2016 Notable Projects in the Thurston Region

Willamette Drive and 31st Avenue NE Roundabout (Completed construction of a roundabout with sidewalks and landscaping to improve traffic circulation and intersection safety) City of Lacey

22nd Avenue Sidewalk (Completed the 22nd Avenue sidewalk, making it easier for people to walk to parks, schools, and bus stops) City of Olympia

Tyee Drive Extension/Israel Road Improvement (Began construction of a new segment of Tyee Drive and roundabout at Israel Road) City of Tumwater

Old Hwy 99 Pavement Rehabilitation (Completed more than six miles of asphalt resurfacing, from Lewis County to Tenino, including asphalt removal, rumble strips, lane arrowing at intersections, and roadway paving) Thurston County

Bus Stop Enhancements for Improved Accessibility and Safety (Increased pedestrian safety and allowed ADA bus ramp deployment to meet federal standards at 49 bus stops in Thurston County, Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, and Yelm; installed interior solar lighting at 10 more shelters) Intercity Transit

Bike Corridor Pilot Program (Completed the Bike Corridor Pilot Project on low-stress streets, from Lions Park to Sylvester Park) City of Olympia

Tumwater Historical Park Trail (Replaced existing crushed rock and brick paver trail with a 10-foot-wide paved, ADA-accessible shared-use path) City of Tumwater

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Updated Regional Transportation Plan Keeps Us Moving

During the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update process, nearly 1,500 people responded to Thurston Regional Planning Council’s (TRPC) Transportation Investment Survey. About two-thirds supported raising transportation taxes and fees for their important priorities. Yet folks didn’t necessarily agree on the priorities: Widen roads – Don’t Widen Roads … More bicycle lanes – No bicycle lanes … More Transit – Less Transit … Rail Now – Rail Later – Rail Never.

What Moves You—2040 serves as a strategic blueprint for the Thurston Region’s transportation system. TRPC estimates that by the end of the 25-year planning horizon, the region will grow from about 270,000 to 400,000 residents. The share of people over 65 will likely reach 20 percent. Millennials will be mid-career and probably raising families. Peoples’ needs will change over time — as will choices.

By mid-century, will autonomous vehicles whisk us to our destinations with little human interaction? Will we have a sustainable source of funding to maintain the system we have? Where our residents live and work, and how they travel, will influence how the transportation system functions.

The Thurston Region boasts a strong history of collaboration. While the RTP is a federal- and state-required document, regional policymakers and the public went beyond requirements to envision and plan for a dynamic future. We will all need to continue working together to keep the region moving.

In 10 years, how do people feel their transportation needs will change?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Why the change?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 40%        | Will do more walking, bicycling, teleworking, riding the train. | • Retirement
            |              | • Changing physical ability
            |              | • Children entering school
            |              | • Children old enough to drive or leaving home
            |              | • More future transportation options & changing technology
| 51%        | Will do less driving. | • Congestion
            |              | • Growth
            |              | • Employment changes
            |              | • Location changes
            |              | • Environmental issues
            |              | • Increasing costs
| 43%        | Will do the same amount of walking, bus riding, carpooling/vanpooling. | |
| 30%        | Will do the same amount of driving, carpooling/vanpooling. | |
| 40%        | Will NOT carpool/vanpool, telework, ride the train. | |

2016 Retrospective — A Year of Changes

Changes were afoot in 2016 for TRPC’s transportation program. The year started off with an agency restructure, followed shortly by a major shuffle of staff responsibilities. The Transportation Policy Board and Technical Advisory Committee welcomed new members, and we unveiled a new transportation model and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) by mid-summer. Executive Director Lon Wyrick retired at the end of July, after 16 years at the helm of TRPC.

We kept the ship on a steady course, and in the latter part of 2016 we:

- Updated our agency Public Participation Plan and Council Bylaws.
- Programmed more than $9 million in federal funding for transportation projects.
- Presented the RTP’s public-outreach strategy at the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations’ annual conference, in Fort Worth, Texas.
- Negotiated federal planning funding with fellow metropolitan planning organizations and the Washington State Department of Transportation.
- Became co-chair of the South Sound Military and Community Partnership’s Transportation Work Group.

I could not be more proud of Team TRPC!

Marc Daily joins us in 2017 as the new executive director. He brings established local relationships, as well as a strong background in leadership, fiscal, and project management, collaboration, facilitation, and planning. We are excited for Marc’s leadership, and we look forward to a productive and interesting 2017. Full steam ahead!

- - R. Veena Tabbutt, Interim Executive Director

Legislative Priorities

- Fix Interstate-5 (I-5). Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has no plan for I-5 through Thurston County. Provide $5 million to WSDOT/TRPC to create plan.
- Maintain and grow public transportation services. Increase local funding options, provide state funding for interregional services, and invest $5 million to address Intercity Transit infrastructure needs.
- Thanks for supporting I-5 improvements. Need to continue funding critical interchanges and bridges and add high-occupancy vehicle capacity.
- Preserve and maintain the multimodal system and complete current projects — including state highways, local roads, bridges, and bike and pedestrian facilities.
- Maintain and increase state transportation planning funds and Regional & Rural mobility funds.
- Increase funding for fish passage culvert conversions.
County Receives $2 Million for Innovative Road Surface Safety Projects

The County has deployed low-cost counter measures, such as installing signs, pavement markings, and rumble strips, to keep cars on the road. The County is running out of places to install these lower-cost measures, however, so it will soon use a $2 million grant to improve roadway friction.

In 2013, the County began examining locations that may benefit from what’s known as High Friction Surface Treatment (HFST), a thin layer of coarse aggregates that provides long-lasting skid resistance and protection from wear and polishing. In 2014, the County formed a partnership with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to conduct an HFST demonstration and peer exchange. FHWA identified this collaborative effort as noteworthy and published a case study.

Last summer, WSDOT issued a call for “Innovative Safety Program” projects and made $25 million available to local agencies. Thurston County considered HFST for a variety of reasons, including:

- Limited impact (e.g., easier permitting thus reducing environmental review time).
- Proven Safety Counter Measure
- Provides benefits to pavement surface (similar in nature to chip seals).
- Prior experience with HFST installation.

WSDOT awarded Thurston County $2 million for 29 HFST installation locations, with construction scheduled to begin fall 2017.

High Friction Surface Treatment (HFST) is a layer of aggregates as a topping on a polymer resin binder. Expected crash reductions after HFST installation range from 32 percent for all crashes to 65 percent for wet-road crashes in rural areas, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

Photo: HFST at Thurston County Horizontal Curve Demonstration Site. Source: Scott Davis, Thurston County.

TRPC Model Helping Lewis County

TRPC began expanding its travel-demand model to all of Lewis County last year, and will use the tool to study improved access to industrial areas in and around Centralia.

Lewis County contracted with TRPC to support the North Lewis County Industrial Access (NLCIA) study, which began last summer and concludes in 2017. Using TRPC’s Greater Thurston-Lewis Region (GTLR) model, Lewis County will evaluate ways to better link industrial sites with I-5. Such sites include TransAlta Corp.’s Centralia Coal Plant, which is slated to be decommissioned and eventually redeveloped as an industrial park.

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Nearly $21 Million for Transportation Projects Throughout Thurston County

Thanks to local, state, and federal collaboration, partnerships, and funding, the Thurston Region will see 28 projects move forward during the next three years.

These priority projects will make the transportation system safer for all users, improve the efficiency of the transportation network, and repair or replace aging infrastructure. The $21 million in investments will:

• Construct the Deschutes Valley Trail, from Tumwater Historical Park to Falls Park.
• Construct two roundabouts.
• Reconstruct Desoto Street in Tumwater.
• Add sidewalks, bike lanes, and street lighting on Mullen Road, between Carpenter Road and Lacey City Limits.
• Create corridor and area transportation studies for Bucoda, Tenino, Grand Mound, Rochester, and Yelm, preparing these areas for future projects.
• Install pedestrian-activated flashing beacons in Olympia, Tumwater, Rainier, and Tenino.
• Continue Safe Routes to School programs.
• Support countywide road maintenance projects.
• Update and reprint the Thurston County Bicycle Map.
The workhorse Transportation Policy Board (TPB) tackled a heavy agenda in 2016 and made plans for an equally busy 2017.

Led by Chair Andy Ryder (City of Lacey) and Vice Chair Graeme Sackrison (Citizen Representative), the committee dug into the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update and studied the new transportation model, forecasts, public ideas and expectations, performance measures, and financing challenges. The committee completed its work in May and recommended that the Thurston Regional Planning Council adopt the final draft plan (See front-page story).

With little pause to celebrate the RTP adoption, TPB jumped right into a work program priority — to better understand how we plan for transit and rail. Policy Board members heard from Intercity Transit about fixed-route, Dial-a-Lift, ridesharing, and travel training. They learned more about the Rural & Tribal Transportation program (RT). In 2017, they plan to move to rail presentations and discussions.

Fall 2016 brought to the TPB table the 2017-2019 Federal Funding – Call for Projects. In addition to providing input on the process, board members dealt with the “paperwork” requirements, such as recommending adoption of the 2017-2020 Regional Transportation Improvement Program and various amendments.

Along the way, guest speakers reported on bike and pedestrian strategies, tools for improving access to trails, school Walk ‘N’ Roll and bus programs, and road projects such as the Yelm Loop. The Policy Board also helped develop the 2017 Legislative Priorities (See story, Pg. 2) and served as a focus group for a state Commute Trip Reduction Board strategy proposal.

TRPC’s travel-demand model — which also includes parts of Mason, Grays Harbor and Pierce counties — incorporates land use, population, and employment forecasts to project vehicle routes and volumes through 2040. Such information will help engineers, planners and policymakers evaluate whether roads and highway interchanges need to be improved or added to enhance capacity, multimodal amenities, and access to Lewis County’s northern industrial sites.

TRPC will run through its model several project scenarios, including land use or roadway options, and will provide each scenario’s base year and forecast results to the NLCIA project team for further performance evaluation. TRPC also will link volume maps, screenline summaries and tables that note vehicle miles traveled and vehicle hours traveled to compare current year, baseline 2040, and project scenario options.

Lewis County will contract with TRPC to maintain the model going forward, so it may be used for other projects. For more information about the model, visit trpc.org.
Regional Partnership - Videos Promote Transportation Services to Ease I-5 Congestion

Traffic on I-5 between Tumwater and Lakewood is a frustrating experience to everyone who travels the largest corridor on the West Coast. Congestion and delays cost people, businesses, and communities time and money.

The JBLM/I-5 Congestion Relief Action Plan included strategies to alleviate congestion on I-5’s South Sound segment by encouraging JBLM service members, defense employees, and others who travel to the base to use transit, carpool or vanpool, and other employer-based programs such as telework and flex schedules.

Since 2012, JBLM has developed and formalized on-base programs to help active-duty personnel, employees, dependents, and contractors travel easily and cheaply to and from base without a car. The Go Lewis McChord program offers three services: Go Transit, Go Bike, and Go Vanpool.

In 2016, TRPC partnered with JBLM, Pierce County, Pierce Transit, and Intercity Transit to develop three short animated videos to market the Go Lewis McChord services. TRPC contracted with Creative Media Alliance from Seattle to direct and produce the videos. All the project stakeholders contributed valuable input to the script, the scenery, the vehicles, and military uniforms and hairstyles.

The videos highlight the benefits of the program’s travel options. They also convey in a positive and upbeat manner what makes JBLM and the South Sound special. The partners will release videos one at a time during the next three months, on GoLewisMcChord.com, YouTube, Facebook, and other social media. To learn more about JBLM’s transportation services, visit www.GoLewisMcChord.com.