

Legislative Priorities 2022

Innovative, Equitable, & Efficient Solutions

The Thurston region enjoys a long history of collaboration among state and local decision-makers. As we face growing economic, health, environmental, transportation, and infrastructure challenges we must strengthen those partnerships. We also need to collaborate on the opportunities provided by new federal funding and ensure that local jurisdictions have appropriate tools to support our shared constituents. Our residents and visitors rely on our ability to work together for innovative, equitable, and efficient solutions.



Transportation

I-5 Tumwater through Mounts Road: While our focus for 2022 is I-5, we know that a well-functioning transportation system must be multimodal and include state and local routes, as well as the highway system.

We appreciate the \$5M that the Legislature provided for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review of key strategies to reduce congestion, improve salmon habitat, and reduce flood risk. The Nisqually Indian Tribe and U.S. Geological Survey's recent report (funded by the Legislature) found that with projected sea level rise, increased flood frequency and severity, and current rates of erosion, the Nisqually River will undercut I-5 between 2040 and 2055. Although the NEPA review won't be complete for 2-3 years, when the Legislature considers a transportation funding package this session, it should include at least \$125 million for I-5 from Tumwater through Mounts Road. These funds are for the design, engineering, and right-of-way phases to replace the Nisqually River bridges with a wider span that addresses salmon habitat and flood risk issues, modify the two train trestles near milepost 115, and add a lane in both directions of I-5 from milepost 111 to 116. This also includes \$19 million for the construction of three roundabouts on Hwy 507 outside of Yelm to improve traffic flow on a critical I-5 alternate route.

We cannot afford to wait for the next transportation package.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

Multi-Year Transportation Package or New Federal Revenues: Provide at least \$125 million when the Legislature considers a multi-year transportation package.

Complete 507-510 Loop and Roundabouts - critical route for I-5 backups and closures.

TDM Strategies: Fund strategies that allow us to wring more efficiency from current system. Call for state employees to increase telework/flexible schedules on the Capitol Campus and throughout the region.

Broadband

During COVID shutdowns, broadband access became a lifeline for some and a barrier for others - to connect to work, school, and critical services. To fill these gaps, a variety of entities are stepping up - Tribes, PUDs, Ports, agencies, and others. Unfortunately, without coordination, we may miss opportunities for efficiency and cost-savings.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

Funding: Provide Funding to increase Broadband access and close gaps, especially in rural communities.

Coordination: Tie coordination requirements to applications and funding awards.

