The Sustainable Thurston project is an opportunity to shape this region’s future as well as the actions, and responsibilities to achieve it.
Public Safety Panel Process

Between April 2011 and January 2012, public safety professionals from around the Thurston Region, including fire protection agencies, Thurston County Medic One, TCOMM9-1-1, law enforcement, emergency management, plans examiners, private ambulance company management, Thurston County Prosecutor’s Office, and college security directors convened to discuss a wide range of aspects of public safety.

Who was involved?

Jim Quackenbush, TCOMM 9-1-1, Panel Chair
Brian VanCamp, South Bay Fire Department, Panel Alternate-Chair
Steve Romines, Thurston County Medic One
Pete Suver, Thurston County Medic One
Christen Anton Peters, Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office
Tim Braniff, Thurston County Sheriff’s Office
Howard Thronson, Saint Martins University
Kathy Dickson, Lacey Fire District 3
Steve North, McLane Black Lake Fire Department
Rita Hutcheson (Retired), SE Thurston Fire Authority
Brian Stewart, SE Thurston Fire Authority
Greg Wright, Olympia Fire Department
Chris Edmark, Thurston County
Kathy Estes, Thurston County Emergency Management
Mark Gregory, Bald Hills Fire Department
Jim McGarva, Tumwater Fire Department
Terry Ware, Olympic Ambulance Company
Jon Weiks, Tumwater Police Department

Panel Support
Paul Brewster, TRPC
Jailyn Brown, TRPC

The panel members answered three key questions that serve as the findings of this white paper:

1. What is working well with respect to the provision of public safety services within the Thurston Region?
2. What are the challenges or barriers, at present and perhaps the future, with public safety?
3. What are the opportunities to improve public safety?
About This Project

This community conversation comes at a time when the issues of economic resilience and efficiency are foremost in our minds. Our region’s households, governments, nonprofits and businesses are making the most of resources in order to maintain quality of life and build toward a more resilient economy, society, and environment.

This region and its 29 public and private sector partners successfully competed for a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from the Federal Office of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Their interest in making these grants possible is to encourage regions to incorporate livability principles into sustainability plan discussions since these are proving to be essential to the creation of resilient communities.

The Sustainable Thurston Plan will build upon:
1) **Thurston Region Population Projections** estimated to add 120,000 additional residents between 2010 and 2035
2) **Existing state, regional, and local plans** as the base scenario for plan discussion and analysis
3) **State Requirements** set forth in the Growth Management Act
4) **Livability Principles**
   - Provide more transportation choices
   - Promote equitable affordable housing
   - Enhance economic competitiveness
   - Support existing communities
   - Coordinate policies and leverage investment
   - Value communities and neighborhoods

About Sustainable Thurston Panels

The Sustainable Thurston process begins with information development through a series of “white papers” produced by panels and work groups and reviewed by the Sustainable Thurston Task Force. This work will inform the three phase public process about a variety of elements that support our community and work together to enhance quality of life. These include:

- Economic development
- Housing
- Water infrastructure, stormwater, sewer
- Solid waste
- Public safety
- Schools and transportation
- Health and human services
- Local food systems
- Land use, transportation, climate change
- Energy
- Public outreach and education

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..................................................................................................................1

Who Keeps Us Safe?.....................................................................................................................1
Is the Thurston region a Safe Place?..........................................................................................1
Focus on Sustainable Public Safety...........................................................................................1
Recurring Themes.........................................................................................................................2

1. INTRODUCTION..................................................................................................................3

Background—The Sustainable Thurston Project........................................................................3
Public Safety Needs in Long-Term Planning...............................................................................3
Who Keeps Us Safe?.....................................................................................................................4

2. SAFETY BY THE NUMBERS..........................................................................................7

Fatal and Nonfatal Injuries..........................................................................................................7
Law Enforcement and Crime Statistics.......................................................................................9
Emergency Medical Services System and Fire Protection Statistics........................................11

3. WHAT TO CONSIDER FOR SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC SAFETY..............................15

I. Land Use & Design – Incorporate Emergency Response.........................................................15
II. Public Safety Collaboration – Meeting Needs Efficiently......................................................18
III. Accommodating Growth – Challenges...............................................................................20
IV. A Well Trained Public – Better for All...............................................................................22
V. Catastrophes Create Opportunities – Planning Ahead..........................................................24

4. SUMMARY..........................................................................................................................27

APPENDIX A - Contents List......................................................................................................29
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Who Keeps Us Safe?
Public safety begins with the public – the true first responders to an emergency. A variety of professionals and volunteers play essential roles to support public safety and provide emergency services – 9-1-1 dispatchers, law enforcement officers, firefighters/EMTs, paramedics, emergency managers, prosecutors, judges, corrections personnel, social workers, public health professionals, building inspectors, plans examiners, and many others.

Officials from a variety of agencies within the Thurston region convened on a Public Safety Panel to identify issues, from an emergency services perspective, critical to creating/maintaining a sustainable community in the Thurston region. This white paper highlights the major strengths, challenges, opportunities and implications for sustaining effective and efficient public safety efforts into the future.

Is the Thurston region a Safe Place?
Yes – the vast majority of our residents live their daily lives safe from harm and have excellent access to emergency services when they need them. Data bears this out. Our region’s crime rate is fifteen percent lower than the state’s average. Police, fire and emergency medical response times are good for a region of this area and population.

But, with growth and tightening budgets, this picture may be changing. For example, the number of police officers employed per thousand residents has steadily fallen county-wide for the last several years. With resources shrinking, police and other emergency service providers have to focus more on responding to incidents, and less on successful prevention, coordination and efficiency efforts. The problem is further exacerbated by the elimination of public health and social service programs, shifting many of the issues these programs addressed onto emergency service providers without a commensurate increase in resources.

Focus on Sustainable Public Safety
Part of the reason people find the Thurston region a good place to work, live and raise a family is that we enjoy a strong sense of safety. How do we foster and uphold that security as our region grows? The Public Safety Panel highlighted some key areas to address:

I. Land Use & Design
How we develop is changing, from where we locate homes and places of business to the design and materials used in building. But we’re seeing that these changes may not adequately support emergency services access. And while our community needs these emergency services, siting of important infrastructure, like public safety radio systems and correctional facilities, is becoming increasingly difficult and expensive.

II. Collaboration
In the Thurston region, our public safety and emergency service providers work extremely well together and with other service providers like prosecutors, and public health and social services personnel. Such collaboration results in better levels of service and more efficient operations. However, continuing cuts in resources reduces opportunities for interagency or intradepartmental collaboration, training exercises, and specialized teams.
III. Accommodating Growth
In recent years, with growing budget strains, public safety and emergency service providers have been forced to scale back services. Without a sustainable way to grow services with population, the high sense of security our region enjoys is at risk.

IV. A Well Trained Public
As the first responders to any emergency, it is important that the public be well informed and trained in preventing, planning for and responding to emergencies. Keeping the public informed and providing basic safety and emergency response instruction requires considerable effort. Public education and information is a vulnerable budget category when agencies have to choose between outreach or providing direct services.

V. Catastrophes Create Opportunities
No one likes to think about disasters, but planning for them is essential. As devastating as disasters can be to our community, it's important to recognize that advance preparation may identify opportunities to rebuild in more sustainable ways. Measures such as building resilient infrastructure, continually honing our response capabilities, and pre-planning how we want our community to be restored during the recovery period are important components of sustainable development.

Recurring Themes
There are no easy answers to resolving the region’s public safety challenges. The Public Safety Panel developed a number of potential recommendations in response to the issues identified above.

- Continued planning, training and updating of equipment are essential, both for our public safety professionals and the public. These activities are especially threatened by budget cutbacks.
- Emergency services need a sustainable revenue structure. The current structure is not keeping up with increasing demand for services.
- Elimination of safety net public health and social services programs removes a layer of emergency prevention and inadvertently shifts added responsibility onto emergency response services. Prevention is important and should be emphasized in policies and budgets.
- Collaboration among our region’s emergency service agencies is one of the community’s distinguishing achievements, markedly improving the level, range and efficiency of service our residents enjoy. These efforts should be encouraged and supported.
1. INTRODUCTION

Background—The Sustainable Thurston Project

The Thurston Regional Planning Council’s (TRPC) population forecast estimates that 120,000 more people will reside in Thurston County by the year 2040. Where and how our future population will be housed will have profound implications for the provision of government and community services. More people will place greater demands on infrastructure, social services, and environmental resources. Our growth will also offer new opportunities for economic development that can lead to the creation of vital urban centers, and grant people more affordable housing and transportation choices.

The Sustainable Thurston project is a three-year region-wide planning process that aims to gather a broad range of ideas, and to formulate goals and actions for how our communities will grow sustainably in the future. In general, this project will collect information from a variety of experts and community professionals, as well as those who live, work and play here. Throughout the process, people will have opportunities to engage in community conversations about how our region’s future might look and function. Policy makers and the public will evaluate data-driven alternative land use scenarios and consider where people could live and work. In the end, the communities’ visions for future growth will be incorporated into a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. This project will also result in updates to the cities’ and County’s comprehensive plans, the Regional Transportation Plan, and the County-Wide Planning Policies. In addition, this project will produce a Regional Housing Plan and a Regional Economic Strategy.

Public Safety Needs in Long-Term Planning

For all of this project's subject areas including economic development, housing, water-sewer-stormwater, solid waste, health and human services, local food systems, schools and transportation, landuse-transportation-climate change, and energy, expert panels were formed to collect information and data about what is working well, what’s not, and opportunities. This white paper is the culmination of the Public Safety Panel’s discussions about the long-term sustainability of public safety services in the Thurston Region. This paper chiefly focuses on emergency and safety services available to respond when individual or community safety is immediately threatened. It is not an exhaustive summary of all of the public safety issues in the region, but rather highlights the major strengths, challenges, opportunities, and their implications of services today and the overall safety of our communities thirty years from now.

Although one could infer that public safety is intrinsic to the goals of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), the act itself does not require any specific emergency service public safety elements to be considered in context to the accommodation of population growth, or to be included in cities’ and counties’ comprehensive plans, but it is prudent to do so. The efforts of the Public Safety Panel’s planning process are consistent with the State Legislature’s intent to coordinate planning within the laws of GMA:

“... uncoordinated and unplanned growth, together with a lack of common goals expressing the public’s interest in the conservation and the wise use of our lands, pose a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety, and high quality of life enjoyed by residents of this state. It is in the public interest that citizens, communities, local governments, and the private sector cooperate and coordinate with one another in comprehensive land use planning...”

1 Washington State Growth Management Act, Legislative Findings, RCW 36.70A.010
Safety must be incorporated into every aspect of community planning, whether we’re considering land use, public health, housing, industry, transportation, schools, or utilities. The long term viability and sustainability of a community can be measured by its resilience to natural disasters, ability to protect environmentally sensitive areas, suppress criminal behavior, and prevent and respond to unintentional injuries and fatalities within its population.

Our community’s safety is also affected by state, national and even international situations. The challenge is to sort out what can be affected at the local level and, further, what issues should be tackled proactively versus those that must/should wait for a reactive response. But without intentional consideration of how we build and service our communities, unintended and perhaps untenable responsibilities may continue to accrue unmet for our public safety sector.

Who Keeps Us Safe?

A variety of professionals such as law enforcement officers, fire fighters, paramedics, fire marshals, emergency managers, 9-1-1 dispatchers, plans examiners, building inspectors, social workers, public health professionals, traffic engineers, prosecutors, judges, corrections personnel, and others all play a role in making the Thurston region a safe place to live, work, and play.

Within Thurston County, there are six municipal and two tribal law enforcement agencies, three college campus police or security departments, and the Washington State Patrol. There are three municipal fire departments, fifteen individual fire protection districts, and two regional fire authorities. Most of the fire protection agencies are operated substantially by volunteers, with the exception of the larger municipal fire departments.

Thurston County Medic One is a public, countywide tiered Emergency Medical Services (EMS) System. Medic One provides coordinated fire-services based basic and advanced life support (ALS), emergency medical and trauma care, and transport services for the entire County population within a 727 square mile area. Sixteen fire departments provide basic life support (BLS) and are certified as First Responder or Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) levels. There are fifty BLS units to provide countywide coverage.

All Thurston County BLS Agencies have been auto-defibrillation capable since 1986 and epinephrine pen qualified (to treat severe allergic reactions) since 2000.

There are seven medic unit stations that serve Thurston County’s ALS functions. Thurston County Medic One contracts with three ALS fire agencies to provide countywide paramedic response and transport. Established in 1974, Medic One is believed to be the nation’s first such countywide EMS system.

Thurston Communications 9-1-1 or TCOMM 9-1-1 (formerly CAPCOM), an independent intergovernmental organization, has provided 9-1-1, emergency communications and central dispatch services countywide for all police, fire, and emergency medical services since 1970. Telecommunicators answer all emergency calls within Thurston County, dispatching public safety response vehicles and personnel according to standardized protocols developed by law enforcement and fire response agencies. An extensive radio infrastructure is in place at twenty-three separate, strategically chosen locations throughout the county, to provide response agencies essential communications tools to assure safe responses to emergencies. An extensive mobile computer infrastructure serves all public safety departments that incorporate a private/public solution to

In Thurston County, 56 of 550 firefighters are paramedics and over 90 percent are EMTs.
assure reliability. TCOMM 9-1-1 answers and dispatches public safety resources to all emergencies, and when major disaster situations occur, they dispatch and track the extensive list of resources associated with that disaster until Thurston County Emergency Management mobilizes an Emergency Operations Center to assist.

Thurston County Emergency Management plays a lead role in strategic planning and organization of the region’s capacities and assets to respond to disaster events. There are also multiple non-governmental organizations that augment public sector safety organizations, such as the American Red Cross, Disaster Assistance Council, Thurston County Search and Rescue, and the Crisis Clinic.

There is a strong tradition of collaboration among our region’s public safety partners, both within and beyond Thurston County’s border, out of the recognition that collective efforts of many exceed the singular efforts of few. These partnerships foster a joint approach to planning, training, exercising, and sharing resources; and executing when the time comes to respond to major emergency events. The Emergency Management Council of Thurston County was created in 1993, via an interlocal agreement to coordinate the local emergency management activities of the county, cities and tribes.

Thurston County, Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater are members of a broader five-county emergency management mutual aid organization known as the Washington State Homeland Security Region 3. This region, comprised of Thurston, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, and Pacific Counties, is formalized by an omnibus mutual aid agreement to coordinate emergency response efforts in the event of a major natural or technological disaster.
2. SAFETY BY THE NUMBERS

Is Thurston County a safe place? What will be the effect of future natural disasters, budget cuts and changes in levels of service? Understanding the answers to these questions cannot occur in a vacuum. Providing emergency services may seem like a separate, independent area of focus but, in reality, it is another example of the complex and interconnected nature of the elements that make and support a community.

Thurston County is a safe place. The vast majority of residents can expect to live their daily lives free from harm. Public health officials maintain sanitary conditions, engineers and building officials strive to develop and maintain safe infrastructure, and law enforcement officers, paramedics and fire fighters stand ready at seconds’ notice to respond to emergencies within our communities. Aside from the risks of infrequent major natural disaster, such as a sudden large scale earthquake and its aftershocks, our population faces little collective risk. Most of the risk associated with life in our region involves individuals who may be at greater risk for injury or death due to a health condition, or because of contact with criminal activity or negligent behavior.

Fatal and Nonfatal Injuries

The Thurston region is no different than Washington State or the United States with respect to the causes of fatalities and injuries. Most deaths in our region result from natural causes such as disease or the effects of aging. First responders certainly play a key role in responding to cardiac arrest and other acute complications that arise from health problems, but these types of incidents are largely connected with individual health, public health, and healthcare systems. Most disease related fatalities are also age related, such as cancer, cardio- and cerebrovascular diseases.

Trauma is a disease of epidemic proportions. Each year, over 140,000 Americans die from trauma. It kills more Americans between the ages of one and thirty-four than all of the other diseases combined. It is the leading cause of death for all people under the age of forty-four, and is the leading cause of disability for all people under age sixty-five. It is also a significant cause of death and disability among the elderly due to increasing numbers of senior falls.²

Thirty to forty percent of all trauma deaths occur within hours of the injury, usually from shock or external bleeding³, so decreasing basic and advanced life support response times play a significant role in saving peoples’ lives. In Washington State, approximately ninety percent of trauma is unintentional in nature. Assault and self-inflicted injuries account for the remaining nine percent of cases. By examining trauma or unintentional injury and unintentional fatality data by age, we can better understand threats to public safety beyond those that are mostly health- and/or age-related.

Did you know...

...motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of unintentional injury deaths in Thurston County.


In Washington State:

- Cancer, heart- and cerebrovascular diseases are the leading causes of death for people aged forty-five or older (all races, both sexes)
- Trauma fatalities are the leading cause of death among people aged one to forty-four (all races, both sexes), and traffic related fatalities are highest among people aged five to twenty-four
- Poisonings/drug overdoses (30.2 percent), falls (26.5 percent), and traffic-related deaths (23.2 percent) are the leading causes of unintentional fatalities for all Washington residents
- Suicide is the single highest cause of intentional injury deaths (self-inflicted, 13.2 fatalities per 100,000 people/year)
- Falls (52 percent), traffic accidents (11 percent), and poisonings/ drug overdose (6.9 percent) are the leading cause of non-fatal injury hospitalizations

In Thurston County:

- Motor vehicle and traffic related fatalities (27.6 percent) are the leading cause of unintentional injury death, followed by falls (27.2 percent) and poisonings/drug overdose (25 percent) for all ages combined
- Suicide is the leading cause of intentional injury-related fatalities (14.3 fatalities per 100,000 people/year)
- Falls (49.3 percent), traffic (10 percent), and poisonings/drug overdose (5.8 percent) are the leading cause of non-fatal injury hospitalizations

Data clearly shows that traveling on our state’s streets and highways presents significant risks to motor vehicle drivers, occupants, as well as pedestrians and cyclists. Fatalities are primarily due to operator error including impairment, speeding, and distracted driving.

Between 2004 and 2008, 1,221 impairment-involved fatal motor vehicle crashes in Washington State resulted in 1,363 deaths; an average of 273 deaths per year. This accounts for approximately forty-six percent of all traffic related deaths during the five-year period. Half of impairment deaths were persons between sixteen and thirty years of age. Almost two-thirds of impairment-related deaths were in rural areas.

Speeding was involved in forty percent of all traffic deaths during the same period. Over half of the persons who died in speeding-related crashes were also between sixteen and thirty years old. Over half of speeding-related deaths occurred in rural areas.

Distracted driving contributed to 758 deaths, accounting for nearly twenty-six percent of all traffic-related fatalities. Collision data collected by crash investigators often underreports driver distraction because there is no evidence at the crash scene and drivers are reluctant to admit distraction played a role in the crash.

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Law Enforcement and Crime Statistics

Countywide, law enforcement receives and responds to a variety of requests for police aid and services. TCOMM 9-1-1 tracks over 190 police call type definitions that range from abandoned vehicles to water rescues. In 2010, TCOMM 9-1-1 reported 235,656 law enforcement related dispatched calls, and 239,723 in 2009. Between 2009 through 2010, local law enforcement officers responded to 69,259 traffic stops and 14,239 traffic related incidents. Combined, traffic related calls represented nearly eighteen percent of all police responses, more than twice the number of the next highest police response activity, follow-up phone calls, either to citizens who request a call from an officer, or to re-contact persons involved in a prior situation or case.7

The Thurston region has a relatively low crime rate of 34 (offenses per 1,000 people) compared to the statewide rate of 40. In the last twenty-five years, crime rates have decreased for the state and for communities in Thurston County. In 1985, the crime rate within the Thurston County Sheriff’s jurisdiction was 37.2. In 2010 the crime rate was 23.5. Countywide there were 5,196 adult and 1,250 juvenile arrests in 2010. Larceny and burglary accounted for 64.4 and 23.6 percent of all criminal offenses respectively. Thurston County has a low homicide rate (homicides per 100,000 people). For comparison, average 2010 homicide rates were as follows8:

- Washington State - 3.4
- Pierce County - 4.5
- Kitsap County - 1.8
- Thurston County - 1.8
- Walla Walla County - 0.9

7 TCOMM 9-1-1. 2009 and 2010 Call Type Activity Report for Thurston Co. SO., Tumwater P.D., Olympia P.D., Lacey P.D., Yelm P.D., and Tenino P.D.

## 2010 Total Criminal Offenses in Thurston County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lacey</th>
<th>Olympia</th>
<th>Tenino</th>
<th>Tumwater</th>
<th>Yelm</th>
<th>Thurston County</th>
<th>Nisqually Tribe PD</th>
<th>Chehalis Tribe PD</th>
<th>County-wide Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2010 Population</strong></td>
<td>40,130</td>
<td>45,500</td>
<td>2,195</td>
<td>16,770</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>140,100</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>250,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violent Crime</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assault</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcible Rape</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Property Crime</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Theft</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny</td>
<td>1,195</td>
<td>1,987</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>1,682</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5,554</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1,115</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Arrests</td>
<td>1,137</td>
<td>2,403</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>1,034</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Arrests</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crime Rate</strong></td>
<td>40.97</td>
<td>59.71</td>
<td>27.33</td>
<td>40.01</td>
<td>41.36</td>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs

**Notes:**
2. Tenino Police Department provided police services to Rainier and Bucoda in 2010.
3. Crime Rate/1,000 people

---

While Thurston County’s population has increased, the number of commissioned officers within the local law enforcement departments has generally not kept pace over the last four years. With the exception of the City of Lacey and Tenino Police Departments, the rate of commissioned officers per thousand residents has gradually diminished, placing increasing demands on existing officers. Although recent technological advances in electronic reporting have alleviated some elements of officers’ workloads, having a smaller police force presents challenges with a growing population. Smaller police force means that the majority of officers’ time is spent responding to incidents, and little time is available for other types of community policing activities such as working with schools or providing community crime prevention education and training to residents and businesses.

### Commissioned Officer Rate/1,000 Residents in Thurston County, 2007-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police Department</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lacey</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympia</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenino</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurston County Sheriff’s Office</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumwater</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>1.44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yelm</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.31</td>
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### Emergency Medical Services System and Fire Protection Statistics

When someone in Thurston County dials 9-1-1 for help, EMS personnel stand ready to respond. The location of the incident or where the caller lives can make a huge difference in the length of paramedics’ response time. For example, the mean 2010 advanced life support (ALS) response time in the City of Olympia and its urban growth area (UGA) was 5 minutes and 9 seconds, whereas Fire District 17, in the Bald Hills area of southeast Thurston County, averaged 19 minutes and 2 seconds. Thurston County Medic One response times are categorized into three geographical levels of service classifications with the common goal to respond to more than eighty percent of calls under the target response time as follows:

- Urban, less than 10 minutes
- Suburban, less than 20 minutes
- Rural, less than 30 minutes
- For wilderness areas, as soon as possible

Countywide, the Medic One system averaged 11.7 minutes in response time. Paramedic units accomplished an overall ninety-four percent response goal achievement in all level of service classified areas combined. BLS units average around 7 minutes countywide.

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In 2000, the EMS system responded to 17,616 calls (an average of 48 calls per day). In 2010, it responded to 25,419 calls (an average of 70 calls per day). Annual EMS call volumes will exceed 60,000 calls (over 160 calls per day) by the year 2040 if projected along recent call volume and population trends (2005-2010).

In 2010, paramedics responded to 9,041 ALS calls and EMTs responded to 16,378 BLS calls. Paramedics transported over 4,452 life critical patients. Private ambulance companies also serve as partners in providing BLS treatment and non-critical medical transport services. Although the private ambulance companies charge patients for medical trips to the hospital, they add BLS and medical transport capacity to the region’s public EMS system. Fire Departments responded to 5,902 fire protection type incidents.

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### Thurston County Medic One Response Level of Service Classifications and 2010 Response Time Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban (&lt;10 mins)</th>
<th>Met Goal</th>
<th>Suburban (&lt;20 mins.)</th>
<th>Met Goal</th>
<th>Rural (&lt;30 mins.)</th>
<th>Met Goal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olympia + UGA</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>Tumwater UGA</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>FD2 Yelm³</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacey + UGA</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>FD1 Rochester²</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>FD4 Rainier³</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumwater City</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>Yelm + UGA³</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>FD5 Black Lake</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FD3 Lacey</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>FD7 North Olympia</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FD6 East Olympia</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>FD8 South Bay</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FD9 McLane</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>FD12 Tenino</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FD11 Littlerock²</td>
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<td>FD13 Griffin</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tenino + UGA</td>
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<td>FD16 Gibson Valley</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bucoda</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>FD17 Bald Hill</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1 Thurston County Medic One. 2010 ALS Response Times.
2 West Thurston Regional Fire Authority
3 South East Thurston Regional Fire Authority
TCOMM 9-1-1 EMS and Fire Activity Statistics Summary, 2008-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call Type</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>9111</td>
<td>9041</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLS</td>
<td>15655</td>
<td>15816</td>
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<td>24927</td>
<td>25419</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>6562</td>
<td>6643</td>
<td>5902</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRAND TOTAL</td>
<td>31329</td>
<td>31570</td>
<td>31321</td>
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</table>

Location of all Advanced Life Support (ALS) Stations and 2010 ALS Incidents, Thurston County, WA

3. WHAT TO CONSIDER FOR SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC SAFETY

Part of the reason people find the Thurston region a good place to work, live and raise a family is that we enjoy a strong sense of safety. It contributes to the high quality of life we are fortunate to experience. So the question becomes:

*How do we foster and uphold our safety and security as our region grows?*

Public safety and emergency services representatives from throughout the region identified five chief areas of focus to promote a sustainable sense of safety:

I. Land Use & Design – Incorporate Emergency Response
II. Public Safety Collaboration – Meeting Needs Efficiently
III. Accommodating Growth – Challenges
IV. A Well Trained Public – Better for All
V. Catastrophes Create Opportunities – Planning Ahead

I. Land Use & Design – Incorporate Emergency Response

The Thurston region’s communities each have a vision, comprehensive plan, and permitting processes that guide the way development occurs. This includes planning for and development of public infrastructure like roads, water and sewer, parks and emergency services facilities.

**What’s Working?**

Generally, the Thurston region enjoys a safe built environment. Much of this safety is due to good building code requirements. Even in a catastrophic event, like the Nisqually earthquake of 2001, while some structures were significantly damaged, the region experienced little loss of life and few serious injuries. While the earthquake caused significant damage to public and private infrastructure, buildings and bridges were still standing after this major event.

On a day-to-day basis, Thurston residents enjoy a robust level of service when they need emergency assistance. Dispatch and response of law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services are prompt in urban areas. Collaboration among agencies provides good coverage for suburban and rural areas of the region as well.

Land-use regulations also play a key role in keeping people safe. Thurston County’s development regulations restrict residential development from occurring in flood plains and other areas prone to flooding. The critical areas ordinance also keeps people free from harm by restricting development in geologically hazardous areas.

**What’s Needed**

Technology offers new construction materials and practices that enable different kinds of designs for buildings. Ideas about how communities can function with improved access and efficiency are changing where we locate homes and businesses, and how we get to them. A driving concept behind this change is to make a clear distinction in how we develop, keeping urban areas denser, while keeping rural areas mostly undeveloped. Increasing density can help the region maintain effective emergency response times for the majority of the population.
Technology is also changing how public safety services are provided. For example, in just the last few years, big changes have occurred in how emergency service providers communicate and the information available to them – via wireless radio systems, in-vehicle computers, and real time location information via GPS (global positioning systems).

The challenge comes in effectively blending such technological advances to maintain and improve the level of public safety and emergency response we enjoy today.
Challenge
Green-built and larger buildings may not support public safety communications within to support emergency services.

- Newer structures and the materials (windows, textiles, metals) they incorporate can block emergency communications onsite.
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards are principally focused on energy efficiency and may not account for structure performance during a fire or a significant seismic event.
- Taller and closer spaced buildings, efficient space use, and narrower streets require different kinds of emergency services equipment.

Building emergency services facilities is getting much more difficult.

- Building emergency services infrastructure takes a lot longer and is a lot more expensive.
- Permitting public safety emergency services wireless communications service is difficult and time consuming.
- Supporting infrastructure (for example, corrections facilities to support law enforcement services) is inadequately funded.
- NIMBYism (not in my back yard) makes it difficult and expensive to site and operate emergency services infrastructure (such as corrections facilities, fire/EMS stations and public safety communications towers).

Potential Response

- Move to a more robust 700mHz emergency services radio communications system (estimate $60-70 million\(^2\)).
- Work with building code officials to address and update the approach to issues such as emergency communications, sprinklers and building access for emergency equipment.
- Fire and safety protection elements such as sprinkler systems should become standard for all new residential development.
- Educate residents to install smoke detectors in every living space.

Implications
If these issues are not addressed, the region will experience a real and substantial erosion of emergency service in coming years. It is more efficient from both a cost and safety perspective to develop both private and public buildings with emergency preparedness in mind, than to retrofit structures after discovering they fail in an urgent or catastrophic situation. Similarly, planning and budgeting for siting and operating public safety and emergency service infrastructure is necessary to maintain our region’s high quality of life.

\(^{12}\text{Sparling. 2008. Thurston County CAPCOM Radio system Plan.}\)
II. Public Safety Collaboration – Meeting Needs Efficiently

Strong working relationships among public safety, emergency response, public works, public health, social services and communications agencies at the federal, state and local levels greatly improves the safety and security of a community. It also improves the efficient use of resources and public funds.

What’s working?

One of the Thurston region’s greatest strengths is the high level of cooperation and collaboration among its public safety and emergency service agencies. Mutual aid agreements extend coverage, resources and back up between neighboring jurisdictions. Good, frequent and regular communication exists among staff and policy makers. This collaboration fosters collegial relations, including expanded support for smaller jurisdictions.

State and local law enforcement, fire, emergency medical, emergency operations and public works agencies operate under a coordinated incident management structure. This structure has been tested and proven in daily operations as well as in region-wide disasters like the extensive flooding of south Thurston County in late 2007.

Many service providers have discussed, and some have implemented, consolidation or merger of services. Examples include the sharing of administrative functions of the McLane and Black Lake Fire Districts, the creation of the West Thurston (Littlerock and Rochester-Grand Mound Districts) and Southeast Thurston (Yelm and Rainer Districts) Regional Fire Authorities, and TCOMM 9-1-1 providing countywide public safety dispatching for all jurisdictions within Thurston County.

Schools, public works departments, and Intercity Transit also play key roles as transportation service providers during disaster events. The Thurston County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan outlines key roles for these organizations in providing evacuation for threatened areas within the community. Schools are also designated as emergency shelters.

What’s needed?

A sustained commitment to collaboration is essential to maintaining and improving the region’s safety and security. Reduced and uncertain funding threatens the resources that public safety and emergency service agencies have committed to such collaboration. Cut backs in coordinated public health and social service programs result in a shift of the safety net expectations onto emergency services personnel, without commensurate support, stretching limited resources even further and in ways their expertise doesn’t really address.

For example, in the range of services provided by government, the ideas of public welfare and public safety are interdependent, and the differences between them can become obscured. Consider the region’s successful drug court program. Being associated with the courts, it may at first blush be considered a public safety program, but in function it contributes to the overall health of the community.

Social services programs, like Behavioral Resources, provide a safety net for at-risk individuals in our community. However, as the social services safety net shrinks, public welfare becomes a public safety issue. Individuals may allow their problems to escalate until they reach emergency proportions in order to get treatment. Or friends and family may call 9-1-1 because of an urgent, but non-life threatening, issue when they don’t know where to turn anymore. Proactive policy and program consideration are needed to assess the impacts to and expectations of public safety when health and social service programs are whittled away.

Did you know...

... the number of commissioned police officers per thousand residents in the Thurston region has gradually diminished over the last five years, placing increasing demands on existing officers.
Challenge
Resource cutting is now eroding the basic level of safety and support our community expects from its emergency service providers.
- Consistent performance measures are needed among agencies.
- Government streamlining cuts resources for collaboration & planning.
- Social service, public health, and other safety net agencies are being forced to cut non-emergent preventive and supportive service. This makes emergency services 1) the default provider for non/less-emergent services, and 2) creates emergency situations that could have been more cost effectively (and humanely) provided by safety net programs such as WIC and Behavioral Resources.

Potential Response
- Examine approaches to sharing resources within fire and law enforcement services.
- Don’t expect emergency services to, by default, take over providing social services.
- Reinstate and sustainably finance effective, essential social services programs.

Implications
The Thurston Region enjoys a high-quality standard of living based in part on a substantial sense of safety, security and well-being. Revenue cutbacks – both directly to emergency services, and indirectly by cutting public health and social services – are now eroding our community’s ability to respond to the day-to-day and the “not if, but when” catastrophic emergencies we experience. Extensive collaboration among agencies has provided a high level of service using limited resources. Some additional measure of efficiency may be available through continued consolidation of services, but without a fundamental change in how these services are funded, the current standard of service is not sustainable and will definitely suffer as the region’s population grows.
III. Accommodating Growth – Challenges

How can the region add 170,000 new residents and sustain the sense of safety and security that contributes so fundamentally to our quality of life? Where will these people live and work? What new issues will arise with this kind of growth? And what will local and regional emergency services do - when they are already stretched by the existing population?

What’s Working?

Thurston County leads the curve in community support for public safety and emergency services. The region was an early adopter of next generation 9-1-1 and was the first Washington community to pass a countywide EMS levy. The strong sense of community support is echoed by the extensive collaboration of emergency service agencies. Below are examples of programs that can assist individuals in need while keeping public safety responders free to tackle actual emergency situations:

- In 2001, Medic One and TCOMM 9-1-1 collaborated to implement the use of a 24 hour nurse Healthline to route non-emergency 9-1-1 telephone calls to a nurse who offers useful telephone health care to callers that don’t require emergency unit response.

- In 2010, the City of Olympia Fire Department implemented an “FDCares” program to alleviate firefighter response to numerous daily senior fall incidents at nursing homes and assisted living centers.

- In 2011, Medic One and TCOMM 9-1-1 collaborated to pilot the test of an automatic vehicle locator (AVL) system on paramedic vehicles to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency vehicle dispatch. The system uses GPS technology to dynamically determine the fastest route from the paramedic to the 9-1-1 caller. Using the closest vehicle available at the time should improve response time and decrease miles driven.

What’s Needed?

Growth needs to support the necessary expansion and modernization of emergency services. This includes addressing new and more intensive risks such as the potential effects of climate change (sea level rise, warmer drier summers, and intense winter precipitation events) on Pacific Northwest communities. Emergency services need a sustainable revenue source, a continued culture of collaboration and provision for proven safety net programs. In addition, as new technologies, tools, and techniques emerge, emergency responders will need continued funding for state of the art training to maintain skills proficiency.
### Challenge

Some agencies will outgrow or need to significantly modernize their facilities to accommodate projected growth.

- TCOMM 9-1-1 currently dispatches emergency aid to approximately 260,000 calls per year; if calls grow at the same rate as population, then dispatches will increase to more than 400,000 by 2030.

With substantial growth and increasing density, populations, buildings and the environment will become increasingly exposed to certain risks.

- The wildland/urban interface fire threat is increasing as more of the population moves into rural areas, and as more visitors use the region’s forests, parks, and nature reserves.
- Hazardous material transportation and storage issues become more problematic in high density areas.

Safety net programs become even more important.

- Population growth exacerbates the impact to emergency services from cutbacks in social service, public health and other safety net programs.

The Thurston region is subject to the same social problems and criminal activity of larger urbanized areas because of the region’s interdependence with the greater Interstate 5 Corridor.

- Criminal activities such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, and the influence of gang behavior is likely to increase in Thurston County as the Puget Sound Region’s population grows.
- JBLM’s growth and the stresses of war on our nation’s service members has manifested in increased mental health problems, suicide, domestic violence, drug abuse, and assaults.

### Potential Response

- Establish a sustainable revenue structure to support continuing and growing public safety and emergency services. Explore impact fees and other approaches.

- Continue investments in response planning and mitigation efforts.
- Limit the transport, use and storage of hazardous materials and wastes to serviceable routes and locations.
- Increase support for hazardous materials inspection, planning, management and disposal.

- Establish a sustainable revenue source to fund proven safety net programs that complement public safety and emergency service.

- Maintain ongoing efforts of the Juvenile Justice Coalition to monitor, evaluate, suppress and counter gang-related activities.
- Support programs that offer substance abuse treatment.
- Veterans are members of our communities that require unique treatment and assistance. Continue fostering innovative programs like the Thurston County Veteran’s Court, and the Veteran’s Assistance Program.

### Implications

Resources are finite and continue to dwindle. Further cuts to emergency services will mean direct reductions in service. This is certainly not a sustainable model for growth. While agencies must continue to find and implement cost cutting measures, a new model is needed if the region is to sustain the same high quality level of service for its residents and workers.
IV. A Well Trained Public – Better for All

“Call 9-1-1!” It’s a phrase well known throughout the United States, thanks to intensive efforts by local, state and federal governments to train our citizenry in how to get emergency help. But along with the rise of this ubiquitous call for help has also come a blurring of perception about what constitutes a true emergency.

Members of the public are the true first responders to an emergency. A well-trained citizenry is essential to making emergency services effective. The public needs to know what constitutes an emergency, how to prevent or avoid finding themselves in an emergency, and how to get help in an emergency. We also want them to know how to identify and take care of non-emergency situations, using their own personal support resources.

Public education is necessary to inform people that their choice of location in housing affects the level of service they can expect from emergency service providers. Choosing to live in rural areas comes with the reality that emergency responses will be slower and more costly.

What's Working?

The region’s public, private and non-profit agencies provide an extensive list of opportunities for residents and workers to learn about various safety issues and prepare for emergencies. School curriculums, worksite training, public events, public service announcements and community awareness activities help people from grade school through retirement to stay safe and get prepared.

More community members are enabling themselves to become better “Tier One” responders by learning basic first aid, CPR, the Heimlich Maneuver, and other preparedness activities. In 2007, the Medic One system initiated SafeKids, a countywide version of a national childhood trauma prevention program, through a partnership with the Thurston Child Care Action Council. SafeKids offers child car seat fitting/education, bicycle helmet fitting/education, water safety education, and other child trauma prevention programs. In 2010, CPR training was provided to 1,920 individuals in 160 classes. Also in 2010, the ongoing Public Access Defibrillator program trained 603 people in 67 classes on how to use an automatic external defibrillator (AED). More workplaces are acquiring AEDs and offering training to employees on how to use them.

Thurston County Emergency Management administers the “Map Your Neighborhood” program that helps neighborhoods inventory their resources and skill sets to be better prepared for disasters. Emergency Management also sponsors the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. CERT, a 20-hour training program, prepares people to help themselves, their family, neighbors and co-workers in the event of a disaster. It was created in 1985 by the Los Angeles City Fire Department and adopted by FEMA in 1993. In recent years, Thurston County Emergency Management has sponsored an annual Fall Emergency Preparedness Expo, an educational event that is open to the public.

What's Needed?

No matter how well the public is informed about public safety, maintaining awareness and expanding outreach to others who are less knowledgeable requires considerable effort. Education, outreach and training needs to be constant and consistent. In recent decades, the populace as a whole has
become increasingly reliant on calling for emergency services in situations where they should be able to transport and/or care for themselves. Preventative programs, that have traditionally provided care for people experiencing tough circumstances, are being cut due to tightening budgets, which means that many of these people now can't get help until their situations become emergencies.

**Challenge**

The public has come to rely on emergency services for response to non-emergent issues.

- The public, on the whole, does not understand what is a “real emergency” and seeks emergency services responses.
- Many requests for an emergency service response are instead urgent or non-emergent issues that should be handled by the individual or their personal support network.
- As “Boomers” are aging and aging in place, demand for emergency services will increase and may be more dispersed in the community versus consolidated in care centers. It is essential to foster the ethic of “taking care of each other”—our neighbors and family—rather than relying on emergency services to provide non-emergent care.
- Public health and social services were providing safety net support for many non-emergent needs (for example, mental health issues), but as these programs are shut down, public safety and emergency services are looked upon to pick up this obligation without proper training, resources or funding.

Meaningful public process is important, but finding time, resources and funding to manage it well is challenging.

- Many agencies are experiencing increasing demand for public inclusion and transparency.
- Little leeway is left in budgets, so conducting a more involved public process competes directly for resources used in collaboration and providing service.
- Engaging public interest may be difficult until the issue is in a community’s “back yard.” For example, comprehensive plans and capital facilities plans may call to locate infrastructure in certain neighborhoods, but it may be hard to get the public’s attention until it’s time to proceed.

**Prevention** (avoiding unsafe situations) and **preparedness** (being ready to take care of yourself) are essential to containing the cost of emergency services.

- A key to making emergency services efficient is the public regularly and reliably practicing prevention – preventive care and personal safety.
- Health care providers need to take a more proactive role in recognizing the need for and stressing preventive and non-emergent care.

**Potential Response**

- Maintain and expand existing safety planning and preparedness training to the public.
- Convene the region’s health and social services partners and public safety partners to identify opportunities to bridge gaps in safety net services.
- Continue and reinstate successful public health and social service programs that address needs before they transform into real emergencies.

- Provide adequate support for public process and look for innovative, effective ways to reach out.

- Reinstate and maintain public health and social services programs that effectively address prevention and preparation. Examples include WIC, Behavioral Health Services, Target Zero, DUI prevention, seatbelt enforcement, fall prevention, smoke alarm checks, household emergency plans/preparedness, CERT, and Map Your Neighborhood programs.
Implications

Residents and workers in our region enjoy an expansive array of opportunities to learn about and plan for personal, family, neighborhood and worksite safety. Taking personal responsibility for prevention and preparedness minimizes the number and severity of emergency situations. Without this emphasis on education, outreach and training, the sense of safety—a bedrock of the region’s high quality of life—will erode.

V. Catastrophes Create Opportunities – Planning Ahead

A catastrophic event can produce major destruction. Since 1962, Thurston County has been included in twenty-three federal disaster declarations. There have been six disaster declarations in Thurston County since 2003. The Pacific Northwest remains geologically active and the risks of a volcanic eruption, or worse, a magnitude 9 earthquake from the Cascadia Subduction Zone could result in damage equal to that experienced in the 2011 Tohuku earthquake in northern Japan. Our Pacific maritime climate also frequently subjects the region to extreme windstorms and atmospheric rivers (pineapple express events) that bring intense precipitation resulting in widespread flooding, landslides, power outages and major transportation disruptions. Disasters often result in extensive damage to structures like homes, businesses, schools, roads, bridges, communication towers, and even fire and police department buildings. And they often have long-term impacts to those that endure them.

The good news is that public safety officials and emergency managers are aware of the risks inherent to our region and the hazardous effects we will continue to encounter. And while these events can be devastating, they may also create opportunities. Emergency services can be characterized as preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. In each of these areas, planning and wise investment can help the community to be more resilient and achieve comprehensive plan goals in the wake of a difficult event.

What’s Working?

Most of the region’s communities have developed comprehensive emergency management plans that establish organizational structures to coordinate large scale emergency responses. The plans identify which departments and offices (internal and external) and divisions and programs will coordinate specific elements of the response, as well as identifying assets and resources that can be utilized during a disaster response.

To date, seventeen municipalities and other government organizations in the Thurston region have developed FEMA approved hazard mitigation plans that identify and prioritize actions for jurisdictions to take now to ameliorate the impacts of future catastrophes. These plans are a prerequisite for local governments to apply for and receive federal hazard mitigation grants. Each year Washington State Emergency Management makes pre-disaster mitigation grant funds available to Washington communities. The Thurston region’s public safety partners are eligible to access these funds. The Evergreen State College has succeeded in applying for over two million dollars in FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds to perform seismic retrofits to the college clock tower and its "A Dormitory” student residence building.

The strong spirit of collaboration in the region is evident in the well-coordinated response of emergency management agencies to catastrophic events in Thurston County. Agencies have worked together to establish a clear incident
command structure that makes efficient and effective use of their combined resources. The agencies are also committed to conducting after action reviews to evaluate opportunities to improve their response during the next major disaster.

The region’s many agencies also work closely together to coordinate their public outreach efforts in providing post-event information and resources to help people cope with the impacts of a major event. These recovery agencies also participate in post event debriefing and have identified many ways to prepare for future catastrophes. For example, written information on various resources has been consolidated to help those impacted to quickly find the help they need. And many materials have been translated into Spanish and other languages to help non-English speaking people.

**What’s Needed?**

Public safety agency staffs continue to look for ways to improve. Instead of just waiting for the next event, they continue to prepare to respond and recover even more efficiently when the next event occurs. This effort takes time and resources, both of which are in increasingly short supply.

### Challenge

Finding the time and funding to support preparedness planning and implementation is becoming increasingly difficult.

- The region’s hazard mitigation plan lays out a laundry list of needs. The plan needs to be kept up to date and its recommendations implemented.

Disasters take a toll on equipment and operational capacities — maintaining a commitment to response training and resources is essential to a sustainable community in the future.

- Staff must have time to debrief after major events, and then have resources to act on what they learned.
- Staff must continue to be adequately trained and equipment must be kept up-to-date.

Recovering from a catastrophic event presents an opportunity to rebuild parts of the community not just as they were, but in a more sustainable way.

- If a catastrophic event occurs, does the community want to replace damaged or destroyed structures with the same or different structures? Would communities consider relocating facilities following a catastrophic event?
- Federal mitigation grant programs only allow structural retrofitting or augmentations of existing infrastructure instead of replacing or rebuilding facilities that, although disaster resilient, are not necessarily more energy efficient.
- Federal recovery funds only allow communities to replace infrastructure to the state it existed prior to damage from a disaster; not make it more sustainable.

### Potential Response

- Maintain the region’s hazard mitigation plan.
- Make implementing the plan’s recommendations a funding priority in each jurisdiction.

- Keep dedicated and sufficient funds available to allow for interagency debriefings following major disaster events.
- Train personnel following lessons learned.
- Replace obsolete or worn out equipment.

- Seat recovery committees immediately after a disaster to prioritize restoration of vital public safety facilities and other essential community assets.
- Seek changes to federal and state grant programs to allow replacement with facilities that are better suited to the community’s future.
Implications

Preparedness, response and recovery have a tremendous impact on the region’s built environment. Contingency planning, training and up-to-date resources are necessary to effectively respond when a disaster occurs. They may be unfortunate, but they don’t have to be unanticipated. Failing to plan, train and equip for these events is a missed opportunity that will lead to much more suffering and long-term impacts to how our community develops.
4. SUMMARY

This white paper captures the major public safety issues that the Thurston region faces today and will likely continue to face in the future. It offers some potential responses to overcome the challenges and barriers to maintaining public safety and security. This white paper will be used by the Sustainable Thurston Task Force, the Thurston Regional Planning Council, stakeholders and members of the public, and staff to assist in the development of a regional sustainability plan.
Appendix A

(Please note: if you are viewing this draft white paper electronically, due to file sizes, the items listed below have been posted separately and can be found by visiting the Public Safety Panel page at SustainableThurston.org)

2010 Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs Local Law Enforcement Crime Dashboard Data Profiles:

- City of Lacey
- City of Olympia
- City of Tenino
- City of Tumwater
- City of Yelm
- Thurston County Sheriff’s Office
- Washington State-Wide

2010 TCOMM 9-1-1 Law Enforcement Agencies Call Map

2010 TCOMM 9-1-1 Fire Agencies Call Map