provide transportation **modeling support** for cities.
- Recruit a **new transportation modeler**.
- Support completion of the **Yelm Transportation Plan Update**.
- Develop a **meso-scopic modeling tool**.
- Complete the **Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan**.

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.



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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
North Thurston Public Schools
Olympia School District
Confederated Tribes of the
Chehalis Reservation
Nisqually Indian Tribe

Associate Members:

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Lacey Fire District #3
Olympic Region Clean
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Puget Sound Regional Council
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