2017 Notable Projects in the Thurston Region

The region hummed with projects and programs to improve safety, efficiency, and mobility. This is just a small sample of that good work:

**Tipsoo Loop Pavement Restoration:** Completed pavement restoration of Tipsoo Loop, Tipsoo Dr., Sunrise Ln., and Reflection Ln. City of Rainier

**Bus Stop Enhancements for Improved Accessibility & Safety:** Increased pedestrian safety and allowed ADA bus ramp deployment to meet federal standards at 60 bus stops in Thurston County, Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, and Yelm; installed interior solar lighting at 13 more shelters. Intercity Transit

**Marvin Road Improvements Public/Private Partnership Project:** Reconstructed more than 2,100 linear feet of Marvin Rd., from Britton Parkway/Willamette Dr. roundabout to 30th Ave. NE. City of Lacey

**Gate-Belmore Trail Connectivity Study:** Completed study and removed the rails and rail ties from the county-owned section. Thurston County

**Pattison Street Maintenance, Operation & Administrative Base:** Began construction of Phase 1 to decommission old underground fuel storage tanks and install new. Intercity Transit

**Fones Road Value Planning:** Partnered with the Center for Sustainable Infrastructure in a value-planning exercise to explore design solutions to transportation problems along this major corridor; this included identifying options to meet the community vision at lower cost. City of Olympia

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Adaptation Plan Keeps Region Resilient When Climate Threatens Transportation

Storms, floods, droughts, wildfires … We face these natural hazards today, and climate change is projected to worsen them tomorrow. Fortunately, we can reduce our risks, respond to impacts, and remain resilient.

This is a guiding principle of the Thurston Regional Planning Council’s newly adopted *Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan* — an ambitious effort to help the Thurston County region prepare for and adjust to climate impacts on roads, bridges, streams, shorelines, and other built and natural assets. The plan has more than 91 actions — including 25 priorities — for tribes, municipalities, utilities, households, and others.

“All of us will be impacted — especially the most vulnerable populations,” said Lacey Deputy Mayor Cynthia Pratt, who served on the adaptation plan’s stakeholder committee. “Floods, landslides, and severe windstorms may block roads with downed trees, utility lines, water and/or mud, making it difficult to access or leave homes. Emergency responders may not arrive in time to help those who might need medical attention.”

See Adaptation, Page 3

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Downed power poles and limbs halt traffic on Yelm Highway, in Lacey, following a May 4, 2017, “microburst” storm event that featured heavy rains and a sudden downdraft of air. The storm, which caused the most private-property loss in the city’s history, damaged more than 40 structures. Source: City of Lacey

Continued on Page 7
In 2017, the Thurston Regional Planning Council celebrated 50 years of service to the region. We had more than 100 past and present council members, staff, and other local leaders attend a 50th anniversary event in October to recognize TRPC’s community contributions. As part of the event, we looked at transportation’s past and future through the lens of an Olympia intersection — Capitol Way and Legion Way.

It was amazing to see that just 50 years before TRPC was created, our cobblestone roads were shared by pedestrians, horse carriages, some cars, and a trolley!

By 1967, the car was clearly king. Capitol Way was part of the Pacific Coast Highway and downtown was bustling.

Yet, with completion of I-5, Capitol Way returned to a local street. By 2017, the scale of transportation and development in downtown had changed and calmed substantially. Thankfully, we have some trees again!

Looking ahead, we are on the cusp of a transportation revolution akin to the automobile. Soon, driverless vehicles will change the way we get around. Drones — and, yes, robots — will fetch and deliver products to our doorsteps. By 2067, we might even see flying cars across Thurston County’s horizon. There are already several flying-car manufacturers that believe they are close to taking their products to market. These changes could dramatically change the look and feel of our community, potentially returning the ground to pedestrians and bicyclists, while the sky becomes our highway.

Whatever the future holds for transportation, with our communities coming together through TRPC, our region will continue to thrive for decades to come.

— Marc Daily, Executive Director
2018 State Legislative Session

Each year, TRPC policymakers educate the Washington Legislature on regional priority issues, emphasizing the need for state/local collaboration and partnerships. Our residents rely on our ability to work together for innovative, equitable, and efficient solutions.

Transportation:
“I-5 is such a fragile system — it doesn’t take much to break it.”

This comment, from a local transportation professional, articulates the urgency of fixing I-5, one of the region’s primary transportation priorities, during the 2018 state legislative session.

I-5: Invest $5M in “Congestions Solutions — Mounts Road through Tumwater,” an action strategy to support mobility, economic vitality, and military transport, while improving environmental functions.

I-5: Improve interchanges and bridges & add High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) capacity in Pierce and Thurston counties.

Maintain and Grow Public Transportation: Increase local funding options, provide state funding for interregional services, and invest $5M for capacity needs at Intercity Transit’s Maintenance & Operation facility.

Preserve and Maintain the multimodal system.

Shared Revenue Options & Local Funding:
Equitably share Liquor and Marijuana Revenues.

Fully fund local options for Transportation, Environment, Economic Development, and Homelessness/Affordable Housing.

Fully fund state-mandated Planning, including Buildable Lands.

Adaptation
Continued from Page 1

More than a dozen of the plan’s actions pertain to our region’s transportation network, which includes 235 bridges, 2,235 miles of roads, 59 miles of paved trails, and 748 miles of sidewalks. Many actions are new to the region, while other actions are underway and could be expanded. Each identifies a lead, partner, and timeline for implementation. Examples include:

Action G-06: Create a household preparedness plan and store of food, water, and other supplies (lanterns, bicycles, etc.) to use in case a flood or other hazard cuts off access to goods, services, and emergency responders.

Action G-11: Factor climate impacts into the full life-cycle costs of roads, buildings, parks, and other assets — from their initial siting and design to their ongoing operations and maintenance.

Action G-17: Advocate for expanding the eligibility of federal disaster-assistance funding to allow for the replacement or relocation of aging or vulnerable infrastructure before it fails.

Action F-16: Retrofit or relocate low-lying roads vulnerable to coastal or inland flooding.

The full adaptation plan — as well as its companion Resilience Toolkit and “Resilience Road” board game — are available online at www.trpc.org/climate.
TRPC Awards $1.7 Million to Regional Priority Projects

TRPC recently concluded its 2017 Federal Funding Call for Projects by selecting eight transportation proposals that will support the goals of the Regional Transportation Plan. Funded by federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) grants, the projects will make the region’s transportation system safer, improve the efficiency of the transportation network, and repair or replace aging infrastructure.

TRPC selected the following priority projects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>GRANT</th>
<th>AWARD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  The City of Rainier Binghampton Streetscape Project Phase 1</td>
<td>STP</td>
<td>$95,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  The City of Yelm SW Mosman Avenue Phase 2 Project</td>
<td>STP</td>
<td>$338,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  The City of Tumwater Desoto Street Stabilization and Rehabilitation Project</td>
<td>STP</td>
<td>$66,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Intercity Transit Walk N Roll Program 2019-2020</td>
<td>CMAQ</td>
<td>$95,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Intercity Transit Walk N Roll Program 2020-2021</td>
<td>CMAQ</td>
<td>$95,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Multi-agency Smart Corridors Signal Upgrade and Transit Signal Priority Project: Phase II 2018</td>
<td>CMAQ</td>
<td>$387,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Multi-agency Smart Corridors Signal Upgrade and Transit Signal Priority Project: Phase II 2020</td>
<td>CMAQ</td>
<td>$268,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  City of Olympia Traffic Signal Controller Upgrade to Support TSP and Enhanced Signal Coordination</td>
<td>CMAQ</td>
<td>$363,480</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Madison Elementary students participating in Intercity Transit’s Walk N Roll program.
Improving the Capitol Campus, One Step and One Stall At A Time

Parking and politics — two topics not considered as dinner table fare, but for the Washington Department of Enterprise Services (DES), parking is their daily bread and butter. In 2015, the Washington Legislature directed DES to implement strategies to improve access to “the people’s house.”

Tomy Mollas, DES Transportation Demand Manager, led staff members through the difficult task of converting 6,000 parking stalls in 28 locations into a more efficient and fair system that reduced the number of reserved stalls, implemented a robust enforcement program, increased the availability of visitor parking and spots for people with disabilities, and improved signage. DES’s effort resulted in: 700 reserved spots converted to general purpose; 133 more employee spaces and new visitor parking in the Plaza Garage; and, an on-going effort to install new technology to guide people to available spots and to facilitate enforcement.

Great results. Painful steps: raising parking fees, working with agencies to give up reserved spots, reducing the size of parking stalls in the Plaza Garage, and issuing more parking tickets. In 2017, the State added 400 employees to the Capitol Campus’ new Helen Sommers building (106 11th Ave. SE). Construction included demolishing a parking structure.

The state Commute Trip Reduction Law (CTR) recognizes the “state’s crucial leadership role,” calling for agencies to “aggressively develop substantive programs to reduce commute trips by state employees.” Strong advocates of that law, DES staff members educate state employees about alternate ways to travel when an employee requests a parking permit.

“A new employee, or one who just moved to a new location, is already in a change-mode,” Mollas explained, “so this is a great time to encourage transit, carpools, vanpools, walking, or biking.”

“Politics is not worrying this country one-tenth as much as where to find a parking space.”
– Will Rogers

The new Helen Sommers building at Capitol Way and 11th Avenue in Olympia eliminated about 260 parking spots.
On the morning of Dec. 18, 2017, an Amtrak train derailed while crossing over Interstate 5 (I-5), near DuPont. The derailment closed the highway’s southbound lanes for three days, and the transportation impacts were felt throughout the Puget Sound region.

I-5, the main north-south transportation corridor for the nation’s west coast, carries about 60,000 southbound vehicles a day. The incident occurred just north of the I-5 Nisqually River bridge, one of only a few ways over the river for vehicles. The State of Washington recommended two ways to detour around the closure (see map) — both adding miles of travel for frustrated travelers, and directing traffic through the downtowns of numerous small cities along the routes.

The City of Yelm had recently contracted with the Thurston Regional Planning Council to develop a traffic simulation model that examined not only traffic conditions within the city, but could also simulate the effect that incidents on I-5 have on traffic through Yelm — an ongoing issue for the city. TRPC’s modeling team quickly calibrated the model

Screenshots show simulations of traffic through Yelm under average rush hour conditions (left) and during rush hour when I-5 was closed in the southbound direction (right).
In her career, she spent time with the Community Transportation Association of America and CTA-NW, supporting people who — because of age, income, or ability — face mobility challenges. She knows that transportation happens “one seat, one ride, one trip at a time.”

Former State Representative and current TVW Executive Director Sinclair served on the State House Transportation Committee, as well as Snohomish County’s Committee for Improved Transportation, Economic Development Council, and Planning Commission.

“I enjoy working with governments to build quality of life,” Sinclair said. “Increased transportation options and congestion relief will benefit the community, my company, and my own personal travel.”

Ryder noted the importance of business voices at the table. “The private sector will build the community we envision,” he said. “We need them at all stages of planning.”

New voices. New ideas. Never too early.

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**Modeling**

Continued from Page 6

The Transportation Policy Board meets at 7:00 a.m. on the second Wednesday of every month but August.

**TPB**

Continued from Page 2

**Countywide Safety Upgrades:**
Upgraded more than 9 miles, including new paint lines. Installed shoulder rumble strips on Steamboat Island Rd. Thurston County

**Sussex Avenue Flashing Beacons:** Installed pedestrian-activated flashing beacons at Sussex Ave. & Custer St., as well as at Sussex Ave. & Ritter St. City of Tenino

**Bald Hills Rd. SE Upgrade:**
Upgraded about 2.5 miles of Bald Hills Rd. SE, from Smith Prairie Rd. SE to Lacomas Creek, providing 11-ft. travel lanes, 5-ft. paved shoulders, centerline/shoulder rumble strips, and associated stormwater facilities. Thurston County

**Citywide Pedestrian Crossing Safety Improvement Project:**
Installed flashing beacons at six pedestrian crossings: Mullen Rd. at Timberline High School; Mullen Rd. at Lakes Elementary School; 54th Ave. SE at Aspire Middle School; Mullen Rd. at Komachin Middle School; Sleater-Kinney Rd. at Woodward Trail; and 6th Ave. NE at Chinook Middle School/ North Thurston High School. City of Lacey

**Beaver Creek Bridge:**
Used a prefabricated bridge to replace a culvert over Beaver Creek during an expedited 1-month construction window. Prefabricated the bridge offsite in units sized for placement in this environmentally sensitive area; this method resulted in 50% reduction in project costs. Thurston County

**Walk ‘N’ Roll Program:**
Encouraged more than 8,200 students, parents, teachers, and elected officials in events in North Thurston, Olympia, and Tumwater school districts; additionally, 74 students graduated from “Earn a Bike” classes, and 93 bikes were completely overhauled at the program’s bike shop. There were a total of 1,296 volunteer hours dedicated to the bike program — a 50% increase over the prior year. Intercity Transit

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Modeling

Continued from Page 6

to reflect the derailment conditions — including diverting traffic to alternative routes, estimating how many people chose not to travel, and simulating the effects of traffic flow through signalized intersections by using flaggers.

The model confirmed what people on the ground were experiencing — the trip from SR 512 to Yelm that normally takes around 40 minutes was taking 3-5 hours.

“The modeling exercise coincided with a tragic event that demonstrated exactly why we needed the study. When I-5 fails, the alternate routes fail too,” explained Yelm Mayor JW Foster. “This model captured real data that clearly demonstrated the need to move quickly to increase the capacity and safety of this state highway.”

Next steps are to use the model to identify short- and long-term solutions for the identified bottlenecks. To see the simulation, follow this link: [www.trpc.org/861/Subarea-Models](http://www.trpc.org/861/Subarea-Models).

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Assessing the State We’re In: TRPC published an inaugural State of Our Transportation System report last year that focused on pavement preservation, bridges, and fish-passage barriers. The report, which will focus on sidewalks, transit, and other topics in future editions, found that our roads are generally in good condition today. There isn’t sufficient funding to maintain or repair our fast-growing region’s roads, however. Local jurisdictions collectively spend around $10 million annually on pavement preservation; it would take $25 million to maintain roadways in their current condition, according to the report. Without additional resources, in 10 years, the average roadway condition will be poor. Learn more: www.trpc.org/820/State-of-Our-Transportation-System.

Measuring What We Can Manage: TRPC hired a team of Seattle-based consultants last year to assess Thurston County’s carbon footprint and potential “wedge” pathways to hitting emissions-reduction targets. The consultants — Clean Energy Transition and the Stockholm Environment Institute — developed an “energy map” that shows the greenhouse gas emissions associated with Thurston County’s 2015 electricity generation sources (coal, natural gas, etc.) and end uses (buildings, vehicles, etc.). Next, the consultants developed a “carbon wedge” analysis, a series of graphs that show Thurston County’s actual 1990 and 2015 emissions and the 2020, 2035, and 2050 emissions-reduction targets that TRPC adopted in its Sustainable Thurston plan. Wedges in the graphs show the emissions-reduction impacts of existing state and federal policies from the baseline; additional wedges show the impact of potential climate mitigation actions, including reducing vehicle miles traveled and fossil-fuel power generation. TRPC and its municipal partners will use the analysis to identify actions to include in the Regional Transportation Plan and other policy documents. Learn more: www.trpc.org/647/Greenhouse-Gas-Emissions.

Envisioning the Future of Transit: Approximately 3,500 individuals joined the Intercity Transit Road Trip, making over 10,000 comments about the future of transit in the community. IT General Manager Ann Freeman-Manzanares applauded the level of engagement: “We heard that people value our drivers and service.” And they want more: later, earlier, weekend, and more frequent service; expanded routes; improved bus stops, fare systems, and technology; increased Dial-A-Lift and Dash. “We can’t do it all, and will need to examine the trade-offs and how we can fund the ‘more,’” explained Freeman-Manzanares. IT is working with a steering committee to recommend options and opportunities, and will want to hear from the public again in Spring 2018. Learn more: www.itroadtrip.net/.

Riding a Cleaner, Greener Bus: ruralTRANSIT (rT) provides weekday transit service for the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation and the communities of Rochester, Tenino, Bucoda, Rainier, and Yelm. In 2017, rT added six new “smart-fuel” vehicles to the fleet. All propane-powered, the buses “fuel up” at the Rochester office, reduce environmental impacts and provide more cost-effective and efficient service. Sunny days are on the way. Put on your spring togs, and explore the South County on rT! Learn more: www.trpc.org/325/Rural-Transit.