



Sustainable Thurston is an opportunity to shape this region's future as well as the actions and responsibilities to achieve it.

Sustainable Thurston Task Force Mission, and Foundation Principles and Policies

The Sustainable Thurston Task Force developed the Mission, as well as Foundational Principles and Policies using information and discussion collected from Task Force and Panel meetings and presentations, public meetings, public comments, and surveys.

Task Force Mission:

Our mission is to propose a plan to integrate sustainability into all regional decision-making to achieve a healthy economy, society and environment.

Sustainable Thurston Foundational Principles and Policies

Sustainable Thurston Foundation Principles and Policies reflect the values of our region expressed by more than 2000 residents who took part in the community-wide discussion between 2011 and mid-2013. These principles and policies articulate in a holistic way what the Thurston region believes in and what it will do to achieve the bold vision over time. The specific goals, targets and actions in the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development will determine the path forward and what must occur to achieve the vibrant, healthy and resilient future described.

Sustainable Thurston

Enhance Quality of Life – Foster Economic Vitality – Protect the Environment

The Thurston region will:

- Balance our needs today with those of future residents to protect and enhance quality of life.
- Champion a diverse economy and job opportunities that support community and household resilience, health, and well-being.
- Meet basic human needs of clean water and air, healthy food, adequate housing, quality education, public safety, and equal access regardless of socio-economic status.
- Offer engagement opportunities and information encouraging choices that contribute to individual, household, and community health and well-being.
- Protect the natural environment while acknowledging the interdependence of a healthy environment and healthy economy.
- Take action to conserve resources, increase use of renewable resources and decrease dependence on non-renewable resources.
- Preserve the unique identities of existing urban, suburban, and rural communities in a way that protects what matters most and improves what can be better.
- Acknowledge interdependence of communities within – and external to – our region; impacts of our region upon the world, and impacts of the world upon our region.

- Foster open communication and transparent processes that encourage community-wide participation.
- Support local decision-making, while encouraging regional and cross-jurisdictional coordination, communication and cooperation that increases our capacity to make decisions for the common good across jurisdiction boundaries.

“Creating Places – Preserving Spaces – a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development” is organized around the following policies. The plan includes specific goals, targets and actions for each of these that reflect the best thinking of residents and leaders as well as the best information available. The actions identified in the plan are a path forward and will be essential for moving toward the bold vision and for achieving targeted outcomes.

Sustainable Thurston Foundational Policies include:

Community

- Build and maintain distinct communities. Preserve and enhance the character and identity of existing urban, suburban, and rural communities while offering additional opportunities.
- Add cultural, social, and recreational opportunities in appropriate places and at a scale that supports community health and well-being.
- Support education, employment, and commercial opportunities that support community health and well-being.
- Respond and adapt to future social, economic, and environmental challenges.

Investment

- Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and assets. Leverage the value of these in building vital, healthy and economically viable communities.
- Make public investments that further multiple community goals, target identified priorities, and leverage additional investment.
- Consider economies of scale and long-term maintenance cost when investing in infrastructure.
- Provide and maintain municipal services (water, sewer, solid waste, public safety, transportation, and communication networks) in a sustainable and cost-effective manner.
- Champion energy efficiency and renewable energy strategies that contribute to energy independence, economic stability and long term household and community health.

Economy

- Create an economy that is diverse, can adapt to changing conditions, take advantage of new opportunities and that supports creativity, arts and culture.
- Acknowledge and look for opportunities to engage with regional economic drivers such as state government, the Port of Olympia and Joint Base Lewis-McCord.
- Build a vital economy by offering opportunities for education and entrepreneurial endeavors.
- Provide opportunities for a range of business types to succeed.
- Emphasize policies that support locally owned businesses including home-based, entrepreneurial, and non-profit business and organizations.
- Nurture urban and rural agricultural and food-oriented businesses. Protect resource lands.
- Connect economic health with personal health and well-being, and the advancement of environmental health.

Opportunities and Choices

- Increase housing and transportation choices to support all ranges of lifestyles, household incomes, abilities, and ages.
- Increase opportunities to use transit, biking, walking, ridesharing, flexible work schedules and telework.
- Encourage development of local services for food, clothing and other basic human needs.

Natural Environment

- Protect the soil, air, surface water and groundwater quality through reducing dependence on chemicals and products that pollute and, when their use is necessary, minimizing releases to the environment.
- Ensure adequate clean water is available to support household and commercial needs while sustaining ecological systems through conservation, balancing of uses, and reuse.
- Protect our natural resources and habitat while providing for public access and sustainable uses and economic activity (forests, prairies, wetlands, surface and groundwater resources, and aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals)
- Reduce the effects of the built environment on the natural environment through land use and transportation plans and actions that encourage compact development, retrofitting existing infrastructure to reduce impacts, and by reducing energy consumption and reliance on nonrenewable energy sources.
- Acknowledge that changing weather and climate patterns will impact the human, natural and built environments and plan for impacts such as increased flooding and sea level rise.

Participation

- Cultivate respectful civic engagement and participation by residents, public, private, and non-profit businesses and organizations.
- Develop new ways to cultivate and support respectful civic engagement and participation.
- Think broadly and regionally.
- Partner across topic areas and jurisdictional boundaries.
- Break down institutional barriers to communication and cooperation.

Leadership

- Translate vision to policy.
- Act on adopted local plans and policies.
- Consider the effects of decisions on achieving this vision.
- Think regionally – act locally.
- Balance individual property rights with broader community needs and goals.
- Use meaningful, easy-to-understand methods to measure progress on key objectives.
- Monitor progress and shift course when necessary.