

If you come to a fork in
the road, take it.
-Yogi Berra

Journeys

2009 Regional Transportation Planning Highlights

Volume 7

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2009 Notable Projects in the Thurston Region

I-5/Grand Mound to Maytown Stage

One Add lanes (under construction - adds one lane in each direction to I-5 from south of Grand Mound interchange to north of Maytown interchange) *WSDOT*

West Olympia Access Study

(Three alternatives identified for modified US 101 access to Olympia's Westside. The next step - Interchange Justification Report) *City of Olympia and WSDOT*

Martin Way Park and Ride

Expansion Completed (Increased stalls from 138 to 318) *Intercity Transit*

Gateway Phase 2

(Main Street extension for ¼ mile from Marvin Road intermediate roundabout, and Britton Parkway eastbound lane addition from Marvin Road to Cabela driveway) *City of Lacey*

Skookumchuck Road Upgrade

(Coal to Whitefish) *Thurston County*

Deschutes Parkway Bicycle and

Pedestrian Improvements (New sidewalk and dedicated bike lane) *City of Tumwater*

Downtown Commuter Program

Funding (Federal Energy Efficiency Block Grant continues program, already with 340 downtown employee participants walking, biking or riding the bus with 75 fewer employee cars each day in the downtown core) *City of Olympia*

Secena Road Construction

(Anderson Road to the Chehalis Tribe Community Center) *Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation*

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American Reinvestment and Recovery Act

In 2009, local and State agencies were awarded nearly \$14 million of federal economic stimulus monies for transportation projects in the Thurston Region. These projects required quick response to advertise, contract and construct in 2009 (see the Notable Projects list for more information). Eager construction firms across the state (and the country) consistently offered bids lower than projected, allowing additional projects to be funded and constructed. This first round of stimulus funding may even fund another project in 2010 in the Thurston Region.

The President and Congress are considering a second round of economic stimulus funding in 2010. The Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) is working with the State Department of Transportation to strategically position our Region's candidate projects now in anticipation of this potential funding resource.

Capitol Campus Study

Commissioned by the State Legislature, a TRPC study looked at how visitors and state employees travel to, around and between State facilities in Thurston County. The study considered the way the State manages, locates and builds facilities, with an eye to local and regional Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) goals and improving multimodal travel options.

Study recommendations fall into five broad categories:

- **Quick Fixes** – better information with easier access, use existing parking for more convenient visitor parking, and use off-site parking for large buses.
- **Funding** – increase funding for CTR implementation and trip planning/tracking tools, continue and expand state employee CTR support programs, analyze parking utilization, and share in funding Intercity Transit's DASH bus service.
- **Plans** – create a way-finding plan and increase multimodal circulation options for the Capitol Campus.
- **Pilot Programs** – Legislative testimony via teleconference, broader use of telework, alternatives to mid-day drive alone trips, and school commute alternatives
- **Legislative Leadership** – charge market rate parking, adhere to master and comprehensive plan visions, and keep CTR a priority at top levels of State government.

The study was well received by the State and implementation of many of the recommendations is underway.

Preferred Leasing and Development Areas (PL/DAs)

Linda Bremer, Director of the State Department of General Administration, briefed the Transportation Policy Board (TPB) about the development and implementation of PL/DAs. Dating back to 2000, the PL/DA good neighbor policies involve the local community in how and where State facilities should be located. The policies are undergoing revision which will be conducted in conjunction with local city staff and Intercity Transit.

I-5/Grand Mound to Maytown Stage Two Replace Interchange (under design – replaces bridges, widens ramps and improves ramp intersections - construction to start in late 2010) *WSDOT*

Independence Road Chehalis River Flood Mitigation (110 foot long bridge, extensive retaining walls to minimize wetland impacts, bio-engineered bank protection, wetland mitigation, and related roadway/drainage work - 90% complete) *Thurston County*

Mobility Strategy (Adopted in August, outlines opportunities to better achieve City's multi-modal vision) *City of Olympia*

Carpenter Road Widening (Lacey Woodland Trail to South Lacey City Limits) *City of Lacey*

Customer Analysis and Segmentation Studies (Completed 3 studies - Customer Satisfaction, Market Segmentation and Worksite Commuter survey, including 96 sites in Thurston County and 7,874 responses) *Intercity Transit*

I-5/Scatter Creek Rest Area Improvements (completed February 2009) *WSDOT*

Parking Strategic Business Plan (Four year action plan to advance downtown visions) *City of Olympia*

Centennial Station (Parking lot and facilities repairs and repainting) *Intercity Transit*

Transportation Funding Strategy for High Priority Projects (Council approved \$24 million funding strategy to construct several priority projects - Boulevard Road/ Log Cabin Road roundabout, 18th Avenue improvements (Hoffman Road to Fones Road), and Harrison Avenue Phases II and III) *City of Olympia*

Martin Way Sidewalks (Dutero to Lacey City Limits) *Thurston County*

Bicycle Commuter Contest (Increased registrations 9% with largest ever number of registrants - 1,733) *Intercity Transit*

Ruddell Road Extension/ Yelm Highway Intersection Realignment *City of Lacey*

SR 510/Yelm Loop Phase One New Alignment (constructs new alignment for SR 510 - construction start in 2010) *WSDOT*

Legislative Focus

During this short session of the State Legislature in 2010, TRPC is emphasizing:

1. Transportation and Land Use – funding a regional household travel survey and implementing recommendations of the Capitol Campus Study.
2. Water – timely and predictable permitting, aligning water rights processing with the Growth Management Act, and a moratorium on exempt wells in closed basins.
3. Essential Tools – maintain and expand local funding options, eliminate unfunded mandates, and use proven regional prioritization processes for state and federal funding processes.

TRPC Director Wyrick and Chair Stanley, together with other TRPC policy makers, continue to meet with our State Legislators to engage their support.

Wyrick Leads AMPO

Lon Wyrick was elected President for the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) Board of Directors. Under his leadership in 2010, AMPO is tackling some critical policy and technical issues – federal transportation bill reauthorization, stimulus funding, Surface Transportation Fund (STP) allocation, federal funding rescissions, climate change legislation, smart growth and the role of MPOs in transportation planning. AMPO represents over 200 MPOs across the United States.

From the Executive Director...

Positioning Ourselves for Federal Action.....?

As we watch and wait for movement of a transportation authorization bill, we continually hear of possible congressional direction, administrative discussion, new federal DOT guidance and of course, another letter from Congressman Oberstar! The path to an authorization bill is not getting easier or clearer as time passes. The parade of "continuing funding resolutions" only extend transportation planning and projects for a couple of months at a time and add to the problem by carrying forward a base with a serious funding shortfall.

So how do we move forward? The only strategic way is to listen closely and align regional data/information, projects, plans and studies in a way that will allow for quick assembly and submission. The one thing we know from the last year, when it happens, the deadline will be "Thursday"!

TRPC transportation staff is following this strategic direction. For this effort to be successful it requires a lot of effort by staff and makes it necessary for TRPC and the TPB to be nimble and act quickly - sometimes outside our established process - to move our needed projects forward.

We will keep our ears to the ground and hopefully position our region for success!


-- Lon D. Wyrick, Executive Director

Urban Corridors Task Force

TRPC and TPB established an Urban Corridors Task Force in late 2009 to conduct an in-depth evaluation of land use located on the region's key transportation corridors and within activity centers. A recent update of indicator data suggests that development is not occurring as envisioned in local comprehensive plans. The Task Force is charged with developing a well-rounded, objective assessment of factors influencing development, and identifying issues ripe for targeted policy maker action to achieve adopted land use visions.

Focus is on the region's urban center of Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater. This coincides with two related regional projects, the High Capacity Transportation evaluation and the Smart Corridors project. As part of its assignment, the Task Force will monitor these projects and advise TRPC on related policy issues.

Walk & Roll Program Expands

In its second year demonstrating best practices, the *Walk and Roll* program encourages students to use active transportation for trips to and from school. The program resulted in much higher percentages of students biking and walking. For example, on *Walking and Wheeling Wednesdays*, walking and biking increased from 24% to 57%. Program partners are continuing to monitor results and expand to additional schools in 2010. Additionally, a grant from the Nation Safe Routes to School organization will help fund an anti-idling and anti-speeding demonstration project at program schools. Through education and pledges, the program will further awareness and action for clean air and safety.

Why Can't Kids Walk and Bike to School?

A Policymaker Discussion and Brainstorming Session

In the fall of 2009, this forum generated 138 ideas for encouragement, education, engineering, enforcement and evaluation. Participants included policy makers, school district representatives, state and local transportation, land use and public health planners, and citizen planners. A subcommittee is working to consolidate, analyze and organize the ideas into a draft Action Plan for review and implementation by stakeholders throughout the County.

Transportation Policy Board

In 2009, **Jackie Barrett Sharar** and **Mike Beehler** joined TPB as citizen representatives, and **Sandra Romero** as the Thurston County representative. TPB also saw departure of **Joan Cullen** (General Administration – and an original member of the TPB at its inception in 1991), **Graeme Sackrison** (Lacey - who represented TRPC to the Puget Sound Regional Council TPB), **Karen Messmer** (Olympia), **Patty Betts** (Citizen), **John O'Callahan** (Tenino) and **George Barner** (Port of Olympia). **Bob Jones**, WSDOT Olympic Region planning manager and long time TPB participant, retired in 2009. Thank you all for your service! In 2010, new to the TPB roster are **Jeff Davis** (Port of Olympia), **Andy Ryder** (Lacey), and **Rhenda Strub** (Olympia), with an appointment from Tenino pending. TPB will also select a new business representative.

High Capacity Transportation

Since a 2006 recommendation to conduct a High Capacity Transportation study to comprehensively evaluate commuter transportation alternatives, TRPC has pursued State and federal legislative support, as well as worked to advance study elements incrementally as regional funding allows. TRPC is one of a handful of MPOs across the US to participate in a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) demonstration technical assistance program to help with this type of planning. Work with FTA will get underway in 2010. A key consideration of the Urban Corridors Task Force is how land use impacts potential for high capacity transportation in our community's future.

Smart Corridors

Smart Corridors is a transportation technology demonstration project to improve operational efficiency along two key strategy corridors in the Thurston Region that connect the urban centers of Lacey, Olympia and Tumwater. Local transportation staffs are working with TRPC staff and our consulting team to determine signal improvement needs and the potential of transit signal priority. While this is a technology project, it involves institutional and policy considerations which the Urban Corridors Task Force will consider.

Walk and Roll Partners

An Active Community Environments Grant awarded by the State Departments of Health and Transportation allowed TRPC, Intercity Transit and Safe Kids Thurston County to deploy this innovative and effective program.

LED Signal Project (LED lights installed in all traffic signals and countdown pedestrian signals installed at 54 of 79 intersections) *City of Olympia*

Oyster Bay Culvert Replacement *Thurston County*

Transit Capital Facilities

Preliminary Planning (Expansion of Olympia Transit Center to include Greyhound, expansion of Intercity Transit's Operations Base, and development of a new Hawk's Prairie Park & Ride Lot on a portion of the Thurston County landfill) *Intercity Transit*

I-5 Martin Way Interchange Improvements (Added bike lanes and extended left turn lane) *City of Lacey and WSDOT*

Stimulus Projects

800 Series Buses *Intercity Transit*

Lacey Woodland Trail Phase II *City of Lacey*

US 101/SR 3 to Perry Creek Bridge – Install Cable Barrier *WSDOT*

Union Avenue Overlay *City of Olympia*

I-5/MP 112-114 - Cable Barrier *WSDOT*

Old Hwy 99 Bridge Replacement – Prairie Creek *Thurston County*

Sussex Avenue Pedestrian & Lighting Improvements *City of Tenino*

Capitol Blvd Preservation *City of Tumwater*

SR 8/Elma to US 101 – Install Cable Barrier *WSDOT*

Old Hwy 99 Turn Lane *Thurston County*

Capitol Blvd Sidewalk & Bike Lane *City of Tumwater*

I-5/Martin Way to 48th St – NB & SB Concrete Rehab *WSDOT*

Minnesota Street Overlay & Enhancements *City of Rainier*

US 12/US 101 to Pecan St SW – Centerline Rumble Strips *WSDOT*

Steilacoom Road Pedestrian Enhancements *Thurston County*

SR 507/Lewis Co Line to SR 510 – Centerline Rumble Strips *WSDOT*

Accomplishments and Ongoing Activities

- **Interchange Studies** – TRPC is participating in continuing studies for Tumwater, Lacey and Lakewood.
- **Bridging the Gap** – Martin Way overcrossing construction was underway in 2009 with a dedication expected in early 2010.
- **Model Update** – TRPC's regional travel demand model was updated with land use and street system changes from Lacey associated with growth called for in the adopted Comprehensive Plan.
- **Dynameq Model Development** – As part of Smart Corridors, TRPC is developing a new modeling tool to look at traffic flows on corridors and in sub areas.
- **RTP Update** – In 2009, TRPC completed its 5th annual update of the Regional Transportation Plan, extending the planning horizon to 2030 and keeping recommendations current.
- **FHWA Signals Review** – Local and regional staff participated in a three day workshop with the Federal Highway Administration evaluating our signal systems.
- **Climate Change** – Work continues on development of a greenhouse gas emissions model, responding to the Governor's Executive Order 09-05, and implementing transportation recommendations of the Climate Action Team.
- **Smart Corridors** – Local and regional staff continue to collaborate on this project, moving toward a regional signal standard and other operations and administrative efficiencies.
- **Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan Updates** – Fifteen jurisdictions completed annexes to the Plan in 2009, including hazard mitigation for transportation system elements.
- **Puget Sound Transportation Recovery Plan Development** – Local and regional staff are participating in this 8 county effort.

Intercity Transit Best in the US

The American Public Transit Association (APTA) honored Intercity Transit with the 2009 Outstanding Transportation System Achievement Award. Each year APTA recognizes a small, mid-sized and large transit agency. Intercity Transit was recognized in the mid-sized service category (4 to 30 million annual passenger boardings) for demonstrating achievement in efficiency and effectiveness from 2006 to 2008. Congratulations!

Anticipated for 2010 . . .

- Participate in the **Federal transportation reauthorization** discussion.
- Conduct the **I-5 Origin and Destination Study**.
- Complete **Smart Corridors** phase I design.
- Participate in the **Governor's Climate Change Working Group**.
- Continue **Rural & Tribal (R/T) Transportation** service.
- Complete design and engineering of the Pacific Avenue Overcrossing for **Chehalis Western Trail - Bridging the Gap**. Dedicate the Martin Way Overcrossing.
- Complete the **City of Rainier Circulation and Mobility Study**.
- Continue coordinated **Commute Trip Reduction (CTR)** program implementation.
- Use FTA Technical Assistance in the **High Capacity Transportation Study**.
- Develop a **Regional Freight Profile**.
- Provide **transportation modeling support** for cities.
- Prepare, update and revise the **RTP, RTIP, UPWP, Federal Functional Classification, and Air Quality Conformity Analysis**.

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, climate change, 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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January 2010

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

Associate Members:

CAPCOM
Lacey Fire District #3
Olympic Region Clean
Air Agency
Puget Sound Regional Council
The Evergreen State College
Thurston Economic
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