Appendix C: Sustainable Thurston Goals and Actions

Creating Places Preserving Spaces

A Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region

December 2013

SUSTAINABLE THURSTON
connect • create • communicate

> **"A livable community must be both equitable and affordable. …In order for our neighborhoods to thrive, our regions to grow, and our nation to prosper, we must support communities that provide opportunities for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities to live, work, learn, and play together."**

- Secretary Shaun Donovan, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

THURSTON REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL (TRPC) is a 22-member intergovernmental board made up of local governmental jurisdictions within Thurston County, plus the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation and the Nisqually Indian Tribe. The Council was established in 1967 under RCW 36.70.060, which authorized creation of regional planning councils.

TRPC's mission is to **"Provide Visionary Leadership on Regional Plans, Policies, and Issues."**

To Support this Mission:

A) Support **regional transportation** planning consistent with state and federal funding requirements.

B) Address **growth management, environmental quality, economic opportunity**, and other topics determined by the Council.

C) **Assemble** and **analyze** data that support local and regional decision making

D) Act as a **"convener"** to build regional consensus on issues through information and citizen involvement.

E) Build **intergovernmental consensus** on regional plans, policies, and issues, and advocate local implementation.

This report was prepared as part of the Thurston Regional Planning Council's 2013 regional work program.

Thurston Regional Planning Council

Governmental Jurisdiction	Name of 2013 Representative
City of Lacey	**Virgil Clarkson,** Mayor
City of Olympia	**Nathaniel Jones,** Councilmember
City of Rainier	**Dennis McVey,** Councilmember
City of Tenino	**Bret Brodersen,** Councilmember
City of Tumwater	**Tom Oliva,** Councilmember
City of Yelm	**Robert Isom,** Councilmember
Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation	**Amy Loudermilk,** staff
Nisqually Indian Tribe	**Willie Frank,** Tribal Councilmember **James Slape, Jr.,** Tribal Councilmember
Town of Bucoda	**Alan Vanell,** Councilmember
Thurston County	**Sandra Romero,** County Commissioner
North Thurston Public Schools	**Chuck Namit,** School Board Member
Olympia School District	**Allen Miller,** School Board Member
Intercity Transit	**Karen Valenzuela,** Authority Member
LOTT Clean Water Alliance	**Cynthia Pratt,** Board Member
Port of Olympia	**George Barner,** Port Commissioner
PUD No. 1 of Thurston County	**Chris Stearns,** PUD Commissioner
Associate Members	
Economic Development Council of Thurston County	**Michael Cade,** Executive Director
Lacey Fire District #3	**Gene Dobry,** Commissioner
Puget Sound Regional Council	**vacant**
TCOMM9-1-1	**Ed Hildreth,** Board member
Timberland Regional Library	**Jeff Kleingartner,** Communications Manager
The Evergreen State College	**Jeanne Rynne,** Director of Facilities Services

CHAIR	VICE CHAIR	SECRETARY
Sandra Romero	**Virgil Clarkson**	**Tom Oliva**

Lon D. Wyrick, Executive Director

Sustainable Thurston Task Force

SUSTAINABLE THURSTON TASK FORCE	MEMBER	ALTERNATE
Bucoda	Alan Vanell	
Housing Authority of Thurston County	Theresa Slusher	Chris Lowell
Intercity Transit	Karen Messmer	Ryan Warner
Lacey	Jeff Gadman	Ron Lawson
Olympia	Stephen Buxbaum	Nathaniel Jones
Rainier	Dennis McVey	
Tenino	Wayne Fournier Dawna Kelley-Donahue (2012)	Dave Watterson
Thurston County	Karen Valenzuela	Sandra Romero
Transportation Policy Board	Andy Ryder	Doug DeForest
Tumwater	Tom Oliva	Joan Cathey
WA State Dept of Commerce	Janet Rogerson	Heather Ballash
WA State Dept of Enterprise Services	Michael Van Gelder	Ann Sweeney
Yelm	Bob Isom	
PANEL CHAIRPERSONS	**MEMBER**	**ALTERNATE**
Blue Ribbon Economic Development Panel	Heber Kennedy	Michael Cade
Health and Human Services Panel	Dennis Mahar	John Masterson
Housing Panel	Doug DeForest	Tim Seth
Local Food Systems Panel	Robert Coit	
Public Outreach and Education Panel	Jackie Barrett Sharar	Cynthia Stewart
Public Safety Panel	Jim Quackenbush	Brian VanCamp
N. County Schools and Transportation Panel	Joan Cathey	Cynthia Pratt
S. County Schools and Transportation Panel	Bret Brodersen	
Water Infrastructure Panel	Chris Stearns	
Energy Work Group	Graeme Sackrison	Ramsey Zimmerman

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- Action Table Definitions
- Action Leads and Partners
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View of South County from Tumwater Hill.

Executive Summary

Sustainable Thurston … A community conversation

The Sustainable Thurston project began in early 2011 with a simple question for the Thurston Region's quarter-million residents: *How do you want your community to look, function, and feel in 2035?*

Online and in person, thousands of people considered the challenges and opportunities of growth from an economic, environmental, and social sustainability perspective. Just as important, these engaged residents helped the Sustainable Thurston Task Force craft a regional vision of sustainable development that encompasses land use, housing, energy, transportation, food, health, and other interconnected issues.

Sustainable Thurston's flagship document, *Creating Places — Preserving Spaces: A Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region,* is as comprehensive as it is ambitious. It aims, no less, to integrate sustainability into all regional decision-making to achieve a healthy economy, society, and environment.

The Plan begins by establishing a definition of sustainability and crafting a dozen foundational principles around six elements: Leadership & Participation, Community, Investment, Economy, Opportunities & Choices, and Environment.

> A sustainable community will enhance quality of life, foster economic vitality, and protect the environment while balancing our needs today with those of future residents.
>
> *Definition of Sustainability for the Thurston Region*

A bold vision statement establishes a clear direction for the region during the next quarter-century:

> *In one generation — through innovation and leadership — the Thurston Region will become a model for sustainability and livability. We will consume less energy, water, and land, produce less waste, and achieve carbon neutrality. We will lead in doing more while consuming less. Through efficiency, coupled with strategic investments, we will support a robust economy. Our actions will enhance an excellent education system, cultivate a healthy environment, and foster an inclusive and equitable social environment that remains affordable and livable. We will view every decision at the local and regional level through the sustainability lens. We will think in generations, not years. The region will work together toward common goals, putting people in the center of our thinking, and inspire individual responsibility and leadership in our residents.*

Making the vision a reality will require tough decisions and significant time and resources over the long term. So why change? The Thurston Region is already a great place — innovative, inclusive, attractive, and affordable. The answer is that doing nothing still comes with costs. Current local land-use plans and trends would result in the following outcomes by 2035:

- Losing 32 percent of farmlands to urbanization — about 15,600 acres
- Losing 10 percent of forest lands to urbanization — about 19,300 acres
- Sending 13 percent of growth into the rural areas, contributing to the loss of forests, farmlands, and prairies
- Difficulty creating vibrant urban and town centers that attract innovative businesses and residents
- Difficulty conserving and protecting water to sustain people and the environment
- Difficulty meeting Washington State's vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas reduction targets

A course correction

Business-as-usual puts us on an unsustainable trajectory. To change course and realize the vision, *Creating Places — Preserving Spaces* sets a dozen priority goals and targets and recommends roughly 300 discrete actions related to 10 quality-of-life topics.

	Priority Goal	Target	First Action Steps
	Create vibrant centers, corridors, and neighborhoods while accommodating growth.	By 2035, 72 percent of all (new and existing) households in our cities, towns, and unincorporated growth areas will be within a half-mile (comparable to a 20-minute walk) of an urban center, corridor, or neighborhood center with access to goods and services to meet some of their daily needs.	Rethink our existing land-use zoning and regulations in the urban areas to allow for greater mix of uses and densities to support efficient provision of services. Identify priority areas, begin neighborhood-level planning to create clarity about design, mix of uses, and density, and take actions. Find resources for continuing the community conversation about land-use and zoning changes.
	Preserve environmentally sensitive lands, farmlands, forest lands, prairies, and rural lands and develop compact urban areas.	Between 2010 and 2035, no more than 5 percent of new housing will locate in the rural areas, and 95 percent will be within cities, towns, unincorporated growth areas, and tribal reservations. Rural areas are defined as outside of the cities, towns, unincorporated urban growth areas and tribal reservations.	To better understand rural land uses, create and prioritize an inventory of farmlands, forestlands, prairies, and other critical habitats that may be at risk due to development pressure. Take appropriate steps (e.g., incentives, support agricultural economy, purchase or transfer of development rights, rural zoning changes) to achieve goals.
	Create a robust economy through sustainable practices.	The Economic Development Council will develop a Sustainable Economy Index. The "Index" will identifiy what to measure in order to track progress toward a robust sustinable economy. A target can be developed from the index after it is monitored for several years.	Implement the Sustainable Economy actions.

	Priority Goal	Target	First Action Steps
	Protect and improve water quality, including groundwater, rivers, streams, lakes, and Puget Sound.	Protect small stream basins that are currently ranked as "Intact" or "Sensitive". Improve and restore as many as possible "Impacted" stream basins.	To preserve the stream basins that still have the opportunity to function properly, conduct watershed-based land-use planning (i.e., basin plans). Focus on those areas that may be at risk of degradation under current plans and development regulations. Implement adopted plans.
	Plan and act toward zero waste in the region.	Reduce per capita landfill waste by 32 percent by 2035 to achieve no net increase in landfill waste compared to 2010 in Thurston County.	Maintain a rate structure that will incentivize waste prevention, as well as implement policy and support programs.
	Ensure that residents have the resources to meet their daily needs.	By 2035, less than 10 percent of total households in Thurston County will be cost-burdened; less than 5 percent will be severely cost-burdened.	To become more strategic in managing scarce social service resources, create a single governing entity to ensure a coordinated and streamlined approach to social service planning and funding in Thurston County.
	Support a local food system to increase community resilience, health, and economic prosperity.	To be determined after development of a local food systems plan.	Find resources to create a local food systems plan, and support development of a regional food policy council.
	Ensure that the region's water supply sustains people in perpetuity while protecting the environment.	Reduce per capita water use by 33 percent by 2035 to achieve no net increase in water use in Thurston County.	Find resources to create a water systems plan that explores ways to manage water resources in the Thurston Region more holistically.

	Priority Goal	Target	First Action Steps
	Move toward a carbon-neutral community.	Become a carbon-neutral community by 2050. Supporting target: Achieve a 25 percent reduction of 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.	Find resources to create a Thurston Region climate action plan.
	Maintain air quality standards.	Continue to meet state and federal air quality standards. • PM_{10}: 150 micrograms per cubic meter of air ($\mu g/m^3$), 24-hour average [state and federal primary/secondary standards]; • $PM_{2.5}$: 12 $\mu g/m^3$, annual average [federal primary/secondary standards]; • Ozone: 0.075 parts per million (ppm), 8-hour average [federal primary/secondary standards].	Continue to focus on reducing vehicle miles traveled and improving operational efficiency of the transportation network (e.g., "Smart Corridors" — see Environment chapter).
	Provide opportunities for everyone in the Thurston Region to learn about and practice sustainability.	Integrate education on sustainability and sustainable practices into K-12 curricula, as well as planner's short courses, workshops, professional training, and other educational opportunities.	Find resources to ensure continued focus on sustainability actions, education, and coordination.
	Make strategic decisions and investments to advance sustainability regionally.	Create and adopt sustainability checklists for use in all local decision making processes by 2016.	Develop a generic checklist for modification and use by local jurisdictions. Use the list when making decisions such as funding allocations, comprehensive plan amendments, and capital facilities investments.

So what would we get? The Sustainable Thurston Task Force's Preferred Land-Use Scenario, which assumes we achieve the priority targets, would result in the following measureable outcomes in 2035:

- 95 percent of growth locating in areas designated for urban growth
- $1.6 billion savings in road, water, sewer, and other related infrastructure costs to support residential development
- 16 percent reduction of 1990 levels of vehicle miles traveled based on land-use changes
- 43 percent of the population living within a quarter-mile of transit service
- 72 percent of urban households living within a half-mile of goods and services
- 33 percent reduction in land consumption
- 21 percent decrease in total residential water consumption
- 11 percent decrease in total residential energy consumption
- No net loss of forestlands
- No net loss of rural farmlands
- 34 percent reduction in new impervious area in protected stream basins
- 31 percent reduction in new impervious area in sensitive stream basins
- 38 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions per household, leading to a 10 percent reduction in total CO_2 from residential uses compared to 2010 which will contribute to meeting our greenhouse gas reduction target. (see priority goals for CO_2 emissions from all sources)

A shared future

The general goals and actions that conclude each of the six core chapters show us how to achieve our sustainability vision, who must be involved and when. What we would get is a more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable future.

Actions that conclude the **Economy** chapter would coordinate economic development efforts, foster industry clusters, and diversify the region's employment base. Changing how we use land would be good for business, too.

Actions that conclude the **Community** chapter would create vital city and town centers that attract artists, entrepreneurs, and other members of the "creative class," as well as increase active transportation and affordable and accessible housing choices in close-in neighborhoods. Additional actions would transition auto-oriented transit corridors into a more walkable urban form and preserve rural lifestyles in the countryside.

Actions in the **Opportunities & Choices** chapter would create "complete" communities by tying together some of the aforementioned transportation, housing, and economic development issues with health and human services, local food systems, and access to schools. Such communities have efficient and equitable access to healthy food, quality schools, parks, and other opportunities.

Actions in the **Investment** chapter would maximize the use of existing public infrastructure and assets and prioritize and leverage future investments. Municipalities would deliver water, sewer, solid waste, public safety, transportation, and communications services in a more cost-effective manner and champion energy efficiency and renewable energy strategies that bolster energy independence and economic stability. The **Environment** chapter builds upon these actions to improve local air and water quality and mitigate global climate change.

The **Leadership & Participation** chapter ties the core chapters together and underscores the maxim "think regionally — act locally." The chapter lists the first action steps we must take to achieve our priority goals and hit our sustainability targets. Such steps include reinvesting in our communities, prioritizing and protecting farms, forests and other lands facing development pressure, as well as drafting comprehensive climate action, water, and food systems plans.

Success will require sustained and widespread commitment. At the household level, this means individuals integrating sustainability actions into their life and influencing neighbors. At the government level, it means municipalities integrating sustainability actions into their comprehensive plan and coordinating regionally to bring about greater change.

Want to learn more about access to housing, services, and other opportunities in the region? Read the companion *Fair Housing Equity Assessment* and *Regional Housing Plan* at www.sustainablethurston.org.

Introduction

The Thurston Region is the economic and cultural heart of South Puget Sound. Government, education, health care, manufacturing, and service sectors fuel our economy. Ports, freeways, and railroads move our goods, and leafy neighborhoods, urban centers, and open spaces provide us places to live, work, and play. But it's our people — our progressiveness and inclusiveness — that make our growing community attractive to new residents and adaptive to new ideas. The choices we make today will shape our community's economic, environmental, and social sustainability in the coming decades.

> A sustainable community will enhance quality of life, foster economic vitality, and protect the environment while balancing our needs today with those of future residents.
>
> *Definition of Sustainability for the Thurston Region*

Our region's wants and needs are changing. The share of the population age 65 and older is projected to grow from 12 percent today to 19 percent by 2035. An increasing number of young people are foregoing or delaying marriage and parenthood. New high school and college graduates are

substituting shiny cars for smart phones and seeking out urban areas instead of suburbs. We are a moderate-sized community — some 250,000 people call our region home. If we continue to grow at the rate we have in the past, our population will increase by about 120,000 people by 2035.

What sort of homes will we need in the future? Will we be nimble and responsive to our changing needs? What jobs will we have, and how will we get to them? Where will we shop, recreate, and interact with each other? And, how will we preserve and protect our streams, skies, forests, farms, and prairies — the natural capital that makes the region special?

Change comes with many challenges and opportunities. This ambitious plan — the first of its kind in the region's history — seeks to address those challenges and opportunities in a comprehensive way. Put simply, the purpose of the plan, *Creating Places – Preserving Spaces: A Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region*, is to identify the actions needed to integrate sustainability into all regional decision-making to achieve a healthy economy, society, and environment.

The Sustainable Thurston Vision:

In one generation — through innovation and leadership — the Thurston Region will become a model for sustainability and livability. We will consume less energy, water, and land, produce less waste, and achieve carbon neutrality. We will lead in doing more while consuming less. Through efficiency, coupled with strategic investments, we will support a robust economy. Our actions will enhance an excellent education system, cultivate a healthy environment, and foster an inclusive and equitable social environment that remains affordable and livable. We will view every decision at the local and regional level through the sustainability lens. We will think in generations, not years. The region will work together toward common goals, putting people in the center of our thinking, and inspire individual responsibility and leadership in our residents.

The Priority Goals, Targets and Action Steps: To measure progress toward achieving the vision, the Sustainable Thurston Task Force identified the following priority goals and targets. These goals and targets represent the cumulative effects of the broad range of actions outlined in the Plan. The first two priority goals and targets (the land-use goals) are essential to achieving the other goals and targets.

Sustainability is a balance of quality of life, economic vitality, and environmental health. The priority goals and targets measure this balance. If progress is not made on all of the goals, the *balance* is not achieved, and additional actions must be taken.

	Priority Goal	Target	First Action Steps
	Create vibrant centers, corridors, and neighborhoods while accommodating growth.	By 2035, 72 percent of all (new and existing) households in our cities, towns, and unincorporated growth areas will be within a half-mile (comparable to a 20-minute walk) of an urban center, corridor, or neighborhood center with access to goods and services to meet some of their daily needs.	Rethink our existing land-use zoning and regulations in the urban areas to allow for greater mix of uses and densities to support efficient provision of services. Identify priority areas, begin neighborhood-level planning to create clarity about design, mix of uses, and density, and take actions. Find resources for continuing the community conversation about land-use and zoning changes.
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	Provide opportunities for everyone in the Thurston Region to learn about and practice sustainability.	Integrate education on sustainability and sustainable practices into K-12 curricula, as well as planner's short courses, workshops, professional training, and other educational opportunities.	Find resources to ensure continued focus on sustainability actions, education, and coordination.
	Make strategic decisions and investments to advance sustainability regionally.	Create and adopt sustainability checklists for use in all local decision making processes by 2016.	Develop a generic checklist for modification and use by local jurisdictions. Use the list when making decisions such as funding allocations, comprehensive plan amendments, and capital facilities investments.

Foundational Principles & Policies: To support the Sustainable Thurston vision, the Plan establishes 10 foundational principles and related policies, developed using input from expert panels, engaged residents, surveys, and the best information available. Together, these principles and policies articulate the region's definition of sustainability:

Enhance quality of life, foster economic vitality, and protect the environment while balancing our needs today with those of future residents.

Sustainable Thurston

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

Ten Foundational Principles

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; recognize 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.

The following Foundational Policies identify the six elements of the Sustainable Thurston plan and articulate what will be done to achieve a more sustainable Thurston Region. This Sustainable Thurston plan is organized using these six elements.

Foundational Policies:

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 both 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, reduced climate impacts, and long-term household and community health.

Economy

- Create an economy that is diverse, can adapt to changing conditions, takes advantage of new opportunities and 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-McChord.
- Build a vital economy by offering opportunities for education and entrepreneurial endeavors.
- Provide opportunities for a range of business types to succeed.

- Emphasize polices that support locally owned businesses including home-based, entrepreneurial, and nonprofit 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.
- Add incentives for business to demonstrate their environmental sustainability including reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Opportunities and Choices

- Increase housing and transportation choices to support all ranges of lifestyles, household incomes, abilities, and ages.
- Increase opportunities for riding transit, biking, walking, ridesharing, allowing and encouraging flexible work schedules, and teleworking.
- 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, retrofit existing infrastructure to reduce impacts, and reduce 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 nonprofit businesses and organizations.
- Develop new ways to cultivate and support respectful civic engagement and participation.
- Think broadly, regionally and globally.
- 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 — and globally, 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.

Implementing the Plan: We will implement this regional Plan with each jurisdiction determining what will work best in its unique community. The actions represent a menu of options for local, state, private-sector, and nonprofit partners. Some actions are underway and can be expanded; others will be new for our region. It will take all of the partners — acting locally, collaborating regionally, engaging residents and sustainaing efforts over time — to achieve the vision.

Downtown Olympia is the region's cultural heart.

The Thurston Sustainability Wheel

Think of the Plan's structure as a circle — or a wheel. The center represents the economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable community described in the vision statement. The innermost ring expresses the six elements described in the foundational principles and policies. The icons in the next ring symbolize the 12 priority goals and targets. The outer ring represents the many actions necessary to achieve the goals, targets and vision. While every action is important to achieving the central vision, some will help the region achieve multiple goals and targets.

Priority Goals, Targets & Action Steps

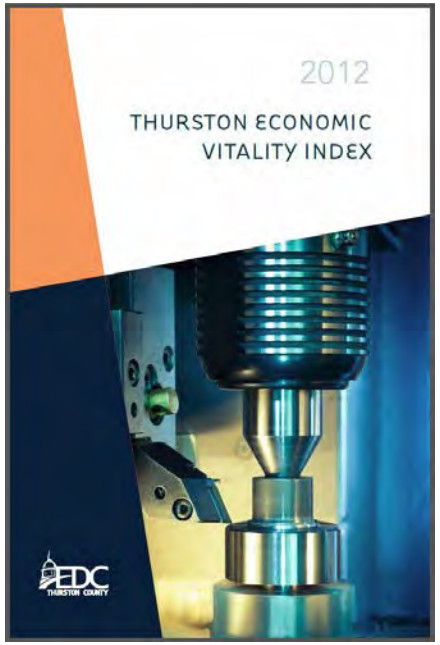
To measure progress toward achieving the vision, the Sustainable Thurston Task Force identified priority goals, targets, and first action steps. The 12 priority goals are broad and interconnected — ranging from creating a robust economy to supporting a local food system — with economic, social, and environmental implications. Achieving one goal helps the region achieve others. For example, protecting air and water quality will help the region attract and keep employers.

Achieving each of the 12 priority goals will help support the three elements of sustainability: economy, society and environment. The table below shows how the priority goals are integral to providing either primary or secondary support to each sustainability element.

	Priority Goal	Economy	Social	Environment		Priority Goal	Economy	Social	Environment
1	Centers and Corridors	P	P	P	7	Food Systems	P	P	S
2	Preserve Environment	P	P	P	8	Water Supply	P	P	P
3	Robust Economy	P	P	S	9	Carbon Neutrality	S	P	P
4	Water Quality	P	P	P	10	Air Quality	S	P	P
5	Zero Waste	S	S	P	11	Sustainability Education	S	P	S
6	Basic Needs	P	P	S	12	Strategic Decisions	P	P	P

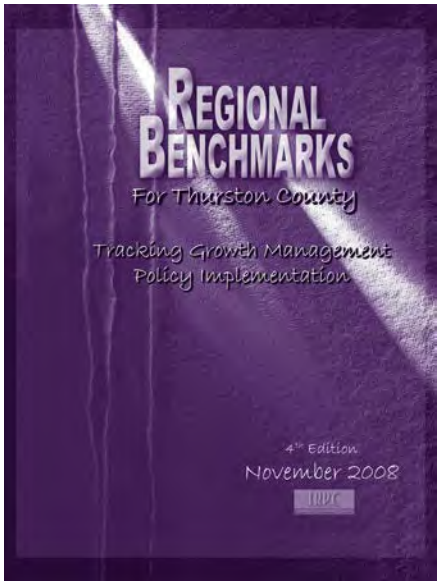
P= Primary
S= Secondary

Over time, local jurisdictions and their partners will develop and monitor more specific objectives and measures. For instance, the Thurston County Board of Health's Thurston Thrives initiative is already developing an action agenda and measures around community health (*see Opportunities & Choices chapter*.)



The Thurston Economic Development Council is developing a Sustainable Economy index, which will use measurements relating to the six goals in the Economy chapter. This index will be a companion to the Thurston Economic Vitality Index.

The Thurston Regional Planning Council — which will monitor regional progress in achieving the broad slate of sustainability goals — will update its Regional Benchmarks for Thurston County report to include the Priority Goals & Targets to ensure regular and consistent monitoring.
TRPC will also continue to monitor a range of land-use, housing, transportation, and environmental indicators.



Thurston Thrives!

Create vibrant centers, corridors, and neighborhoods while accommodating growth.

Creating places will support equal access to quality education, services, amenities, and infrastructure, as well as attract and retain employers and residents who desire an active urban environment.

TARGET

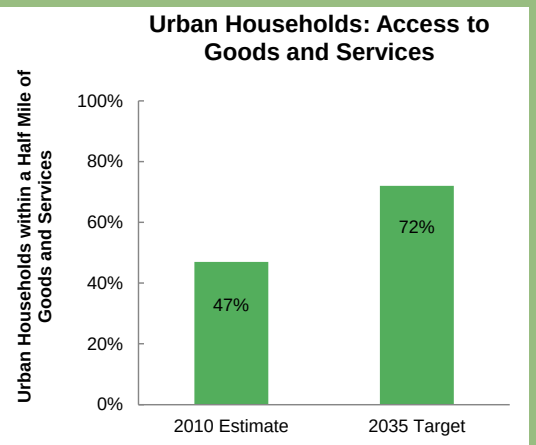
By 2035, 72 percent of all (new and existing) households in our cities, towns, and unincorporated growth areas will be within a half-mile (comparable to a 20-minute walk) of an urban center, corridor, or neighborhood center with access to goods and services to meet some of their daily needs.

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

Creating vibrant centers and corridors where people can live, work, shop and play, and creating neighborhood centers where people can meet some of their daily needs, are the foundation of our urban land-use vision. Walkable urban places should contain all five of these elements:

- People or activity — both residents and employers
- Proximity — places that are interesting near where people live
- Physical Form — great design
- Public Amenities — investment in street design, public buildings, transit, and parks
- Parking Policy — parking sized and designed to support walkable urban areas

Meeting the target will result in urban areas that have a greater mix of housing and commercial activity, and urban densities that support services and businesses. The other components of vital urban places are less quantifiable.



Source of data for monitoring: Thurston Regional Planning Council data program. Available annually at the neighborhood level.

First Action Steps: Rethink our existing land-use zoning and regulations in the urban areas to allow for a greater mix of uses and densities to support efficient provision of services. Identify priority areas, and begin neighborhood-level planning to create clarity about design, mix of uses, and density and take actions. Find resources for continuing the community conversation about land-use and zoning changes.

Preserve environmentally sensitive lands, farmlands, forest lands, prairies, and rural lands and develop compact urban areas.

Preserving spaces will result in multiple outcomes, including maintaining viable local food, farm, and forest economies, protecting the environment, as well as using land in urban areas efficiently and effectively for residential, commercial, and industrial uses while preserving open space.

TARGET

Between 2010 and 2035, no more than 5 percent of new housing will locate in the rural areas, and 95 percent will be within cities, towns, unincorporated growth areas, and tribal reservations. Rural areas include land outside of the cities, towns, unincorporated urban growth areas and tribal reservations.

Supporting target: No net loss of farmlands, forest lands, prairie habitats (in addition to environmentally critical areas that are currently protected) while providing for a range of densities within rural Thurston County.

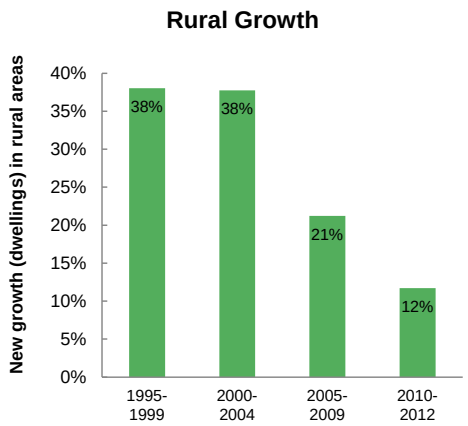
How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

Preserving Thurston County's rural character is dependent on guiding residential growth into the urban areas where households will have greater access to goods and efficiently provided services.

Since Washington adopted the Growth Management Act (GMA) in the early 1990s, Thurston County's rural growth has decreased from 38 percent (1995-2004) to 12 percent (2010-2012). It is projected that without changes to existing plans, however, Thurston County will see a 10 percent reduction in forest lands and 32 percent reduction in farm lands by 2035. Meeting the target and setting a supporting target of no net loss of farmlands, forest lands, and prairie habitats in rural Thurston County will ensure that the goal of preserving environmentally sensitive lands, farmlands, forest lands, prairies, and rural lands will be met.

First Action Steps: To better understand rural land uses, create and prioritize an inventory of farmlands, forest lands, prairies, and other critical habitats that are at risk due to development pressure.

Take appropriate steps (e.g., incentives, support agricultural economy, purchase or transfer of development rights, rural zoning changes) to achieve goals.



Source of data for monitoring: Thurston Regional Planning Council data program. Available annually at the neighborhood level.

Create a robust economy through sustainable practices.

Creating a robust and sustainable economy will support healthy social and environmental systems, will not use up resources faster than nature renews them, and will share benefits equitably. More local jobs mean people will be able to work and shop closer to where they live, keeping more local dollars recirculating within the region.

TARGET

The Economic Development Council will develop a Sustainable Economy Index. The "Index" will identify what to measure in order to track progress toward a robust sustainable economy. A target can be developed from the index after it is monitored for several years.

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

The components of a sustainable economy for the Thurston Region* have been identified as:

1. Coordinated & Efficient Governance
2. Sector Diversity
3. Innovation Climate
4. Physical Infrastructure
5. Adequate Employment Land Supply
6. Progressive Education System
7. Healthy Environment
8. Access to Capital
9. Social Infrastructure
10. Strong Municipal Revenue Base
11. Targeted Economic Development Programs
12. Workforce Industry Balance

Actions relating to the first six components have been identified in the Goals and Action table in the Economy chapter. Evaluation indicators for the first six components will be identified and developed into a Sustainable Economy Index.

First Action Steps: Implement the Sustainable Economy actions.

**The term "Thurston Region" refers to the cities, towns, and tribal reservations, as well as the unincorporated urban growth areas and rural parts of Thurston County, Wash.*

Protect and improve water quality, including groundwater, rivers, streams, lakes, and the Puget Sound.

Protecting and improving water quality will sustain the region's environmental, human, and economic health.

TARGET

Protect small stream basins that are currently ranked as "Intact" or "Sensitive." Improve and restore as many as possible "Impacted" stream basins.

(Note: This target is also used by the Puget Sound Partnership. See *Environment Chapter — Guiding Growth — Healthy Watersheds* callout for definitions.)

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

Source of data for monitoring: Benthic Index of Biotic Integrity (B-IBI). This index describes the biological condition of stream sites and their surrounding habitat based on the diversity and relative abundance of the benthic (bottom dwelling) macroinvertebrates living there.

Protecting Puget Sound, local streams, lakes, and groundwater will require new approaches and new partnerships. Science-based approaches show that once stream basins are degraded, it is difficult to restore their natural function. Efforts are more successful when focused on:

1. Protecting well-functioning or slightly impacted stream basins from degradation. These streams are usually rated "Intact" or "Sensitive" using monitoring data.
2. Focusing restoration efforts in stream basins that are impacted, but not yet degraded, where they have the best chance of success.

There is a range of management strategies, including land-use and stormwater regulations, stormwater infrastructure investments, and restoration activities that will help meet targets on protecting and improving water quality.

First Action Steps: To preserve the stream basins that still have the opportunity to function properly, conduct watershed-based land-use planning (i.e., basin plans that use the best information available). Focus on those areas that may be at risk of degradation under current plans and development regulations. Where existing plans exist, implement them.

Plan and act toward zero waste in the region.

Moving toward zero waste will advance efficient use of resources, reduce consumption, maximize recycling, and ensure that products are made to be used, repaired, or recycled back into nature or the marketplace.

TARGET

Reduce per capita landfill waste by 32 percent by 2035 to achieve no net increase in landfill waste compared to 2010 in Thurston County.

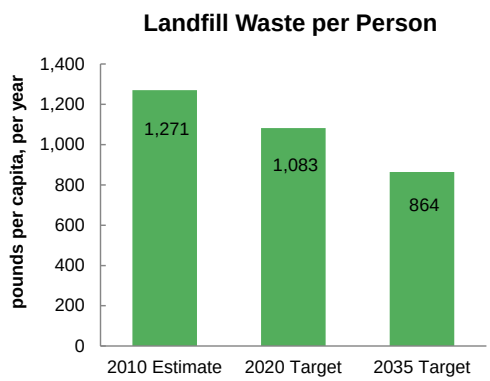
Interim Target: Reduce per capita landfill waste by 15 percent by 2020.

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

Large amounts of solid waste are produced by both residential and commercial customers. Reducing different types of waste from residential, commercial, construction, and organics requires analysis to identify different approaches, facilities, funding opportunities, and coordinated education and outreach, as well as incentives to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Up-to-date, accurate data collection and forecasts of volumes and types of solid waste are essential for tracking the lifespan of the Waste and Recovery Center. Adequate financing, including rate-setting plans are needed to meet the needs of future populations and to provide funding for waste-reduction programs.

First Action Steps: Maintain a rate structure that will incentivize waste prevention, implement policy and support programs.



Source of data for monitoring: Thurston County Solid Waste.

Ensure that residents have the resources to meet their daily needs.

Ensuring equitable opportunity for affordable housing that does not unduly burden a household will help enable residents to meet other basic household needs such as food, utilities, health care, and transportation.

TARGET

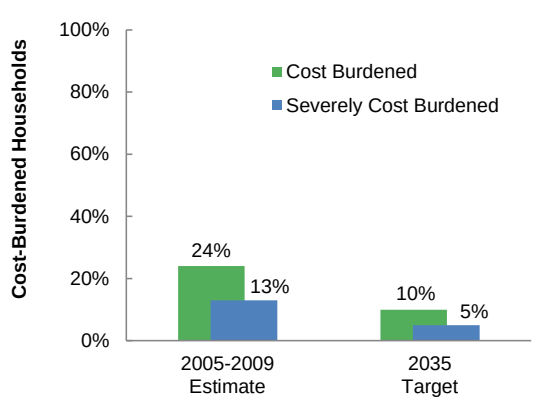
By 2035, less than 10 percent of total households in Thurston County will be cost-burdened; five percent will be severely cost-burdened.

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

Monitoring cost-burden will give an indication of whether residents have access to the resources necessary to meet their daily needs, including access to:

- Affordable, safe, quality, energy-efficient housing
- Affordable, healthy food
- Family-wage jobs and job training
- Health and human services
- Safe and efficient transportation
- Parks and natural resources
- Quality education
- Safe, strong, vibrant, neighborhoods

As progress is made toward the other priority goals, the effect on residents' ability to meet their daily needs will be monitored. Cost-burdened households are defined as those earning 80 percent or less of median income and spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Severely cost-burdened households spend more than 50 percent of their household income on housing.



Source of data for monitoring: HUD CHAS Data (available periodically as five year rolling averages).

First Action Steps: To become more strategic in managing scarce social service resources, create a single governing entity to ensure a coordinated and streamlined approach to social service planning and funding in Thurston County.

Support local food systems to increase community resilience, health, and economic prosperity.

Supporting local food systems will contribute to the local economy — helping sustain local farms and provide residents access to healthy food choices.

TARGET

To be determined after development of a local food systems plan.

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

A sustainable local food system — just like access to housing, schools, and transportation — affects social, environmental, and economic elements of community health by:

- Supporting a stable base of family farms that are less chemical- and energy-intensive, emphasizing local outputs, and improving working and living conditions for farm labor;
- Fostering a business environment where food, community food enterprises and agriculture-related businesses promote local food whenever possible, can create jobs, circulate financial capital within the community, and contribute to diversifying our community's economic development;
- Developing marketing and processing practices that create more direct and beneficial links between producers and consumers, reducing resources needed to move food;
- Improving access to fresh foods and educating on all aspects of food — from soil to soil;
- Reducing waste through education about efficient and safe home and institutional meal planning, purchasing and storing, and supporting efforts that use food as food as long as safely possible (and when food becomes waste, recovering and composting at the home and industrial levels); and,
- Eliminating food insecurity with a coordinated system of service delivery, and improving access by all community members to culturally-appropriate, adequate, healthy, affordable food.

First Action Steps: Find resources to create a local food systems plan, and support development of a regional food policy council.

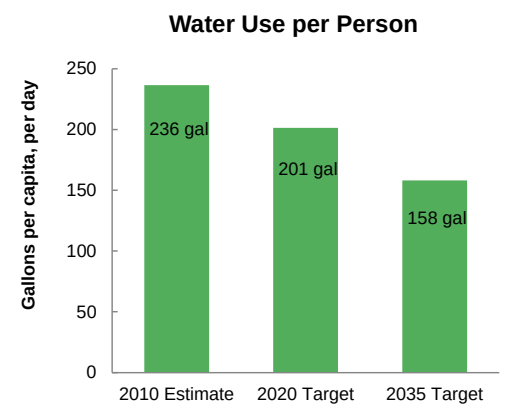
Ensure that the region's water supply sustains people in perpetuity while protecting the environment.

Providing adequate water for all current and future residents will continue to be a fundamental necessity and quality-of-life asset for health, recreation, food production, and economic activities of the region.

TARGET

Reduce per capita water use by 33 percent by 2035 to achieve no net increase in water use in Thurston County.

Interim Target: Reduce per capita water use by 15 percent by 2020.



Source of data for monitoring: Estimated Water Use in Washington, United States Geologic Survey (USGS). Available every five years at the county level. Last report contained 2005 data that was used by TRPC to develop a 2010 estimate.

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

Thurston County's water supply comes from both groundwater and surface water. Both are replenished by precipitation. Our surface water streams and rivers are part of three major watersheds that are much larger than Thurston County: Nisqually, Budd-Deschutes, and Chehalis. Subsurface groundwater exchange can cross watershed boundaries. For these reasons, a water "capacity" analysis does not make sense at a countywide level, but it could be conducted at a watershed or stream basin level. The Department of Ecology is required by state law to retain adequate amounts of water in streams to protect and preserve instream resources and uses. One management tool used to protect flows is to set flow levels in regulation — this is referred to as "instream flows." Instream flows have been set for the Upper Chehalis Basin, part of which is located in southwest Thurston County.

The countywide target to reduce water consumption per capita is a step in achieving the goal of ensuring that the region's water supply sustains people in perpetuity while protecting the environment. To achieve no net increase in water use in the Thurston Region (based on projected population growth rates) it also will be important to ensure that the goal is met in watersheds where instream flows are a concern.

First Action Steps: Find resources to create a water systems plan that explores ways to manage water resources in the Thurston Region more holistically.

Other actions include: increase water conservation measures; encourage a more compact form of development; decrease the number of unmetered wells in Thurston County; reduce water leakage from public water systems; increase use of reclaimed water.

Move toward a carbon-neutral community.

Planning and acting to reduce or offset greenhouse gases will help zero out the net amount of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases the region emits into the atmosphere. Such efforts will also foster local "green" jobs — weatherizing homes, installing solar panels, building energy-efficient residential and commercial buildings — and reduce climate change adaptation costs.

TARGET

Become a carbon-neutral community by 2050.

Supporting targets:

Greenhouse gas emissions targets:

- Achieve 25 percent reduction of 1990 levels by 2020
- Achieve 45 percent reduction of 1990 levels by 2035
- Achieve 80 percent reduction of 1990 levels by 2050

*Decrease annual per capita vehicle miles traveled in the Thurston Region to:

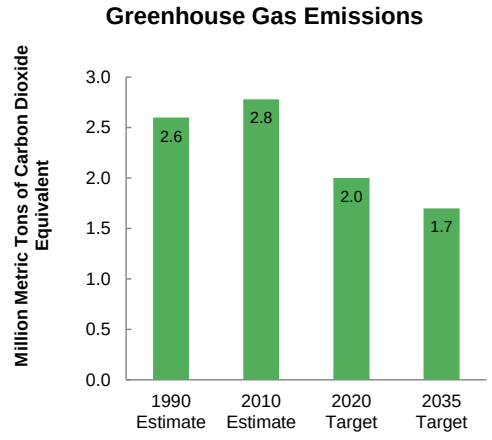
- 1990 levels by 2020
- 30 percent below 1990 by 2035
- 50 percent below 1990 by 2050

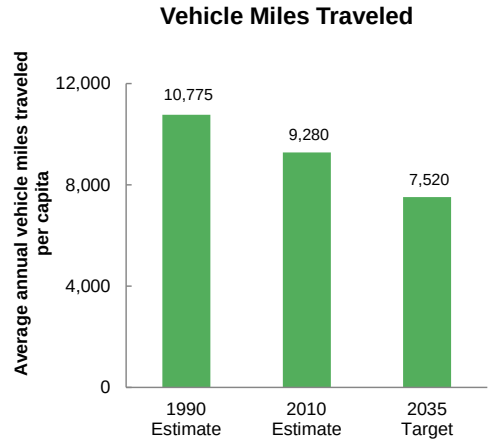
(*amended into the Thurston Region's long-range Regional Transportation Plan in 2010)

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

Until a climate action plan is complete, it is unknown whether meeting the greenhouse gas, vehicle miles traveled, and land-use targets will achieve carbon neutrality. They can, however, serve as interim targets until additional information is obtained.

First Action Steps: Find resources to create a Thurston Region climate action plan.





Source of data for monitoring: The Thurston Climate Action Team developed a greenhouse gas inventory. This inventory can be updated periodically and is developed from a wide range of sources. Vehicle miles traveled data are available annually from the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS).

Maintain air quality standards.

Maintaining air quality will protect the region's health, quality of life, and opportunity to thrive socially and economically.

TARGET

Continue to meet state and federal air quality standards for criteria pollutants, including:

- PM_{10}: 150 micrograms per cubic meter of air ($\mu g/m^3$), 24-hour average [state and federal primary/secondary standards];
- $PM_{2.5}$: 12 $\mu g/m^3$, annual average [federal primary/secondary standards];
- Ozone: 0.075 parts per million (ppm), 8-hour average [federal primary/secondary standards].

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

In 1970, Congress passed the Clean Air Act, giving the federal government authority to clean up air pollution in this country.

Breathing polluted air can make a person's eyes and nose burn. It can irritate your throat and make breathing difficult. Pollutants such as tiny airborne particles and ground-level ozone can trigger respiratory problems, especially for people with asthma. Air pollution can also aggravate health problems for the elderly and others with heart or respiratory diseases.

Air pollution isn't just a threat to our health, it also damages our environment. Toxic air pollutants and the chemicals that form acid rain and ground-level ozone can damage trees, crops, wildlife, lakes, and other bodies of water. Those pollutants can also harm fish and other aquatic life.

The health, environmental, and economic impacts of air pollution are significant. Each day, air pollution causes thousands of illnesses leading to lost days at work and school. Air pollution also reduces agricultural crop and commercial forest yields by billions of dollars each year.

First Action Steps: Continue to focus on reducing vehicle miles traveled while improving the operational efficiency of the transportation network.

Air Quality Standards

Pollutant	Averaging Time	Level
Particulate Pollution (PM-10)	24-hour	150 $\mu g/m^3$
Particulate Pollution (PM-2.5)	Annual	12 $\mu g/m^3$
Ozone	8-hour	0.075 ppm

National and state standards are in place for air quality six pollutants. Of those, monitoring data are available for three. See air quality section of the plan for further information.

Provide opportunities for everyone in the Thurston Region to learn about and practice sustainability.

Sustainability education will empower residents to practice sustainability in their homes, neighborhoods, and communities as well as support action necessary to achieve goals and targets.

TARGET

Integrate education on sustainability and sustainable practices into K-12 curricula; planner's short course, workshops, professional training and other educational opportunities.

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

Integrating education on sustainability and sustainable practices into school curricula, plans, and policies will ensure that decisions and investments support making sustainable practices the norm.

First Action Steps: Find resources to ensure continued focus on sustainability actions, education, and coordination.

Make strategic decisions and investments to advance sustainability regionally.

Making decisions and investments that consider effects on achieving short- and long-term sustainability goals and targets will be key to advancing the Thurston Region's bold sustainability vision. This includes working collaboratively and encouraging coordinated and efficient governance.

TARGET

Create and adopt sustainability checklists for use in all local decision-making processes by 2016.

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

Sustainability checklists will ensure that a wide range of sustainability goals are integrated into the various local decision-making processes.

The sustainability checklist can be tied to the priority goals and targets to ensure that direct progress is made toward sustainability goals as decisions are made by local governments.

In addition, this will help ensure that strategic investments in infrastructure will serve multiple purposes such as:

- Stimulating other investments
- Facilitate movement of goods and services
- Reduce dependency on natural resources
- Reduce the region's carbon footprint

First Action Steps: Develop a generic checklist for modification and use by local jurisdictions. Use the list when making decisions such as funding allocations, comprehensive plan amendments, and capital facilities investments.

2012 Sustainable Thurston workshop in Lacey.

Process and Engagement

Sustainable Thurston is a community conversation to develop a vision for a vibrant, healthy, and resilient future, and to identify the actions and responsibilities to achieve it.

The Sustainable Thurston Story

The seeds of the Sustainable Thurston project were planted during the Thurston Regional Planning Council's 2009 policymaker retreat. Members — representing local cities and towns, Thurston County, tribes, school districts, fire districts, the Economic Development Council, The Evergreen State College, Intercity Transit, and the Thurston Public Utility District — expressed frustration

with the lack of opportunity and resources needed to address several key issues that crossed jurisdictional boundaries. They identified four priority areas:

- Coordinate land-use planning better;
- Integrate climate change-related issues into local plans and decisions;
- Understand and address issues related to water infrastructure, water quality, and quantity; and,
- Increase efficiency in providing government services.

In 2010, 29 public and private jurisdictions and organizations from throughout the Thurston Region applied for a federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sustainable Communities Partnership planning grant to develop a regional plan for sustainable development. The partners committed to working together to address the tough issues facing our community. They understood this represented an unprecedented opportunity for a truly regional communitywide conversation about a full range of quality-of-life topics.

The Thurston Region was one of 45 across the country to receive funding under this grant program. So began Sustainable Thurston — a three-year community conversation to lay out the vision, goals, and actions of a long-range plan for a more sustainable future.

Community Engagement

From the outset, public views strongly influenced the project. The topics explored by the panels and workgroups supplied one of the most visible examples of this influence. The original application identified eight subject areas:

- Sustainable Economy;
- Housing;
- Land Use, Transportation, and Climate Change;
- Health and Human Services;
- Public Safety;
- Schools and Transportation; and,
- Water Infrastructure.

Based on feedback from community members and stakeholders, we added three other topic areas:

- Local Food Systems;
- Energy; and,
- Solid Waste.

In summer and fall of 2011, 180 individuals representing 104 organizations, joined panels to develop a series of white papers based on the 11 topic areas. The panels articulated community strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

To set a baseline, Washington State University (WSU) conducted a general outreach survey of 1,200 people, asking them to identify community values, ways people receive information, and overall feelings about community participation. An education and outreach panel developed a public-engagement plan, laying out the course for the remainder of the project.

To engage residents, in spring 2012, the planning team mailed a postcard to every household in the region and instituted a series of radio spots, local newspaper stories, and videos on local television. Sustainable Thurston partners reached out to their individual contacts/communities through notices on their websites and in newsletters and e-mails. The planning team placed posters on storefronts. These efforts called for action encouraging people to attend the workshops held throughout the region and to send in their comments.

More than 400 people, including business owners, students, seniors, community leaders, and people new to public process, shared their hopes, fears, and bright ideas for the future in small group discussions or through letters and e-mails. The planning team also attended events throughout the region, working booths, and connecting with residents. All in all, thousands of people gave input in the early stages of the project. We distilled all that the communities and panels had to say into the Plan's Foundational Principles & Policies.

In early 2013, the partners sought a second round of public engagement on the work produced by the Sustainable Thurston Task Force, panels, and planning team. In a series of workshops and online

"The Sustainable Thurston project makes me want to be involved and stay involved. It connects me to the community. I have kids; I want them to grow up understanding the importance of this."

— Ruth Chapman, Providence St. Peter Hospital nurse and Thurston Region resident

engagement efforts, we rolled out the vision, goals, actions, as well as three land-use scenarios. The public spoke clearly and directly: **"BE BOLDER and CREATE MORE SPECIFIC GOALS AND TARGETS."**

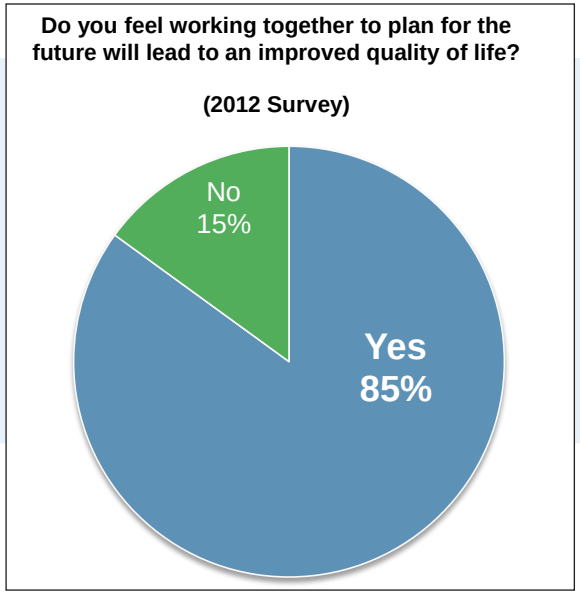
The Task Force responded with a bold vision statement, a land-use vision, and 12 priority goals and targets.

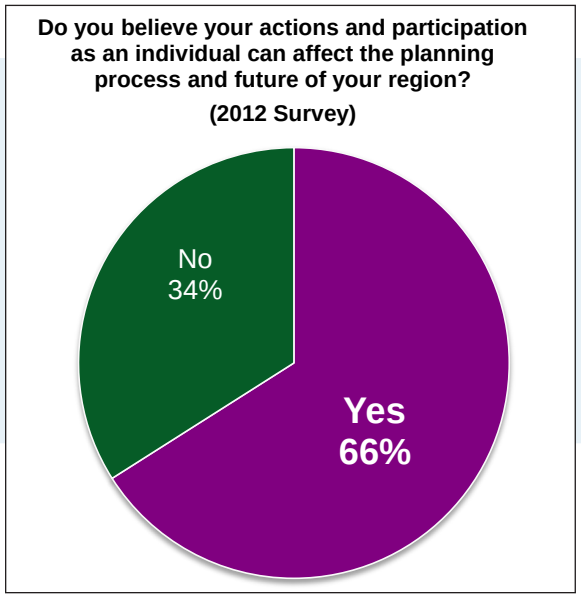
In fall of 2013, TRPC released the draft Plan for public comment. Briefings were held in every local city hall and the County Courthouse, reaching another 300 people in person. Other people participated online, took a survey, or sent in comments, helping to shape the final plan.

Throughout the project, local policymakers and stakeholders engaged in a series of large forums, brainstorming sessions, city council and planning commission briefings, and twice-monthly Task Force meetings.

Targeted Outreach

Partners such as the Thurston County Housing Authority, Community Action Council, Family Support Center, and Thurston County Food Bank helped the project team reach individuals who do not typically participate in planning processes with a "Basic Needs Survey." The planning team conducted interviews with local tribes and organizations representing low-income residents and minorities to inform the





What did people say in the 2012 Sustainable Thurston Survey?

"A group of people discussing real issues is better than one person deciding for everyone"

"More minds working is great"

Regional Housing Plan. The Sustainable Thurston partners wanted to hear the voices of youth, so teachers encouraged students to attend workshops. The Economic Development Council held a Sustainable Economy luncheon highlighting the Sustainable Economic strategy for more than 250 business people, and the Northwest EcoBuilding Guild designed a series of workshops for the development community around the Sustainable Thurston project. Other community organizations wrote articles, contributed to blogs, and sent out newsletters encouraging residents to participate in the project.

Why such attention to gathering public input? As a core value, our community believes that working together as a region will improve quality of life. In Washington State University's 1,200-person survey, conducted at the beginning of the project, 85 percent of the respondents noted their belief in the value of working together. Around 66 percent said that their voice counts in our community.

We.

The use of "we" in this Plan is intentional. "We" refers to the people who will make the vision happen, including residents, business owners, and community leaders. "We" represents local people taking local actions to increase the quality of life in our community.

Next Steps Already Underway

During the course of the three-year project, opportunities for next steps emerged. This Plan notes these as "Sustainability Actions Already Underway." Many grew from the relationships developed during the first years of the project, when inspired community leaders took next steps, such as the Thurston Thrives, South Thurston Economic Development Initiative, Entrepreneurial Center, Brewery District, Martin Way, and Woodland District planning projects.

It is Just the Beginning

Sustainable Thurston began a communitywide discussion that led to a vision: *" … We will view every decision at the local and regional level through the sustainability lens — thinking in generations, not years. The region will work together toward common goals, putting people at the center of our thinking, and inspire individual responsibility and leadership in our residents."*

Successful action toward that vision will depend on motivated, inspired, and informed leaders and residents who continue to expand the engagement and partnerships that began with Sustainable Thurston. A sustainable future — a healthy environment, vital society and robust economy — depends on it.

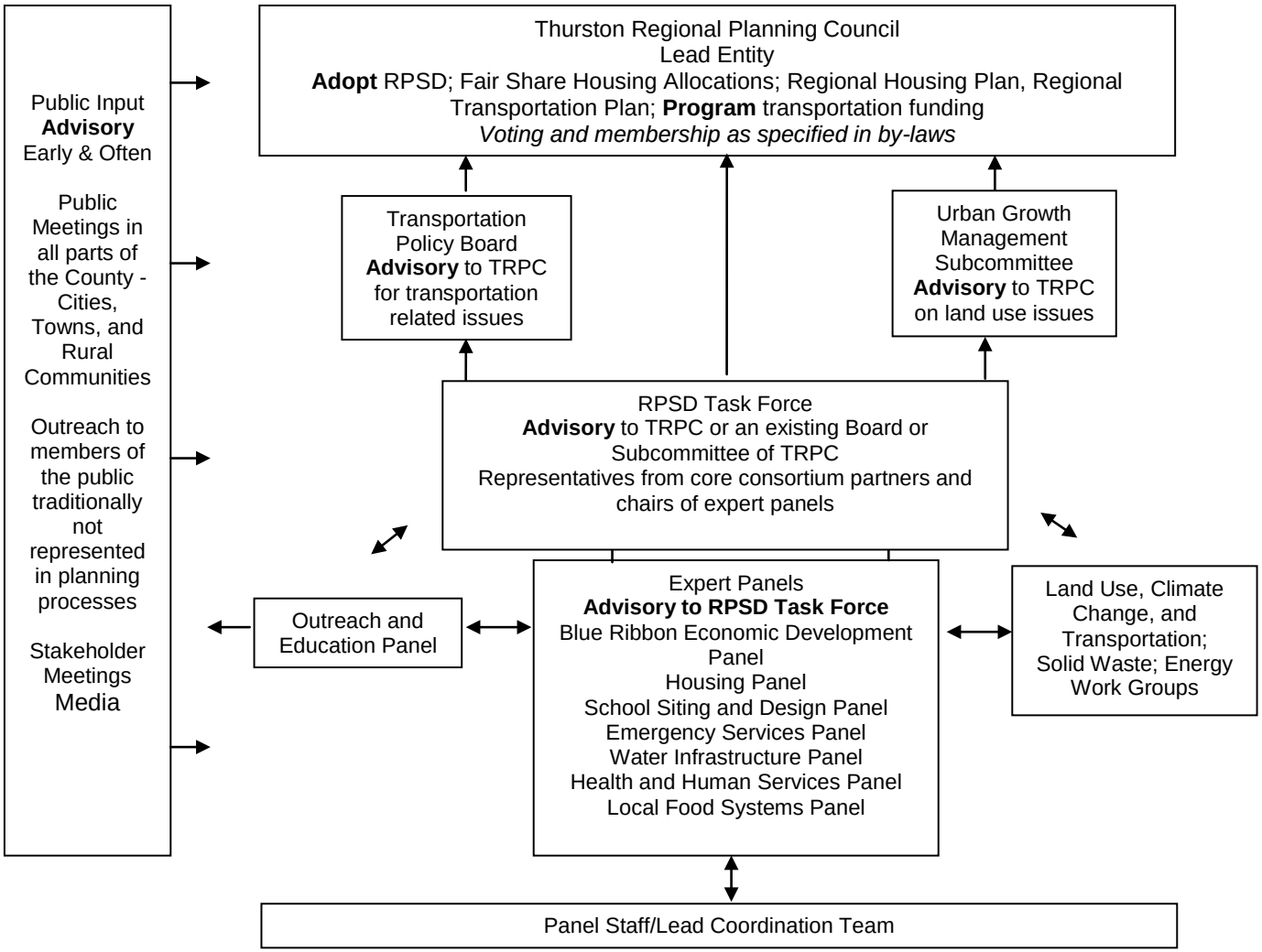
Community Outreach By The Numbers

- 29 partners signed a Memorandum of Understanding
- 180 people participated on 12 topic panels
- 23 Sustainable Thurston Task Force members held 38 discussion sessions
- 104 jurisdictions, agencies, organizations, and community groups represented at Task Force and panel meetings
- 9 Workshops held around Thurston County, with 400 public participants
- 3 Regional forums
- 250 Business leaders attended the Sustainable Economic Futures luncheon
- 1,500 people visited www.EngageSustainableThurston.org almost 15,000 page views and 140 ideas submitted
- 55,000+ page views of the project website
- 8,000+ documents downloaded
- 12 briefings reaching every city/town - 300 people reached
- 185 people took a survey on the draft Plan
- 1,800+ residents responded to two Sustainable Thurston surveys about priority issues, concerns and values
- 1,000 low-income residents responded to a Sustainable Thurston survey about meeting minimum basic daily needs

Community Outreach By The Numbers

- 110,000 postcards sent to homes and businesses countywide
- 1,650 unique email addresses regularly contacted on Sustainable Thurston email list
- 8 libraries targeted with posters and flyers
- 8 city/county halls targeted with posters and flyers
- 215 Employee Transportation Coordinator worksites targeted with posters and flyers
- 3 radio advertisements played 640 times
- 4 on-air radio interviews with TRPC staff
- 5 tabled events
- 2 newspaper editorials in The Olympian
- 5 news articles from regional newspapers and newsletters
- 6 videos produced with 2,400 views on YouTube.com
- 225 people and associated networks reached on Facebook and Twitter

Process and Product: An Organizational Chart for Development and Adoption of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development



Thurston Regional Planning Council members participating in 2013 Council Retreat.

Leadership & Participation

Sustainable Thurston provides an opportunity to take stock of the region today and plan a more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable tomorrow. Achieving Sustainable Thurston's bold vision, goals, and targets will require significant, sustained public- and private-sector leadership and participation.

The Sustainable Thurston Foundational Principles & Policies reflect the values of the Thurston Region — what the region believes in and what we will do to achieve a more sustainable future.

Principles and policies related to Leadership & Participation include:

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

Sustainable Thurston Foundational Principles & Policies Related to Process and Engagement:

- Offer engagement opportunities and information encouraging choices that contribute to individual, household, and community health and well-being;
- Acknowledge the interdependence of communities within — and external to — our region, as well as the impacts of our region upon the world and impacts of the world upon our region;
- Cultivate respectful civic engagement and participation by residents and public, private, and non-profit businesses and organizations;
- Develop new ways to cultivate and support respectful civic engagement and participation;
- Think broadly, regionally, and globally;
- Partner across topic areas and jurisdictional boundaries; and,
- Break down institutional barriers to communication and cooperation.

Challenges & Opportunities

The Thurston Region, which encompasses Thurston County and the cities and towns within, is a growing and changing community. Even without growth, the region faces sustainability challenges. The reality of growth and change raises the hope that current and new residents will contribute talents and values that make the region more diverse and dynamic. Change also raises the specter of more congestion, consumption, and pollution. These important opportunities and challenges are worthy of the community's careful consideration and action.

In 2010, the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) received a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to craft a sustainable development vision and strategies to guide the region through 2035. The resulting Sustainable Thurston project includes a regional housing plan, regional economic strategy, and the broader regional plan: *Creating Places — Preserving Spaces: A Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region*. The Plan makes policy recommendations about transportation, land use, housing, economy, environment, health and human services, public safety, and other related issues.

The goals, actions, and targets that follow cover a diverse array of topics, ranging from transportation and land use to health and climate change. What they have in common is they will require regional leadership and participation. This means thinking boldly and acting together.

Implementation

Creating Places—Preserving Spaces describes a wide range of action steps toward developing a sustainable Thurston Region. Some are essential, while others are desirable. All will be challenging in many ways. In implementing this Plan, financial resources will undoubtedly be limited. But those partners who helped frame the Plan in response to the public process (Sustainable Thurston Task Force members) and the adopters (Thurston Regional Planning Council members) are committed to advocating for actions that are essential for sustainability and for finding the resources to take such actions.

"We commend the process that TRPC has used for the involvement of a wide array of stakeholders. We hope that this ambitious framework will continue, keeping the public and decision-makers aware of the urgency needed to accomplish its goals."

-League of Women Voters of Thurston County

Creating Places—Preserving Spaces is a working document of sustainability concepts that are meant to be used by local governments, special purpose districts, non-profit organizations, and private citizens to help further their sustainability priorities. Not all the concepts are relevant or appropriate in all situations for all partners. Sustainable development in the South County is different than sustainable development in the metropolitan area of Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater. For example, implementation by school districts will be different than implementation by the Port of Olympia.

Nothing in this plan is a mandate for any particular entity to implement. Rather, the concepts should be considered a template for a coordinated approach to sustainable development in the region. It is up to Thurston County, cities, towns, school boards, the Port of Olympia, water providers, sewer districts and other partners to decide which goals and policies to implement within their purview.

eq•ui•ty
\ `e-kwə-tē \

n: The quality of being fair, just and impartial.

adj: equitable

Equity is a common thread that stiches together this Plan's goals and actions.

Working together to provide equitable access to healthy food, affordable housing, and other opportunities will make our community more socially sustainable.

Learn More: Read this Plan's companion *Fair Housing Equity Assessment* of the Thurston Region.

Creating Places—Preserving Spaces aims to add vibrancy to places such as downtown Rainier (pictured).

Regional Goals

Three leadership goals and associated actions have been identified through Task Force discussion, public input, and panel work as being essential to support meeting the region's sustainability goals. They are essential first steps — many related to funding or capacity for implementation of the Plan, and actions that require ongoing collaboration between partners.

Goal L-1: Become a model for sustainability and livability. Identify resources, organizational structure, and educational opportunities to achieve regional sustainability goals.

Goal L-2: Develop regional plans and strategies essential to meeting sustainability priority goals and targets.

Goal L-3: Increase regional coordination and collaboration.

The Plan sets a dozen priority goals to achieve the Sustainable Thurston vision.

1. **Create vibrant centers, corridors, and neighborhoods while accommodating growth.**
2. **Preserve environmentally sensitive lands, farmlands, forest lands, prairies, and rural lands and develop compact urban areas.**
3. **Create a robust economy through sustainable practices.**
4. **Protect and improve water quality, including groundwater, rivers, streams, lakes, and the Puget Sound.**
5. **Plan and act toward zero waste in the region.**
6. **Ensure that residents have the resources to meet their daily needs.**
7. **Support local food systems to increase community resilience, health, and economic prosperity.**
8. **Ensure that the region's water supply sustains people in perpetuity while protecting the environment.**
9. **Move toward a carbon-neutral community.**
10. **Maintain air quality standards.**
11. **Provide opportunities for everyone in the Thurston Region to learn about and practice sustainability.**
12. **Make strategic decisions and investments to advance sustainability regionally.**

The following table includes Priority first action steps for the Priority Goals, Leadership and Participation goals and actions, as well as the timeline, lead, and partners for each action. Timeline definitions are as follows: Underway, Short (1-3 yrs); Medium (3-10 yrs); Long (10-20 yrs). See Appendix for lead and partner acronyms and explanations.

LEADERSHIP & PARTICIPATION

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Priority Goals				
Priority Goal 1	Create vibrant centers, corridors, and neighborhoods while accommodating growth.			
First Step Action 1	Rethink our existing land-use zoning and regulations in the urban areas to allow for a greater mix of uses and densities to support efficient provision of services. The first step is to prioritize where to start and focus neighborhood-level planning efforts, as well as to find resources for continuing the community conversation about land-use and zoning changes.	Short	Cities/towns; County	TRPC; IT; EDC; Housing Authority
Priority Goal 2	Preserve environmentally sensitive lands, farmlands, forest lands, prairies, and rural lands and develop compact urban areas.			
First Step Action 2	To better understand rural land uses, create and prioritize an inventory of farmlands, forest lands, prairies, and other critical habitats that may be at risk due to development pressure. Take appropriate steps (e.g., incentives, support agricultural economy, purchase or transfer of development rights, rural zoning changes) to achieve goals.	Short	County	TRPC (land use/land cover)
Priority Goal 3	Create a robust economy through sustainable practices.			
First Step Action 3	Implement the Sustainable Economy action plan.	Short	EDC	Cities/towns; Chambers; Higher Ed; IT

LEADERSHIP & PARTICIPATION

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Priority Goal 4	Protect and improve water quality, including groundwater, rivers, streams, lakes, and the Puget Sound.			
First Step Action 4	To preserve the stream basins that still have the opportunity to function properly, conduct watershed-based land-use planning (i.e., basin plans). Focus on those areas that may be at risk of degradation under current plans and development regulations.	Underway	County	Cities/towns; TRPC
Priority Goal 5	Plan and act toward zero waste in the region.			
First Step Action 5	Maintain a rate structure that will incentivize waste prevention, as well as implement policy and support programs.	Underway	County; Cities/towns	
Priority Goal 6	Ensure that residents have the resources to meet their daily needs.			
First Step Action 6	To become more strategic in managing scarce social service resources, create a single governing entity to ensure a coordinated and streamlined approach to social service planning and funding in Thurston County.	Short	Cities/towns; County	Nonprofits
Priority Goal 7	Support local food systems to increase community resilience, health, and economic prosperity.			
First Step Action 7	Find resources to create a local food systems plan, and support development of a regional food policy council.	Short	TRPC	County; Cities/towns; Nonprofits

LEADERSHIP & PARTICIPATION

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Priority Goal 8	Ensure that the region's water supply sustains people in perpetuity while protecting the environment.			
First Step Action 8	Find resources to create a water systems plan that explores ways to manage water resources in the Thurston Region more holistically.	Short	County	Cities/towns; TRPC; LOTT; PUD
Priority Goal 9	Move toward a carbon-neutral community.			
First Step Action 9	Find resources to create a Thurston Region climate action plan.	Short	TRPC; Cities/towns; County	TCAT; PSE; IT
Priority Goal 10	Maintain air quality standards.			
First Step Action 10	Continue to focus on reducing vehicle miles traveled and improving the efficient movement of people and goods on the transportation network.	Underway	TRPC	State; Cities/towns; County; IT
Priority Goal 11	Provide opportunities for everyone in the Thurston Region to learn about and practice sustainability.			
First Step Action 11	Find resources to ensure continued focus on sustainability actions, education, and coordination.	Short	TRPC	School districts; Cities/towns; County; IT
Priority Goal 12	Make strategic decisions and investments to advance sustainability regionally.			
First Step Action 12	Develop a generic checklist for modification and use by local jurisdictions. Use the list when making decisions such as funding allocations, comprehensive plan amendments, and capital facilities investments.	Short	TRPC	Cities/towns; County; IT; School districts

LEADERSHIP & PARTICIPATION

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Leadership Goals				
GOAL L-1	Become a model for sustainability and livability. Identify resources, organizational structure, and educational opportunities to achieve regional sustainability goals.			
Action L-1.1	Identify and secure funding to implement actions to achieve Sustainable Thurston goals and vision.	Short	All	
Action L-1.2	Monitor progress in achieving Sustainable Thurston goals and targets. Take action if progress is not being achieved.	Short; Medium; Long	TRPC	All
Action L-1.3	Challenge public entities to be leaders in energy efficiency. For example, adopt Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) and location-efficiency standards for new public-sector buildings, promote commute trip reduction, and retrofit existing buildings.	Short; Medium; Long	Public Entities	
Action L-1.4	Create a regional grant center to provide assistance in identifying and applying for grants.	Short	TRPC	Cities/towns; County
Action L-1.5	Reach community members in their daily lives with sustainability information.	Underway	All	
Action L-1.6	Coordinate and collaborate on outreach and planning efforts that cross jurisdictional boundaries such as stormwater updates, watershed plans, transportation issues, public safety services, and growth-management issues.	Short	TRPC	Numerous, depending on topic
Action L-1.7	Acknowledge that the region's ecological assets have an economic value and consider their value as part of land-use decisions.	Short	Cities/towns; County	
Action L-1.8	Find resources to create a Civic Innovation Incubator. This incubator would provide an infrastructure for residents and public and private stakeholders to collaborate around sustainability projects and policies.	Short	Nonprofits	
Action L-1.9	Find resources for demonstration projects. Support innovative community ideas and projects that support Sustainable Thurston priority goals.	Short	TRPC	Cities/towns; IT; County; Nonprofits

LEADERSHIP & PARTICIPATION

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL L-2	Develop regional plans and strategies essential to meeting sustainability priority goals and targets.			
Action L-2.1	Develop a climate action plan (greenhouse gas emission reduction and mitigation). This will serve as a framework for how this region can reduce its climate impacts, while accommodating projected growth, and how it might best respond to the impacts of climate change on infrastructure, water supplies, risk reduction and emergency management, food systems, energy, community cohesion, and the economy.	Short; Medium	TRPC; County; Cities/towns	TCAT; IT; TE; PSE
Action L-2.2	Create a regional local food systems plan and support development of a regional food policy council.	Underway	Thurston Food System Council	Cities/towns; Chambers; County; EDC; Higher Ed; Nonprofits; School districts; TESC
Action L-2.3	Develop a regional sewerage plan. This should include a strategy to ensure all septic systems are monitored and maintained, that failing septic systems identified and repaired, and a strategy and policy in place to evaluate existing developments with septic systems to determine if conversion to sewer is needed due to impacts on water resources and/or human health.	Short; Medium	County	LOTT; Cities/towns; TRPC
Action L-2.4	Create a water systems plan that identifies ways to manage water resources within the region more holistically and in collaboration among state and local governments. Follow the water systems plan when reviewing and approving land-use applications.	Medium	County	Cities/towns; PUD; Tribes; State
Action L-2.5	Thurston Thrives Develop a community-wide health action agenda for sustainable health improvement. The health agenda will establish population-wide indicators, improvement targets, strategies and partnerships in each major domain of community health including: water, air, disease carriers and the physical environment, our food system, housing, education, income, community design, community cohesion, youth development and resilience, clinical prevention, and medical and behavioral treatment.	Underway (Phase 1 2013-2014)	Thurston County BOH	Cities/towns; TRPC; IT; Nonprofits; Businesses

LEADERSHIP & PARTICIPATION

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action L-2.6	Develop an urban growth area plan on a regional level. The plan could: evaluate the existing Urban Growth Area (UGA) boundaries to identify parts of the UGA that are exceedingly costly to serve with urban services (such as public transportation, sanitary sewers and potable water systems); determine whether certain lands should stay in the UGA.	Short; Medium	County	Cities/towns; TRPC; IT
Action L-2.7	Develop annexation plans. The plans could: identify infrastructure needs and cost-effective strategies for bringing infrastructure up to urban standards; and, establish a framework to guide the timing of annexation decisions to increase predictability for municipalities, property owners, and service providers.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns	County
Action L-2.8	When updating local comprehensive plans, integrate concepts from the Sustainable Thurston preferred land-use vision and other elements of the Plan.	Short	Cities/towns; County	
Action L-2.9	Develop or update essential infrastructure plans to ensure alignment with updates to the local comprehensive plans.	Medium; Long	Cities/towns; County	IT
Action L-2.10	Develop long-term strategies to manage infrastructure assets. Local jurisdictions will need to evaluate, finance, upgrade, maintain, repair, and replace existing infrastructure in a sustainable manner. Developing long-term strategies means embracing a planning horizon beyond the 20-year threshold of the Growth Management Act for infrastructure and land-use planning.	Medium	Cities/towns; County	IT
Action L-2.11	Update the county-wide planning policies as needed. Develop a process for amending the county-wide planning policies as needed.	Short	County	Cities/towns; TRPC
Action L-2.12	Building on the model of county-city joint planning, establish joint plans/agreements between local jurisdictions, special purpose districts, and tribes that will guide long-range growth and investment decisions for all parties.	Short; Medium	All	

LEADERSHIP & PARTICIPATION

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL L-3	Increase regional, multi-regional and state coordination and collaboration.			
Action L-3.1	Take advantage of opportunities to engage in multiregion, multistate, or bi-national alliances such as the Cascadia Center, West Coast Corridor Coalition, or the West Coast Collaborative to advance priority issues for the Thurston Region in league with other organizations.	Underway	TRPC	
Action L-3.2	Join/partner with Joint Base Lewis-McChord and surrounding communities on a land-use study to understand and lessen impacts on residential areas and minimize encroachment into military training areas, such as "Clear Zones" and "Accident Potential Zones."	Short; Medium	TRPC	Cities/towns; County; Tribes; State; EDC
Action L-3.3	Continue policy coordination and formal information sharing between Joint Base Lewis-McChord, state and local government agencies, and chambers of commerce, building on the foundation offered by South Sound Military and Communities Partnership to expand opportunities.	Underway	TRPC	South Sound Military and Communities Partnership
Action L-3.4	Continue to work with the state Department of Enterprise Services and Office of Financial Management to ensure that the siting of leased and owned state office buildings conforms to priority transportation and land-use considerations.	Underway	State	Cities/towns; IT
Action L-3.5	Conduct coordinated planning activities, such as watershed planning, provision of services, or other sustainability planning-related activities, to address regionally significant issues.	Underway	All	

LEADERSHIP & PARTICIPATION

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action L-3.6	Provide support and resources for greater coordination between communities to meet common water infrastructure goals. May include the following: cooperation on joint water rights and transfer applications; joint infrastructure projects, particularly near jurisdictional boundaries; a process to share plans and coordinate proposed projects; use of common tools across the region that may include development standards, management policies, asset-management programs, restoration projects; and, joint public education efforts that address the value of water, wastewater treatment, reclaimed water, and water conservation.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County; LOTT	
Action L-3.7	Build on past success and increase coordination and collaboration between local jurisdictions and special districts such as school and fire districts to ensure short- and long-term growth strategies are consistent, and keep public costs as low as possible.	Underway	Cities/towns; School districts; Fire districts	
Action L-3.8	Create a task force to explore opportunities to increase access to goods and services in existing and planned neighborhoods throughout the region and identify strategies to achieve the preferred land-use vision.	Short	TRPC	IT
Action L-3.9	Update development standards in unincorporated urban growth areas to be consistent with all street and infrastructure standards of the adjoining city. Identify funds to retrofit and update existing infrastructure deficiencies that are delaying annexations.	Short; Medium	County	Cities/towns

Downton Olympia features a walkable streetscape and seeks to add market-rate housing to the mix.

Community

The places we create and spaces we preserve reflect the values of our diverse and dynamic community. In the coming decades, we will give urban residents greater access to a full range of housing and transportation options, as well as protect rural lifestyle choices and resource lands.

What are we today? What is our vision for the future? How will we get there? Answering these questions creates the foundation of our sustainability plan. The discussion starts with understanding how communities' land-use and transportation decisions shape development patterns. The way we use land and our transportation network form the bones of our communities and are hard to change once in place.

Opportunities for infill, redevelopment, reshaping, and revitalizing our communities can occur as growth continues over time. But growth also puts pressure on the natural environment where the consequences to clean water, air, farms, and forest land can be substantial. We explored these tensions during the development of this plan.

What are we today?

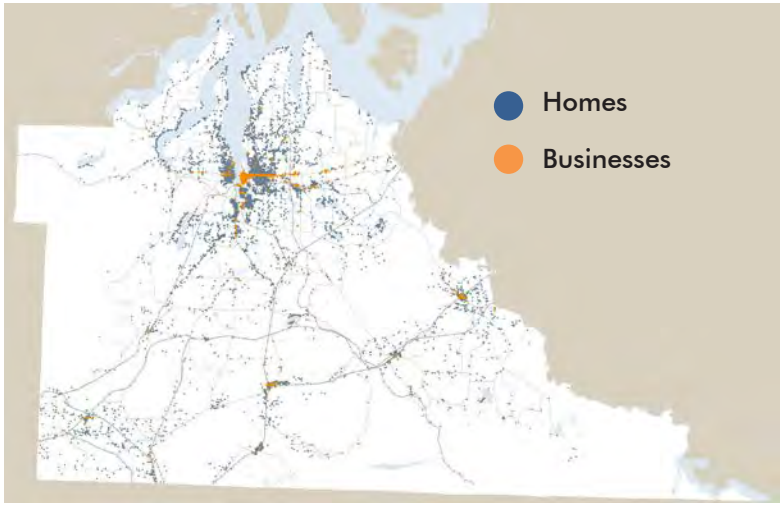
Our region — home of Washington's capital city — is a small-sized county located at the southern end of Puget Sound. The rural areas contain active forestlands — both publicly and privately owned — small farms, natural prairies, and a portion of the Joint Base Lewis-McChord military reservation, which is rural in character. Two tribal reservations — largely rural — are within our county borders. The character of our region changes from north to south. In the north is our larger urban area — the three-city region of Lacey-Olympia-Tumwater. In the south are smaller communities separated by rural areas — Bucoda, Grand Mound, Rainier, Rochester, Tenino, and Yelm. Each faces different opportunities and challenges for the future.

How did land-use and transportation decisions create today's growth patterns?

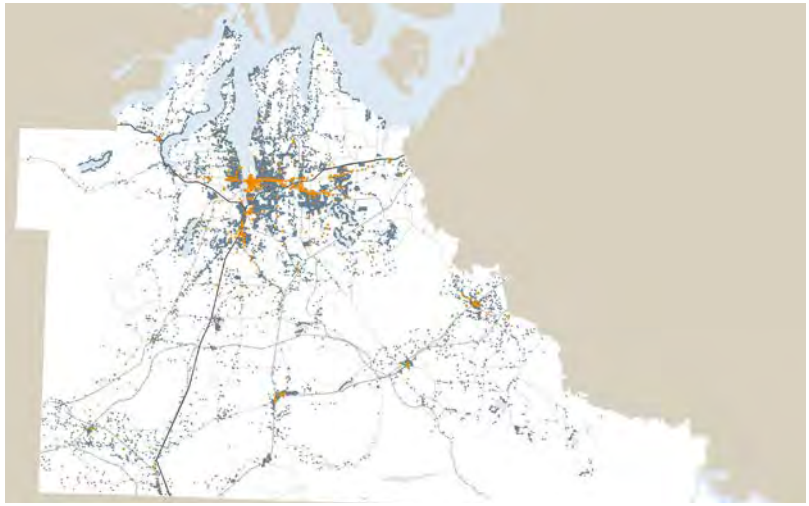
Growth patterns generally follow transportation access and allowed zoning. In 1950, growth remained fairly compact. By 1970, Interstate 5 had been built and growth spread out as more and better roads provided ready access to undeveloped land. By 1990, decades of sprawl development, encouraged by continued expansion of roads and allowed by zoning codes, resulted in the passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990.

The GMA mandated planning for projected growth in a compact urban form that could be served as efficiently as possible and preserving of rural and resource lands, including farms and forest lands. GMA planning made a difference, but not as much as envisioned in the local and regional plans. It turned out to be much more difficult than anticipated to curb sprawl, create vitality in cities and towns, and preserve rural areas. The goals and actions that follow identify what needs to occur if jurisdictions and the region are going to realize the Sustainable Thurston Vision.

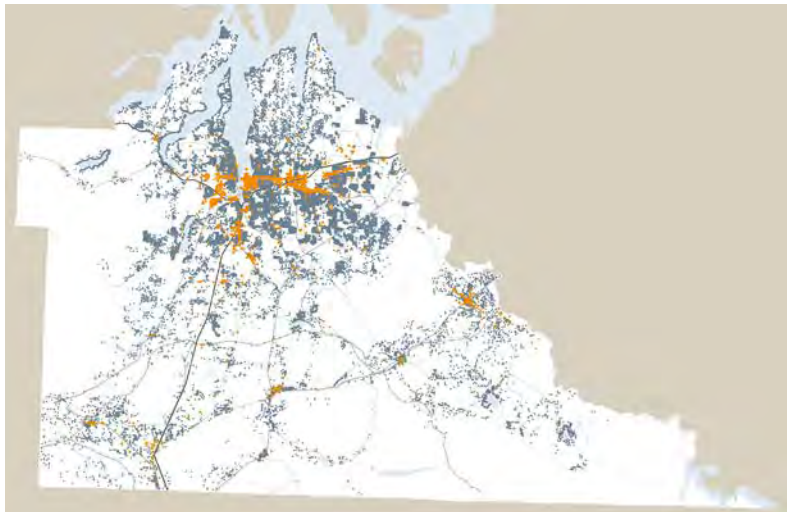
Thurston County, Wash. — land-use growth patterns (TRPC)



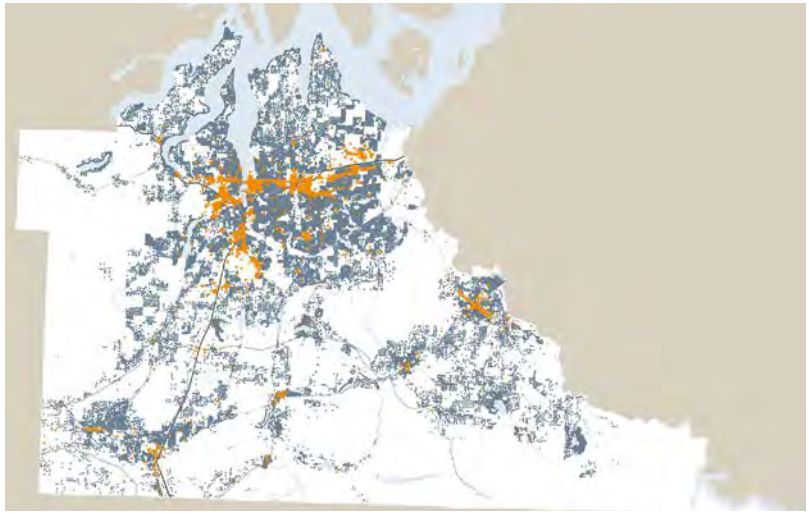
1950... *compact communities around Puget Sound, major roads, and railroads*



1970... *after construction of Interstate 5 growth begins to increase*

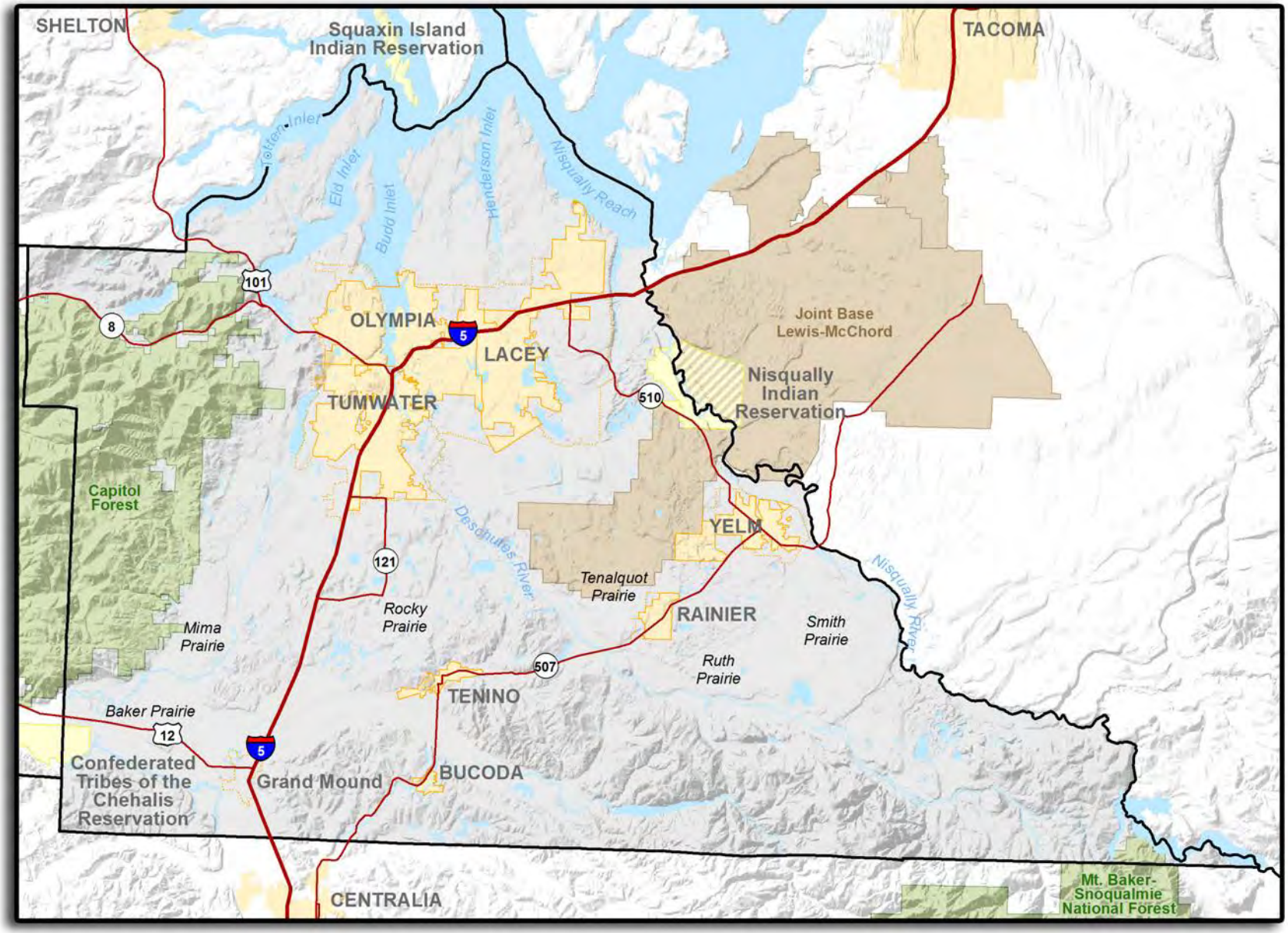


1990... *decades of sprawl result in the state passing the Growth Management Act*



2010... *changes in zoning designations did protect some rural areas, however, residential growth in suburban and rural areas continued while city centers attracted little new activity*

Farming southest of Lacey's urban growth area.



Thurston County map.

What is our vision for the future?

In one generation, the Thurston Region's built environment will transition to unique, recognizable places and neighborhoods, fostering a sense of community, supporting a robust economy, and protecting farmlands and natural areas. City and town centers in Bucoda, Grand Mound, Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, Rainier, Tenino, Rochester, and Yelm will develop or grow into thriving business districts, all with a walkable, well-designed urban form that encourages a mix of housing, goods, services, and places to recreate. Some neighborhoods that are closer in will have greater access to goods and services, as well as increased opportunities for housing choices to fit the needs of the changing population. We'll pay greater attention to design, walkability, accessibility, and affordability — all essential to meet the needs of an aging population and to attract and retain innovators in our community. Suburban, single-family neighborhoods will provide housing choices for families and others that value quiet neighborhoods with private spaces. The rural areas will remain a mixture of rural homes, farms, forest lands, and natural areas, with markedly lower densities of residential growth than the urban area.

What will the future look like under current plans?

The partners first considered the future given current land-use plans and zoning regulations — the Baseline Future.[1] Using the best information available and the adopted population forecast for 2035 analysis shows that existing land-use plans will lead to the following[2]:

- 32 percent loss of farmlands to urbanization — some 15,600 acres — compared to a vision of producing a greater proportion of our food locally and protecting farmlands;
- 10 percent loss of forest lands to urbanization — around 19,300 acres — compared to a vision of maintaining forest canopy to preserve water quality and stream health;
- 13 percent of growth going into the rural areas, contributing to the loss of forestlands, farms, and prairies, resulting in growth patterns that are difficult to serve with infrastructure and services, and straining limited resources;
- Difficulty attracting enough growth to our urban and town centers to create the envisioned vibrant places that will attract and support innovators and creative people to help foster a strong economy;
- Only a slight increase in activity and density in our major transit corridors — areas that are our best opportunity to support enhanced transit service in the future;
- Only a slight increase in our jobs/housing balance, compared to a vision of areas where we can live, work, play, and shop;
- Difficulty achieving the neighborhood centers envisioned in the larger city's comprehensive plans — places that offer destinations close to home and a few goods and services;

- Concerns over water availability to sustain people while protecting the environment; and,
- Concerns over increased energy use and ability to meet the state's targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled.

What will we achieve under the Sustainable Thurston vision?

In contrast, the Preferred Land-Use Scenario presents an alternative future and will result in the following measurable benefits compared to the current trends shown in the Baseline Future:

Greater Efficiency in the Delivery of Services and Provision of Infrastructure

- 95 percent of growth locating in areas designated for urban growth — the cities, towns, designated urban growth areas and tribal reservations;
- An increase in activity density (people plus jobs) in higher-frequency transit corridors approaching a level that may support an enhanced level of transit service; and,
- $1.6 billion savings in road, water, sewer, and other related infrastructure to support residential development, and additional savings in future maintenance costs (it costs $250,000-$500,000 every 10-15 years to maintain a lane mile of road).

Greater Access to Jobs, Shopping, Food, and Services

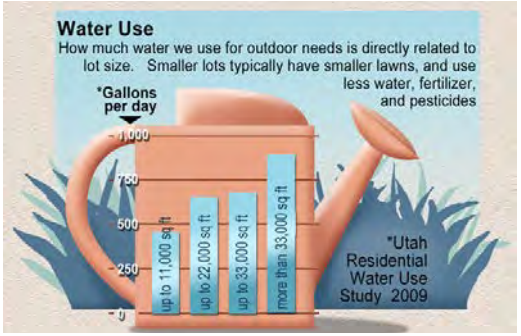
- A better mix of jobs and housing in the county as a whole will lead to a 16 percent reduction of 1990 levels of vehicle miles traveled based on land-use changes alone;
- 43 percent of the population living within a quarter-mile of transit service; and,
- 72 percent of urban households living within a half-mile of goods and services.

More Efficient Use of Resources

- 33 percent reduction in developed land consumption compared to the Baseline Future;
- 11 percent reduction of 2010 levels in per-household water use through land-use changes alone; and a 45 percent reduction when conservation measures are included, leading to a 21 percent decrease in total residential water consumption while accommodating growth;

Cost of Infrastructure: Compact communities need fewer miles of roads, water lines, and other infrastructure.

The Preferred Land-Use Scenario calls for a greater mix of jobs and housing. Commuting to work accounts for a large part of household travel, so increasing housing near job opportunities will result in shorter commutes.



The Preferred Land-Use Scenario calls for a more compact form of development — or a greater proportion of growth to be accommodated in multifamily units or in homes with smaller lots. This means less lawn and landscaping per person.

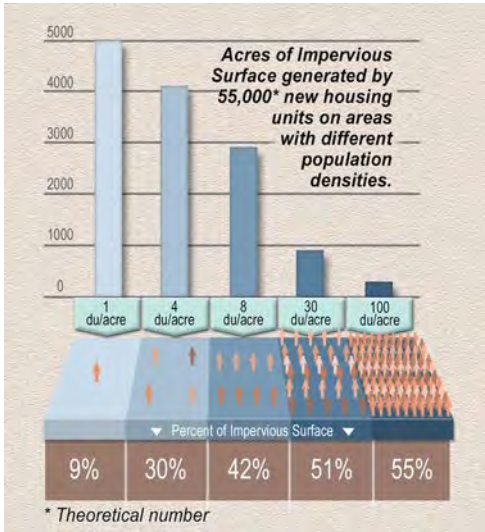
- 28 percent reduction of 2010 levels in per-household energy consumption through land-use changes alone; and a 39 percent reduction when conservation measures are included, leading to an 11 percent decrease in total energy consumed by households while accommodating growth;
- No net loss of forestlands; and,
- No net loss of rural farmlands

Greater Protection of Environmental Quality

- 34 percent reduction in new impervious area compared to the Baseline Future in protected stream basins, and a 31 percent reduction in new impervious area compared to Baseline Future in sensitive stream basins; and,
- 38 percent reduction in residential carbon dioxide emissions per household, leading to a 10 percent reduction in total carbon dioxide emissions from residential uses compared to 2010.

Some benefits of the Preferred Land-Use Scenario are less quantifiable:

- Creating vital urban places will foster an innovative and entrepreneurial economy. By integrating land uses, increasing transportation options, increasing housing density and employment intensity, our urban areas will become more economically productive. This will reduce unemployment, increase wages, and make our economy more resilient. One study showed that doubling population density led to a 6 percent increase in labor productivity and a 15 percent increase in economic productivity.[3]



Runoff from impervious surfaces, such as roads and partking lots, can degrade water quality. Compact growth, such as the Preferred Land-Use Scenario, creates less impervious surface on a per-person basis, making urban stormwater more efficient to treat and protecting rural stream basins.

Long-term job creation begins with small businesses that grow over time within the region. To attract the "innovators" who grow businesses, a community must have vital urban places and activities.

- Focusing on walkable urban places and economic and social factors, such as employment, community safety, income, and education, will have positive outcomes on personal health. According to the County Health Rankings Model, 50 percent of health outcomes relate to social and economic factors (education, employment, income, family and social support, and community safety constitute 40 percent, while the built environment and environmental quality constitute 10 percent). The other factors are health behaviors (30 percent) and clinical care (20 percent).
- Reducing cost burden. Twenty-four percent of Thurston Region households spend more on housing than they can afford — or are "cost-burdened."[4] Of our low-to-moderate-income households (those earning less than 80 percent of median income), 64 percent spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. One-third pays more than 50 percent. This group is considered severely cost-burdened and at risk of becoming homeless. The Preferred Land-Use Scenario focuses on measures to reduce transportation and energy costs, increase economic opportunities, and increase access to food. These measures will lead to households that are more able to meet their basic needs.
- Fostering a sense of community. In a recent survey[5] for the Sustainable Thurston project, 85 percent of respondents contended that working together as a region to plan for the future would lead to an improved quality of life. Sixty-six percent believed that actions and participation as individuals could affect the planning and future of the region.

Walkable communites, such as those envisioned in centers and corridors and the neighborhood centers described in the Preferred Land-Use Scenario, will contribute to positive community health outcomes.

Reducing cost burden means reducing how much we pay for our daily needs relative to how much we earn. Compact communities, such as those envisioned in the Preferred Land-Use Scenario, call for housing in areas with increased and more affordable transportation choices — walking and transit — and greater energy efficiency.

What steps are needed?

The Preferred Land-Use Scenario imagines that we create vibrant centers, corridors, and neighborhood centers while protecting rural residential lands, farmlands, prairies, and forest lands. Many of the actions needed to achieve this future are outlined in this and subsequent chapters but can be summarized as:

1. Focus on creating or enhancing walkable urban city and town centers in Bucoda, Grand Mound, Lacey, Olympia, Rainier, Rochester, Tenino, Tumwater, and Yelm. These places create the vital centers of our community, foster economic development and an innovative culture, and offer places to live, work, shop, and play.
2. Transition auto-oriented transit corridors into a more walkable urban form and seek opportunities for housing and a mix of services and amenities. These "nodes" along the corridor include the city centers and smaller clusters of activity at regular intervals.
3. Increase sustainable economic development activities, focusing on opportunities identified in the Economy chapter. Increase commercial infill and redevelopment in city and town centers and along major transit corridors. Look for opportunities for neighborhood commercial centers where appropriate.
4. Increase the range and choice of housing, especially in areas with access to goods and services such as transit. Focus on moderate, or "gentle," density and accessible housing choices for neighborhoods to meet the needs of our changing demographics.
5. Rethink current low-density residential-only zoning districts in the urban areas. These districts encourage development to occur at densities too low for transit service, creating large neighborhoods with very few transportation options, which are often far away from jobs, goods, and services.
6. Use the remaining urban land supply more efficiently.
    - Take a comprehensive look at the vacant land supply, especially in the unincorporated urban growth area, and remove any areas from consideration that are not suitable for urban development because of environmental reasons, such as high groundwater, large amounts of wetlands, or steep slopes.
    - Assess the cost of extending infrastructure to the remainder of the urban growth areas, and consider the full costs of maintenance when determining appropriate areas for urban growth. Place areas within the unincorporated growth area without urban infrastructure (sewer or water lines) or with no specific plans to extend infrastructure into longer-term holding zones or lower-density development.

7. Increase opportunities for urban agriculture while accommodating growth.
8. Take into account property rights, vesting, and reasonable use of property. Since we have about a 10-to-12-year supply (TRPC estimate[1]) of residential lots and multifamily projects either permitted, vested, or proposed, work with property owners to encourage new development that supports the preferred land-use vision when possible.
9. Inventory and assess farmlands, forest lands, prairies, and other rural lands, and take steps such as re-examining rural zoning, create workable transferring or purchasing development rights programs, providing economic incentives, and improving the farm economy to protect the rural character of the Thurston Region.

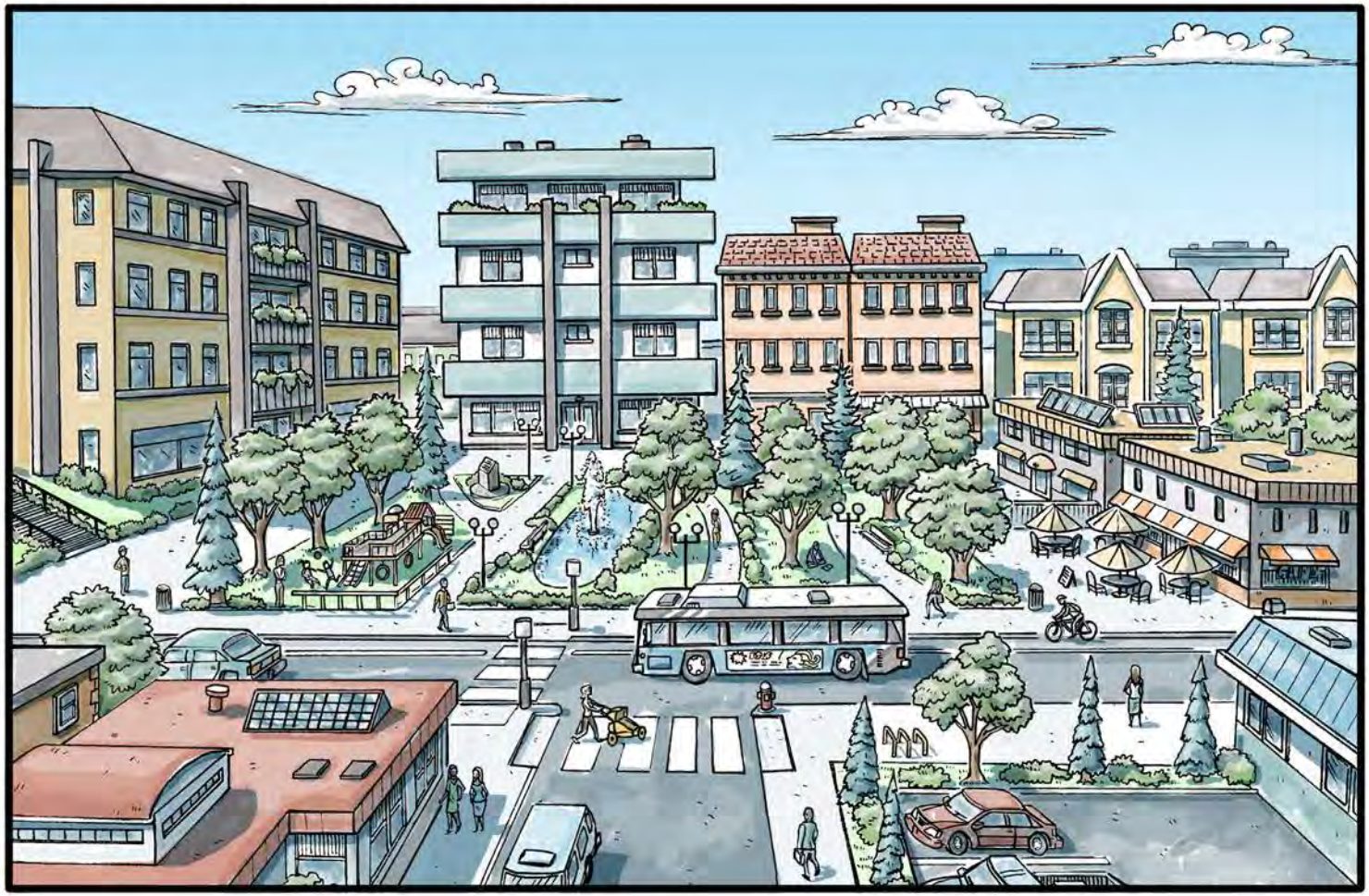
The remainder of this chapter looks at four types of places that constitute the built and natural environment of the Thurston Region:

- Northern Thurston County's urban area, composed of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater and the transit corridors that link the city centers;
- Southern Thurston County's cities and towns and rural communites — Bucoda, Grand Mound, Rainier, Rochester, Tenino, and Yelm — separated by rural lands;
- Neighborhoods that surround the centers in both northern and southern Thurston County; and,
- Rural and resource lands.

Sustainable Thurston Foundational Principles & Policies related to 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 bolster community health and well-being; and,
- Respond and adapt to future social, economic, and environmental challenges.

CITY CENTERS - NORTH COUNTY

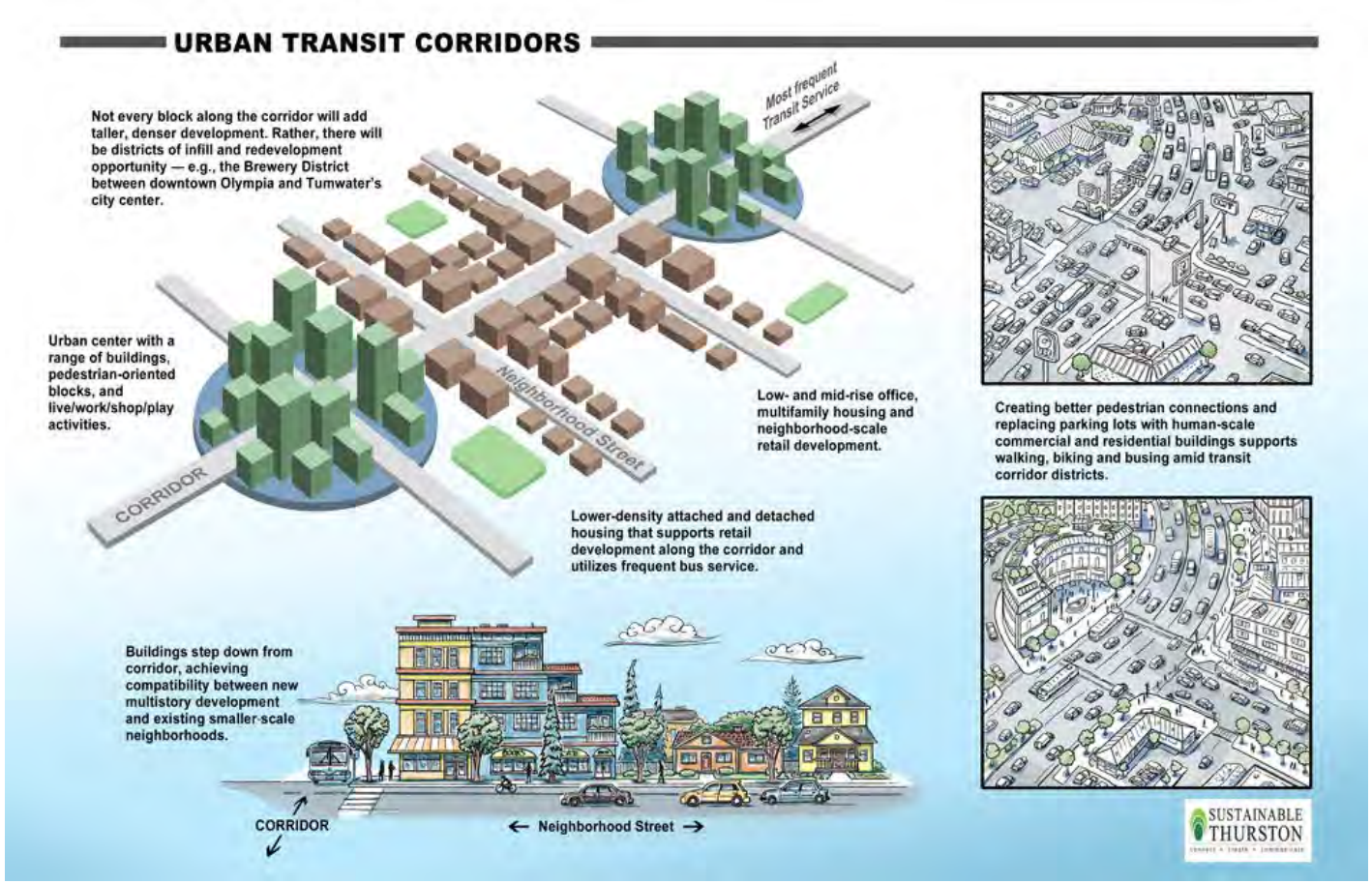


A place to live, work, shop and play • Housing choices for a full range of ages and incomes • Multistory buildings with a mix of shops, offices and services • Easy & safe opportunities supporting walking, biking and riding transit • Well-designed buildings along beautiful streets or surrounding parks and plazas

SUSTAINABLE THURSTON
connect • create • communicate

North County — Urban Corridors & Centers

Residents of the Thurston Region envision vibrant and walkable city centers in Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater that serve as the community's heart. Along the major transit corridors that connect these centers, residents want activity nodes that encourage active transportation and serve surrounding neighborhoods with additional housing, jobs, and services.



Challenges & Opportunities

People in cities throughout the region want vibrant urban centers and corridors — places where people live, work, shop and play. People also envision these areas as the civic heart of cities where folks meet and share ideas. We need these places to attract and support innovators and the jobs their businesses create. Young workers, retirees, and others looking to downsize increasingly seek out these vital centers

in order to live where they can be less car-dependent and find community outside of their door.

The urban core — known regionally as North County — contains areas that are currently — or have the best potential to become — vibrant centers: downtown and West Olympia; Tumwater Town Center and the Brewery District; and Lacey's Woodland District and planned Gateway Center.

Corridors — the old state highways — provide our major transportation routes, linking the existing centers. Corridors are served by our region's most frequent transit service, and, in many areas, have the potential to transition from auto-oriented corridors to walkable areas with nodes of activity.

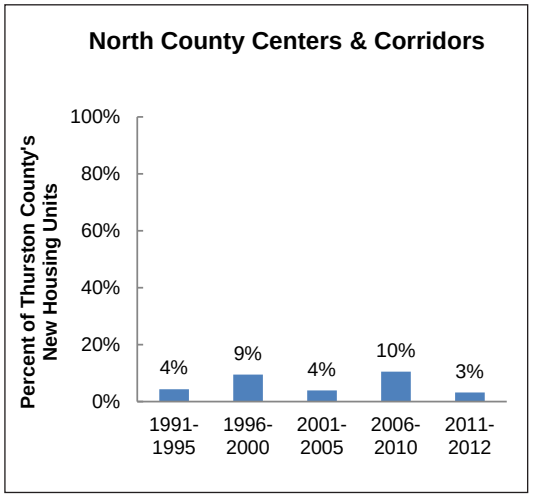
Centers and corridors can be the most challenging places to build because of complex parcel ownership, outdated infrastructure, soil contamination, parking requirements, and the community's resistance and fear of change. Centers and corridors can also be expensive places to develop or redevelop. Some areas are in need of a face-lift to increase attractiveness, smooth congestion, and resolve other issues to increase their desirability.

The biggest challenge is attracting enough housing and businesses to these areas that the community has already invested in. Little new commercial or residential development is occurring in the centers and along the corridors. Developers and businesses have tended to locate new projects on larger undeveloped sites toward the periphery of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater, largely avoiding the centers and urban transit corridors. Since 1995, less than 7 percent of residential units built were located in centers or corridors with excellent transit service.

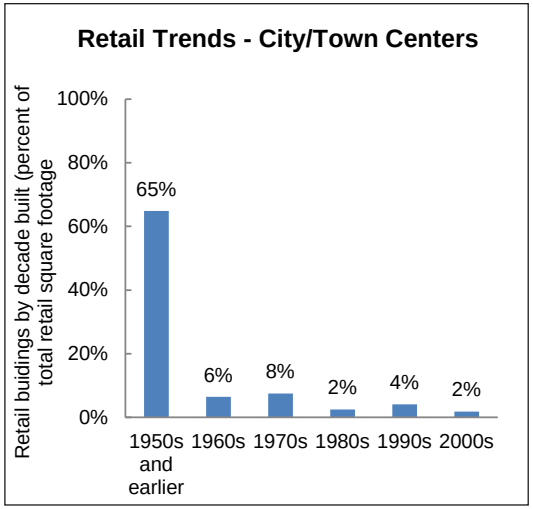
One final challenge is community resistance — what is often referred to as NIMBYism or "Not In My Back Yard" for any new development in existing centers or neighborhoods. Typically what residents object to is the design of proposed buildings more than the density. In the Thurston Region, we're beginning to resolve community conflicts through a process called District or Neighborhood Planning. This strategy asks businesses, residents, and other stakeholders to develop a vision, plan, and action plan focused on a specific area. District Planning also identifies the investments and strategies the cities can take to help encourage the type and form of development that the community supports. Although every area is different, one clear trend is emerging: businesses and residents welcome the opportunity to create a vision and have a voice in planning for the future.

Some specific challenges that are addressed by the actions that conclude this chapter include:

- Community concerns about the design and density of infill and redevelopment and development regulations that do not provide predictability for the development community and residents;
- Aging infrastructure and lack of infrastructure that provides amenities such as sidewalks, street trees, bicycle lanes;
- Too little housing in our centers and corridors to support existing or new business and to support 24-hour activity and the safety that comes with a mix of residents looking out for one another and working with law enforcement;
- Large amounts of surface parking (in parking lots) adjacent to sidewalks discourages walking and saps vitality from the center;
- With fairly low market rents or sale prices for housing in urban areas of our region, the type and form of development the community envisions in centers and along corridors is not financially feasible without some incentives — for example, public financing of street and sidewalk improvements and tax breaks to bridge the gap between costs and revenue;
- Financing for new and unproven types of development can be difficult to obtain as financial institutions do not like to take risk; and,
- A lack of strategic economic development focus aimed at business creation, retention, and expansion in centers and corridors. Over time, this can lead to degraded areas.



Less new housing than envisioned has located in Thurston County's North County centers and corridors — the areas with frequent transit service. Source: TRPC.



Prior to the 1960s, commercial retail buildings located in city centers. Trends have changed. First, retail growth began to locate in regional shopping centers, and then it moved to "big-box" freeway-oriented shopping areas. Trends appear to be changing again with a movement back to smaller neighborhood-scale businesses. Source: TRPC.

Sustainability Activities Already Underway

Building Urban Corridor Communities

The Sustainable Thurston project had been underway for less than a year when the region applied for, and received, a follow-up grant focused on urban corridors and districts. This funding gives the region resources to develop an overall corridor strategy plan and develop three district plans.

The city of Lacey is focusing on the Woodland District, one of the region's major employment centers. This District is in the heart of Lacey, adjacent to St. Martin's University, the library, and city hall. Huntamer Park, with music, outdoor movies, and a summer farmers' market, anchors the District. This center includes numerous retail and service opportunities, such as groceries, discount shopping, dialysis centers and other medical services. Recent relocation and consolidation of state agencies to Olympia and Tumwater resulted in many vacant office buildings. The community envisions a mixed-use District with affordable residential, office, retail, services, and parks supported by multimodal streets and pedestrian walkways. The study will identify the tools and actions necessary to achieve the vision.

The transformation of the Brewery District is Tumwater's focus. This work expands on Tumwater's 2011 study of the former Olympia Brewery and will promote the commercial and residential revitalization and development of the Brewery District. This District includes the former brewery and the triangle of roads formed by Custer Way, Cleveland Avenue, and Capitol Boulevard. The District extends north to the Sunset Life property and south to E Street. Planning for the area is a priority of Tumwater's Strategic Plan. Part of the oldest portion of Tumwater, the Brewery District is located near the Deschutes River. This area was the original location of the first American settlement on Puget Sound and included a variety of commercial businesses and operations that took advantage of the river's power. Construction of Interstate 5, however, displaced this historic settlement, particularly the commercial portion. The highway destroyed the historic downtown, and commercial businesses moved east within the neighborhood as well as south of the neighborhood. Closure of the Olympia Brewery in 2003 affected the area further, resulting in a loss of jobs and a huge vacant site in the center of the Brewery District. This study will identify the tools and opportunities needed to revitalize the area into a walkable commercial and residential area in this historic portion of Tumwater.

In Olympia, the focus is on the Martin Way corridor. This area (Lilly Road on the east/State and Pacific avenues on the west) is close to Providence St. Peter Hospital and other regional medical facilities, a large open space and wetland area, and some of the last undeveloped parcels of land along Martin Way. While served by frequent transit service, the District does not have a complete sidewalk network, nor much density, despite its proximity to downtown Olympia. The results of this study will define the infrastructure investments, such as sidewalks, street frontage, and a stormwater system, to support the future development of the District.

The goals and actions that follow at the end of this chapter are designed to remove regulatory, financial, and perception barriers that stand in the way of adding vibrancy to these urban centers and the major transit corridors that connect them.

Goal C-1: Create vibrant city centers and activity nodes along transit corridors that support active transportation and housing, jobs, and services.

Sustainability Outcomes

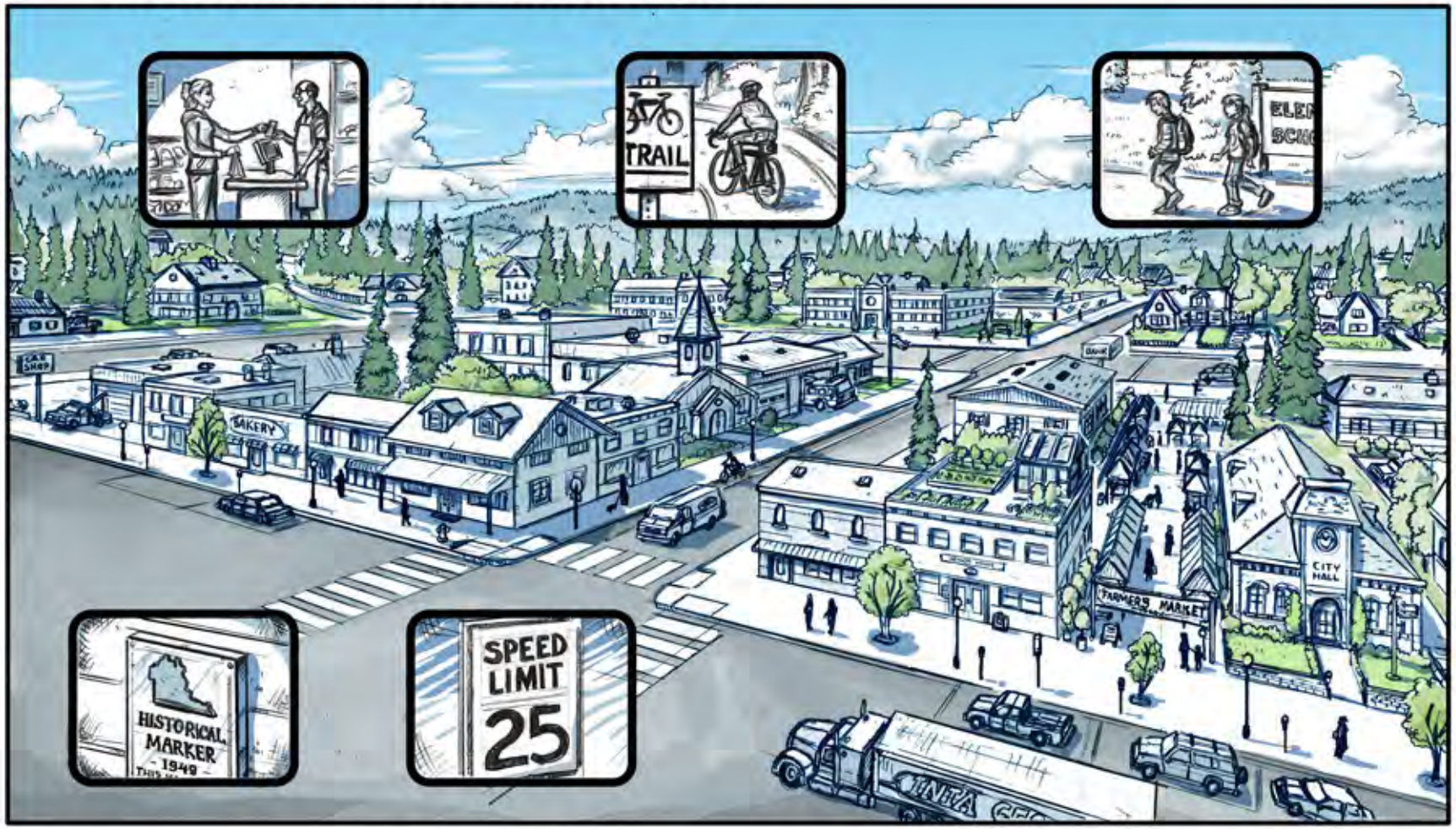
Vital centers and corridors are a major attractor for businesses and workers looking for places to live and work. Such areas also attract a growing population of young workers and seniors seeking to live in active places where they can find community outside their door — and do it without a car trip. Each successful project in a center adds vitality and helps pave the way for additional investments that result in the necessary mix of residential and commercial opportunities that people want.

Adding growth amid centers and the major transit corridors that connect them will reduce growth pressures on rural, resource, and natural areas. This will help protect forest cover and prairie habitat, as well as maintain stream and Puget Sound water quality.

> *"Development along corridors and near centers will enable Intercity Transit to serve the community with high quality service and help move our transportation system closer to sustainability. This development approach achieves many sustainability goals such as reduction of transportation greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the need for households to spend limited resources on transportation costs."*
>
> -Intercity Transit

Focused urban areas are more efficient to serve with essential infrastructure, such as stormwater utilities that help protect water quality. Adding density where infrastructure already exists avoids huge costs to build new systems in undeveloped areas and costly future maintenance. Urban residents tend to use less energy — for transportation and other residential uses — which is important for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, urban residents use less water than suburban and rural residents — mainly as a result of smaller lot sizes. Air quality concerns tend to be higher for some urban residents living close to highways and other high-traffic areas — so attention must be paid to both emission and air filtration systems.

CITY/TOWN CENTERS - SOUTH COUNTY



A healthy mix of homes, shops and services • Safe sidewalks and street crossings • Housing choices for all ages and incomes • Slower vehicles speeds • New buildings that blend with historic structures • Local residents who support shops • Green buildings that conserve energy and water • Centrally located schools

SUSTAINABLE THURSTON

South County — City/Town Centers

Residents in southern Thurston County — an area known regionally as the South County — want small cities, towns, and rural communities that provide a range of goods and services, housing options, and jobs. People also want vibrant business districts at the center of these communities to foster entrepreneurship and reflect a unique sense of place, civic pride, and small-town atmosphere.

Challenges & Opportunities

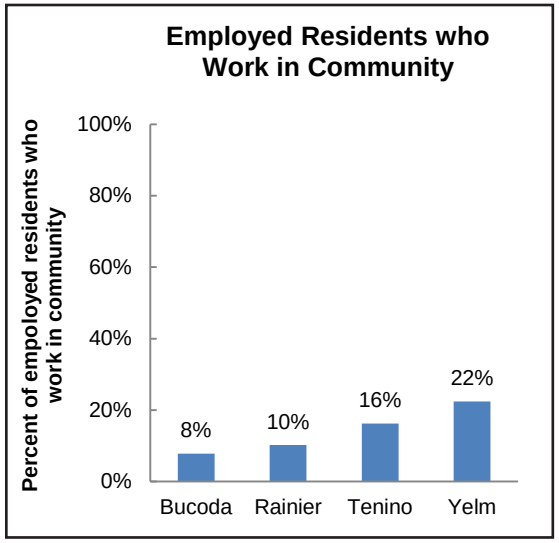
Yelm — one of the fastest-growing cities in the state — is beginning to realize this vision. During the past two decades, Yelm has emerged as a retail and service hub for southern Pierce and Thurston counties. Yelm's downtown currently offers a wide variety of shops, restaurants, a medical services center, movie theater, farmers' market, and a public library.

The other South County communities — Bucoda, Grand Mound, Rainier, Rochester, and Tenino — have not fared as well. Additional shopping opportunities in south Tumwater, Yelm and Centralia, have sapped the vitality of many of the businesses and downtowns in South County. Gone are Rainier's grocery store and Tenino's hardware store. Residents can still get in a car and shop at a big-box store outside the community with relative ease, but this expenditure weakens the sense of character and the economic vitality of the downtowns of South County.

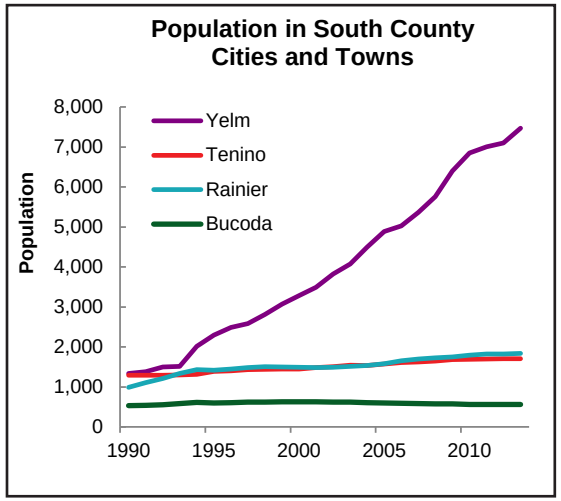
Still, in the face of stiff competition from large retailers to the north and south, small businesses, such as Tenino's Sandstone Cafe and Rainier's Main Street Cookie Company have prospered. Carving out additional entrepreneurial niches — including tourism — will help to boost the vibrancy of South County communities.

Investment in infrastructure also plays a role. Tenino's new sewer system allows the city to add homes and businesses in the compact form needed to create vitality in the downtown. Since the installation of the sewer, several new restaurants have opened. The Grand Mound area also has a sewer and a draft master plan that envisions more opportunities to live, work, shop and play. Lack of sewer in Rainier and Bucoda will limit their ability to add more businesses and homes near their downtowns. Rochester is not currently identified as a growth area, but the community does have a small business district.

Finally, many South County residents commute elsewhere for work, taking their time, talents, and spending dollars with them. According to survey data, less than 25 percent of the labor force in Bucoda, Rainier, Tenino, and Yelm work in the community where they live. Increasing telework, entrepreneurship, home-based and cottage businesses, workforce training, and manufacturing opportunities will encourage more residents to spend time and money in the South County communities.



Creating economic opportunities in South County cities and towns will encourage more residents to spend time and money closer to home. Source: 2010-2013 Survey Data, TRPC.



The city of Yelm experienced rapid growth starting in the early 1990s after it invested in sewer infrastructure. Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management population estimates.

More people living and working close to the business districts of South County will create more demand for shops and services, which in turn, will bring more people to the downtowns — a cycle that will help to generate the vibrancy desired by South County residents.

Yelm

While located within the South County, Yelm is much larger than its neighbor cities and towns. Yelm has been one of the fastest-growing communities in Washington during the last 15 years, and it is projected to have the highest rate of growth in Thurston County during the next 20-25 years. Much of the growth — both residential and commercial — will locate in a planned community to the west of the existing downtown. Yelm shares some of the same challenges as the other South County communities — namely a downtown that is on a state highway and a continued need to focus on economic growth — but it is a very unique community. Perhaps Yelm's greatest challenge is the city's proximity to Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM). In large part, expansion and consolidation of JBLM resulted in the rapid growth of both Yelm and Lacey and rural areas surrounding the communities. Compact growth in the urban areas means less rural growth that puts pressure on already-congested streets. Less rural growth helps stretch school transportation and emergency services budgets, helps reduce growing pains and leads to future economic stability.

Sustainability Activities Already Underway

Growing the South County Economy

The South Thurston Economic Development Initiative (STEDI) is a fledgling effort that seeks to promote community and economic development in the southern portion of Thurston County. The effort was initiated by Bucoda, Rainier, Tenino, Yelm, Grand Mound and Rochester, in collaboration with agencies, including the Thurston Economic Development Council, Thurston Regional Planning Council, Washington State University Cooperative Extension, and the Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater Visitor & Convention Bureau, as a means to promote additional economic opportunities and quality-of-life enhancements for area residents.

Key initiatives identified through initial meetings include:

- How best to promote tourism in South County;
- How best to have area businesses tap into resources available from business-training and tourism organizations present in the northern portion of the county; and,
- How best to encourage South County businesses to use various types of new media.

The main drag through downtown Yelm.

Some specific challenges in the South County cities and towns that are addressed by the actions at the conclusion of this chapter include:

- Many residents commute elsewhere for work, taking their time, talents, and spending dollars along;
- A significant amount of purchases by South County residents occur in Yelm, Centralia, and the North County. These purchases draw business away from Rainier, Tenino, and Bucoda, and result in sales tax benefits going to other jurisdictions;
- Tourism holds promise, but even that approach has challenges. A limited number of activities and insufficient resources for marketing constrain the number of visitors;
- Pedestrians find the downtowns in many of the communities to be uncomfortable, even though the areas were originally designed for travel on foot. Highways run through most of the South County downtowns. These roadways — in tandem with narrow sidewalks — tend to create an unpleasant atmosphere for people walking. A highway by-pass road and full street improvements in Yelm demonstrate the value of having a vision and taking action toward it a priority;
- Lack of infrastructure limits new business growth and development, especially in areas such as Bucoda, Rainier and Rochester that do not have sewer systems. In these downtowns, new businesses must meet septic drain field requirements, which can be particularly burdensome for uses such as restaurants and areas with very small lot sizes (such as those in the business districts); and,
- South County residents drive many more miles than their northern counterparts and so are more vulnerable to the impacts of fuel price increases on their household budget.

Goal C-2: Create safe and vibrant South County city and town centers that foster entrepreneurship, active transportation, civic pride, and a sense of place.

Sustainability Outcomes

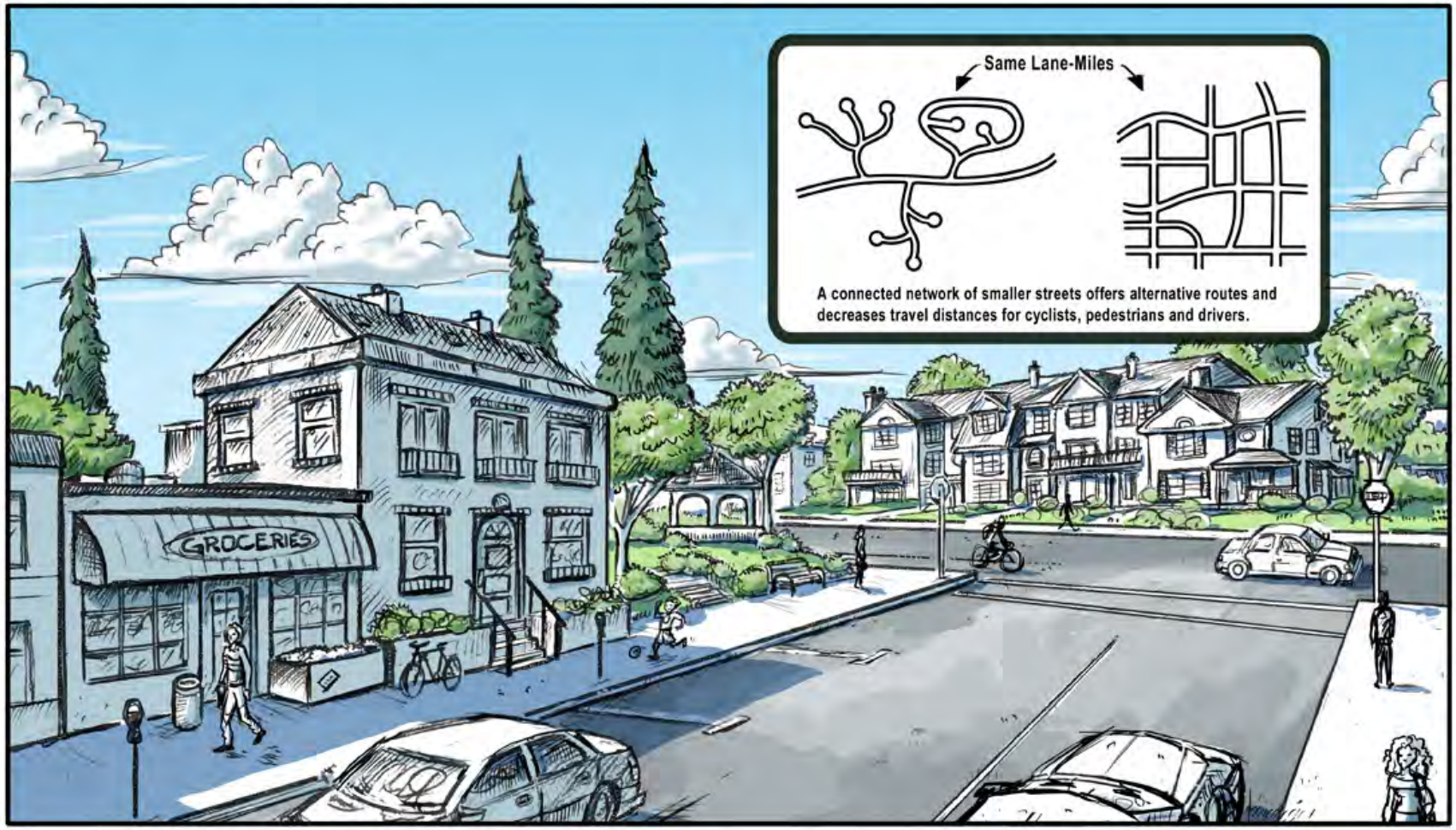
Adding businesses in the South County centers will enable residents to purchase more goods locally — supporting additional jobs in the community and enhancing local sales tax revenues.

Improving key areas for pedestrian travel will encourage more walking within the communities — enhancing health and decreasing chronic disease and the associated costs to households and health service providers.

Creating vibrant communities within the South County will encourage additional development within the areas and help take pressure off the development of agriculture and rural land.

Downtown Tenino gets into the holiday spirit.

NEIGHBORHOODS



Small shops patronized by nearby residents • Connected streets • Sidewalks • Bike lanes • Well-designed multifamily housing • Pocket parks • Street-level activity • Opportunities for neighborhood interaction

SUSTAINABLE THURSTON
connect • create • communicate

Neighborhoods

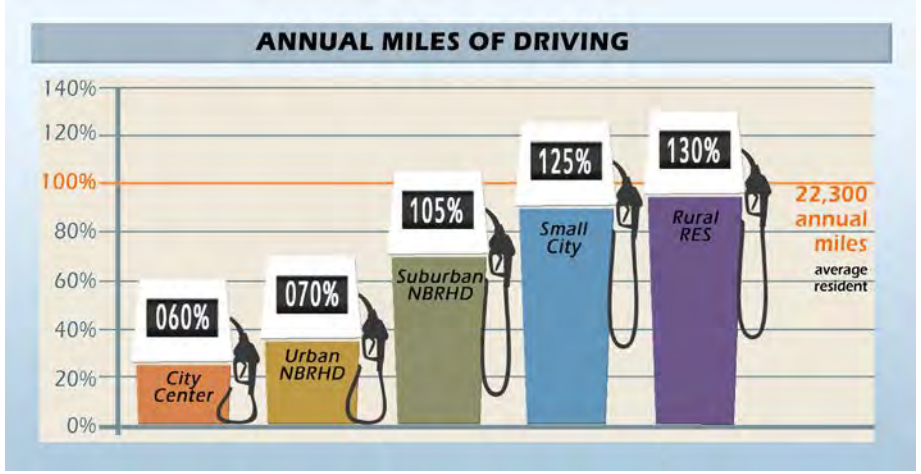
Residents of the Thurston Region envision safe neighborhoods that provide a sense of community. Beyond these basics, people want more destinations close to home — more parks, coffee shops, and other places to gather with neighbors and more options to get around safely without making a car trip.

Challenges & Opportunities

Most people in the region live in urban or suburban neighborhoods, in single-family homes or garden-style apartments. While we may love these places, we could make improvements that support our lifestyles in a more sustainable way. It's a balance between privacy, backyards, transit access, affordability, neighborhood activity, and walkability. Ideally, our urban neighborhoods would have it all. A unique identity. Places to grow our own food and generate our own energy. Local businesses and great schools within walking distance. Social places to gather or recreate. Jobs close by or opportunities to start a business at home. Travel options to meet our daily needs.

The key is choices. People want a full range of choices so they can live where it suits them best as they move through life stages. Singles have different needs and desires than families. As we age, we may want to downsize — not just homes, but also yards and maintenance.

The challenge: We can't have it all. Most people don't envision driving long distances to work and sitting in traffic — or spending an ever-increasing portion of their paycheck at the gas pump. Yet many people are forced into this situation by the way we design our cities. This Plan presents a few solutions. Bring some jobs, services, and activity closer to existing neighborhoods, and create more opportunities for housing near existing jobs and services — ensuring that we retain the things we love about our neighborhoods.



How much of your paycheck goes to the gas pump? People who live in urban neighborhoods and city centers tend to drive 60 to 70 percent of the miles driven by the average Thurston County resident. Source: Center of Neighborhood Technology via TRPC.

Some specific challenges that have been identified include:

- The majority of neighborhoods in the Thurston Region are built with a single type of use — such as single-family homes — and are too far from any commercial services and parks to encourage walking, biking, or using transit;
- Adding different types of uses and activities may change existing neighborhoods. Additional housing and shopping choices close by will be welcomed by some — not so much by others;
- Land-use regulations that result in less diverse types of housing (e.g., single-family homes only) and do not allow neighborhood-scale commercial or appropriately scaled multifamily buildings result in "drive mostly" neighborhoods — offering few choices for reducing car dependence, since they have neither the density nor the destinations needed to support transit, walking, and biking;
- Where businesses are wanted, there will need to be enough housing close by to support them. A small neighborhood commercial area of 15,000 square feet typically requires 500 units within a quarter-mile, and 1,000 units within a half-mile[6] — nowhere near the typical density of neighborhoods in the Thurston Region;
- Even minimal bus service requires a certain number of housing units within walking distance of a route. Quality service requires a high density of residential and commercial services in close proximity to be effective;
- Taking action to use land more efficiently is important. There is a 12-year supply of housing already planned, but these may build out at a density that won't support urban form and the activity necessary to achieve the Sustainable Thurston Vision.
- Parts of the remaining undeveloped growth area are heavily encumbered by environmental constraints, such as wetlands, are costly to serve with infrastructure and may not be the best places for urban growth;
- Many existing urban neighborhoods lack urban infrastructure such as sewer. Cities are hesitant to annex these areas and assume the financial burden of upgrading infrastructure. Yet many septic systems are failing due to age — a cause of concern for water quality, and in some urban areas development is still allowed on septics;
- Portions of the urban areas have transportation infrastructure that is not updated to current standards. Of particular note are the dead-end streets that force residents to travel circuitous routes to reach their destinations, discourage walking and bicycling, and limit emergency service access;
- Many residents of suburban neighborhoods do not have convenient access to healthy food; and,
- Ways for jurisdictions and neighborhoods to collaborate on smaller improvements are not well established. Areas where nearby neighbors recognize an enhancement is possible — such as a park, a garden, or sitting space — typically go unrealized by jurisdictions because they are unaware of the idea or unable to devote resources to the project.

The goal below and associated actions at this end of the chapter will help the region achieve its community priorities and broader sustainable development vision.

Goal C-3: Create safe and vibrant neighborhoods with places that build community and encourage active transportation.

Sustainability Outcomes

Creating good access to services in existing small, medium, and large neighborhood commercial hubs supports business, expands the local tax base, and decreases the number of car trips and distance traveled — saving household dollars.

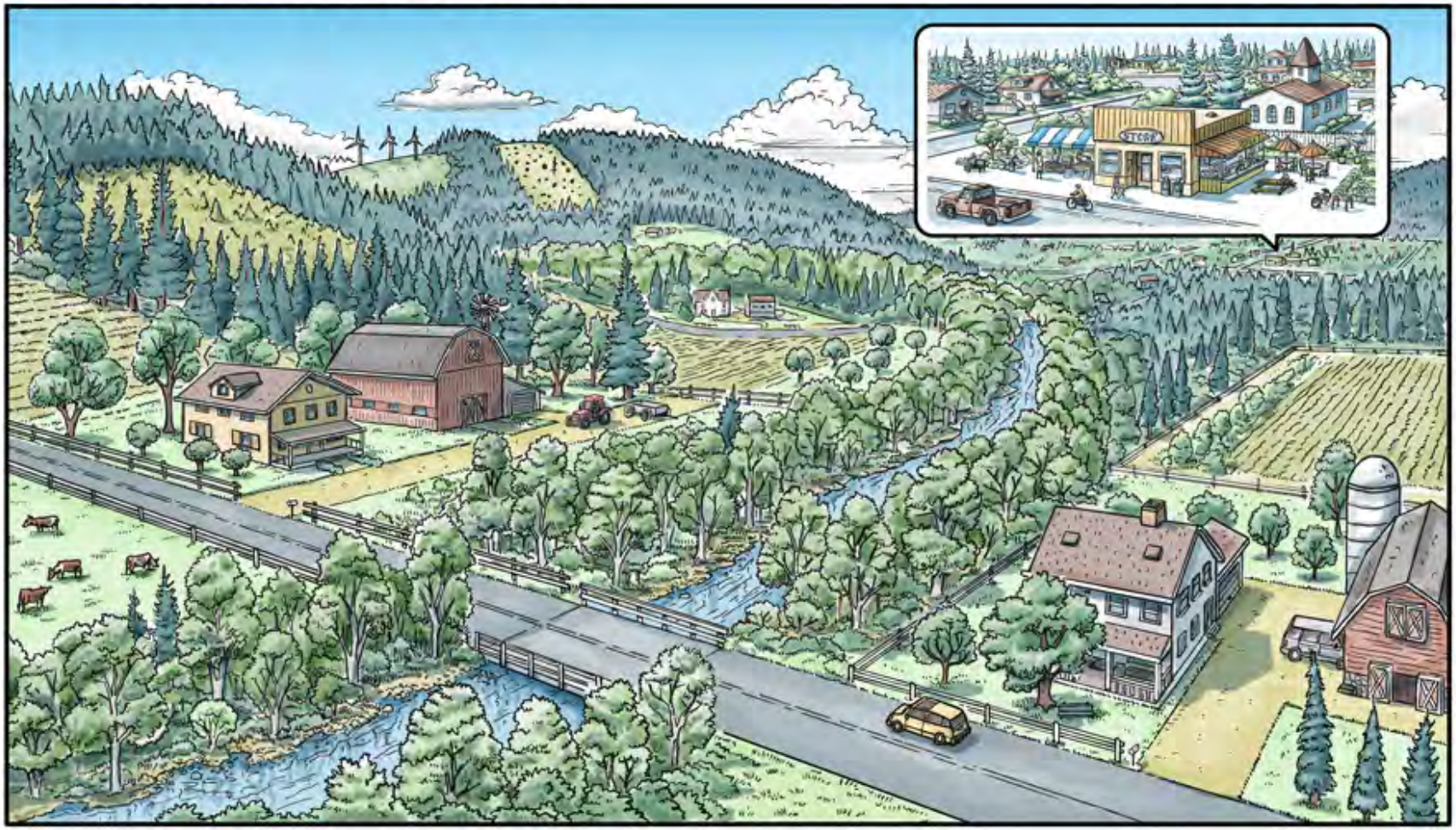
Compact neighborhoods require less energy and water per household. They will need stormwater systems to capture water runoff, but these can sometimes be incorporated into street and park design. Infill within existing urban neighborhoods will increase the likelihood of providing sewer service to urban residents on septic systems. This will reduce the amount of nitrates entering our groundwater that can threaten our drinking water source.

When there is not enough density to support permanent services, one strategy might be to allow food carts into the neighborhood at certain times or days.

Opportunity for nearby shopping and services will be determined by the number of households within walking distance or a short drive. Connecting streets encourages more walking and biking as well as increases opportunities for driving fewer miles and reducing traffic on streets. More people living in close proximity to a transit route and traveling to activity centers will determine the amount of service offered. Building housing in a way that uses less land takes pressure off of land not yet built upon in both urban and rural areas.

The most affordable housing will be where households can choose less car ownership and use. Easy and safe walk, bike, and transit access from neighborhoods to service and jobs centers makes living with fewer cars possible.

RURAL & RESOURCE LANDS



Mix of farms, forests, rural households and small-scale businesses at commercial crossroads • Protects region's natural resources • Preserves opportunities for rural living

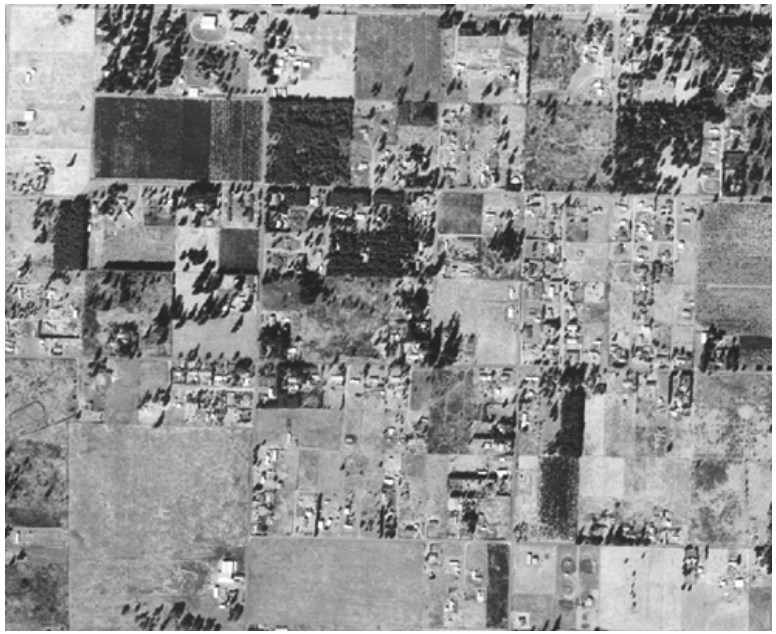
SUSTAINABLE THURSTON
connect • create • communicate

Rural & Resource Lands

Residents of the Thurston Region envision rural areas remaining bucolic in character, with single-family homes on large lots, farms, forests, and large expanses of natural areas. Rural residents prize the freedom they feel in such areas and envision a high degree of autonomy and self-sufficiency into the future, though they also want some nearby services and job opportunities.

Challenges & Opportunities

Rural and resource lands across the country are vulnerable to residential sprawl. Locally, we've seen our agricultural and forest lands become housing subdivisions. Rural residents want to ensure that their land and investments maintain their value. Those on the urban fringe often find that selling to developers yields more profit than maintaining a resource-based business.



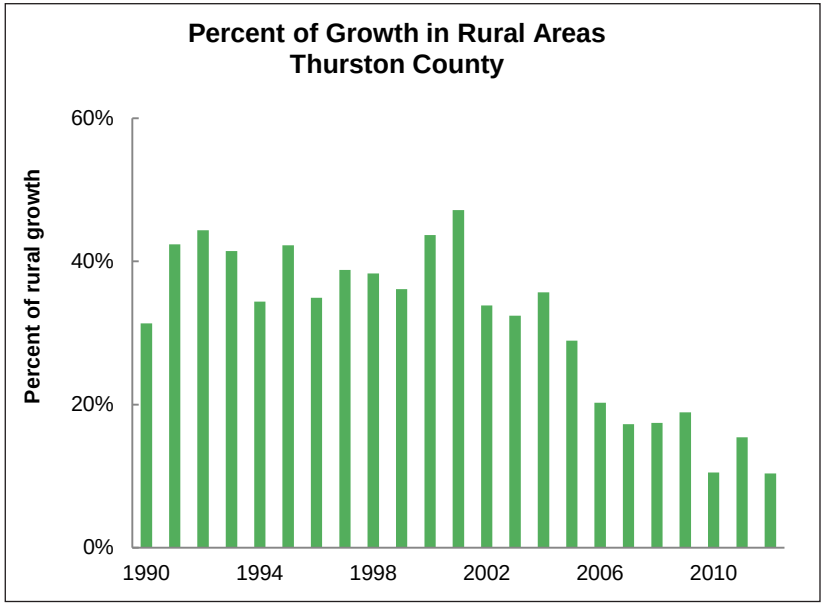
1992... *Farmlands near Rochester, Wash. in the Chehalis River Valley*

2012... *Small residential rural subdivisions dot the landscape 20 years later*

Maintaining the value of rural properties may face greater challenges in the future. Across the country, a growing number of people are choosing to live in walkable urban neighborhoods rather than suburban or rural areas far from activities. If that trend prevails here, overbuilding rural residences may mean existing rural homes will lose their value.

The key is balance. Allow for some rural growth, especially that which is needed to support rural activities such as farming, or family member units to ensure that aging rural residents have family nearby. At the same time, do not encourage rural sprawl. People living in rural homes will then have the flexibility to move when they are ready, opening up opportunities for others who desire a rural lifestyle.

Residents see economic resilience as a strong part of this vision, expressing a desire for rural self-sufficiency. Reinvesting in our resource-based economy and providing incentives such as tax breaks to keep land in rural resource uses will help preserve rural lands.



Rural growth (new permits minus demolitions) dropped steadily during the last decade. However, even at a more modest growth rate than previous decades, rural residential growth strains Thurston County's emergency services, needs infrastructure that is costly to maintain, and puts forest land, farmlands, and critical habitats at risk of urbanization. Source: Thurston Regional Planning Council.

Rural area challenges for local governments include:

- Per person, it is more costly to provide services and maintain infrastructure in rural areas than those in urban areas. Because these homes are spread out, it takes longer for emergency services to reach them, and there are more miles of road to maintain;
- Rural residents face high travel costs. Such people generally spend more time and travel more miles for their daily commutes or to conduct their errands, since the job centers and stores are in the urban areas. This means more money is spent at the gas pump — money that leaves our region and won't be available to recirculate within our communities;
- Between 1950 and 2008, Thurston County lost 90,000 acres of farmland — 50 percent of its agricultural lands — to residential development, changing rural character and depleting future opportunities to strengthen local food systems[7];

- Recent proposals to list prairie species as threatened and endangered under the Endangered Species Act require habitat conservation and management plans that will affect rural, resource, and likely some urban lands;
- Most rural homes use onsite septic systems, which increasingly have been found to leak and threaten water quality; and,
- Most rural homes are on exempt wells. These wells do not require a water right and are therefore easy to drill, but over time, many small wells can have a large impact on the groundwater. Allowing more exempt wells in a rural area may lower the water table, leaving existing residents with dry wells. Conservation is difficult to encourage with exempt wells, as they are unmetered, so the owners have no cost incentive to conserve.

Some specific challenges related to the rural areas include:

- Understanding how much agricultural land is necessary to maintain local food systems, forest cover is necessary to maintain water quality, and habitat is necessary to protect endangered or threatened species;
- Increasing the economic viability of farming to keep farmers on local farms and preserve farmland; and,
- Protecting critical habitats while maintaining property rights.

The goal and actions at the end of the chapter will help address the challenges listed above.

Goal C-4: Protect the region's farms, forests, prairies, and open spaces while providing places for those choosing a rural lifestyle.

Sustainability Outcomes

Preserving rural, natural, and resource lands is a key element of environmental protection and sustainability. Forest lands store carbon dioxide and help mitigate global climate change. When stream basins have more than 65 percent forest cover, the streams generally function well. Well-managed agricultural lands have less of an impact on the environment than urban lands. Removing growth pressures on prairie lands and other natural lands maintains critical habitats until they can be protected by long-term strategies.

Maintaining rural character would ensure that a rural lifestyle remains available for those who choose it. Shifting new households and jobs as much as possible from rural areas to cities, towns, and identified community growth areas would preserve rural character and aid in creating the envisioned centers, corridors and neighborhoods. Providing a few day-to-day services at existing commercial crossroad areas can enhance a rural community hub for surrounding residents. Large numbers of rural residents travel to cities to work each day.

More opportunities to telecommute, carpool, or vanpool will reduce miles traveled.

Rural lifestyle choices would continue to be available for those who choose them, even if most new housing is located in cities and towns. Increased traffic on rural roads, car dependence and use, and increased cost of emergency services to rural areas erodes rural quality of life and increases costs to the region as a whole. New rural housing increases pressure on land currently used to preserve farm, forest, and other resource lands.

Preserving farmland would support local, sustainable production of plant and animal products. Healthy food choices will be encouraged by making fresh food available at existing small crossroad service centers, as well as at urban markets.

Agritourism Comes to Thurston County

Thurston County adopted the Agritourism Overlay District (AOD) Ordinance in 2012, giving South County farmers a much-needed boost. The ordinance is the result of the collaborative work among local farms, wineries, the Olympia Lacey Tumwater Visitor and Convention Bureau, Thurston Regional Planning Council, and other business owners to help farmers make a living all year round.

The term "agritourism" generally refers to any activity that attracts visitors to a farm or ranch. Agritourists can choose from a wide range of activities that include picking fruits and vegetables, riding horses, tasting honey, learning about wine- and cheese-making, engaging in ecotourism or shopping in farm gift shops and farm stands for local hand-crafted goods. Farmers, ranchers, distillers and food artisans are showing an increased interest in starting agritourism ventures as a way to boost the local economy by purchasing locally produced items.

The ordinance is designed to reduce regulatory barriers, streamline permitting, and help guide and encourage future development of agritourism operations within the overlay district. The ordinance covers activities including farmers' markets, overnight farm stays, farm stores and bakeries, country inns, wineries, breweries and more.

Fred Colvin, a local farmer and former Agriculture Committee member, sees the benefits of agritourism. "Agritourism is just another way for the (agriculture) community to connect with others in the community as well as provide for diversification to help make agriculture more viable," he said. "The county's efforts should open up new opportunities for the farming community, and I thank the county for leadership on this."

The ordinance encompasses about 40 percent of the non-forestry-zoned acreage in Thurston County, primarily in the south. Because it's the first time something like this has ever been done in region, the Thurston County Board of Commissioners will revisit the ordinance to determine if adjustments to boundaries or other components are needed. To learn more about agritourism in Thurston County, visit www.co.thurston.wa.us/permitting/agriculture/agriculture-tourism.html.

The following table includes Community goals and actions, as well as the timeline, lead, and partners for each action. Timeline definitions are as follows: Underway, Short (1-3 yrs); Medium (3-10 yrs); Long (10-20 yrs). See Appendix for lead and partner acronyms and explanations.

COMMUNITY				
Goals and Actions		**Timeline**	**Lead**	**Partners**
GOAL C-1	North County — Urban Corridors & Centers: Create vibrant city centers and activity nodes along transit corridors that support active transportation and housing, jobs, and services.			
Action C-1.1	Conduct District and Neighborhood area planning. Involve the neighborhood in the process, answer questions up front, and encourage sharing of ideas and information with the goal of creating clarity and predictability about outcomes. Processes include discussions about: density and design; and using form-based codes or other tools that may streamline the permit process by creating more certainty about outcomes that may reduce opposition and costly delays. Identify specific action steps needed to achieve resulting District or Neighborhood vision.	Underway	North County cities	County; IT; EDC; TRPC; Chambers
Action C-1.2	Invest public money to attract private investment in development projects. Create an investment strategy for critical infrastructure and place-making amenities (e.g., street trees, sidewalks, bike lanes, and traffic-calming devices.)	Short; Medium	North County cities; County	IT; LOTT; Finance
Action C-1.3	Pursue grants and loans for mixed-income or subsidized housing, and other types of desired investments.	Short	County; Olympia; Housing Authority	Nonprofits
Action C-1.4	Encourage efficient use of land and building form that encourages walkability. Steps include: enforcing maximum parking requirements or eliminating minimum parking requirements altogether to reduce large expanses of surface parking. Consider strategies such as shared parking, charging for parking, and other means to reduce the need for large amounts of land used for parking.	Short	North County cities	County; IT

COMMUNITY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action C-1.5	Utilize incentives to improve financial viability for infill and redevelopment projects. This includes: Special Valuation Multi-family tax program, reducing or eliminating impact fees, using Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) or Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs that have been tested for feasibility, waiving stormwater fees for a number of years, providing frontage and utility improvements, eliminating connection charges, etc.	Short; Medium	North County cities	County; TRPC
Action C-1.6	Work with private financial institutions to provide innovative financing tools to supply credit for center or corridor projects. This includes: creating a community lending pool to supply credit for projects (e.g., spreading the financial risk among several local banks or investors); and other tools and programs that will help the financial viability of projects.	Medium	North County cities	Finance
Action C-1.7	Form partnerships and do market analyses to identify priority opportunities for center and corridor development. Create conditions that attract investments in center projects. This includes: building infrastructure as part of a project to make it financially viable; working with state and local governments to maintain and build their offices in urban centers; and, forge a regional agreement to support center-focused development.	Short; Medium; Long	North County cities	County; IT; TRPC; EDC; Chambers
Action C-1.8	Where appropriate, hire an ombudsman to market center development sites or master-planned areas. Resolve issues during the development process in a way that meets city expectations and development financial and timeline constraints.	Short	North County cities	EDC; Chambers
Action C-1.9	Review and update as appropriate individual jurisdictions' architectural and design guidelines and ensure design review procedures and boards are capable of effectively considering unique needs of urban and mixed-use projects. Consider contracting with an urban architect specifically to support center and corridor development by identifying ways to meet cities' design expectations.	Short	North County cities	Developers

COMMUNITY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action C-1.10	Create public-private or public-public land swap strategies to reduce the cost and risk of investments in centers and corridors. This includes considering swapping public lands that are underused and that could be developed more strategically by another government agency or private interest. This also includes amassing parcels in strategic locations and reselling them to a private development partner, or participating in a public-private development opportunity within the bounds of existing law.	Short	North County cities; County	IT; State; School districts
Action C-1.11	Form a multiagency partnership to foster conditions that attract investments in center and corridor projects. This entails collaborating among center and corridor communities, identifying opportunities, and recruiting developers.	Short	North County cities	County; IT; TRPC; EDC; Chambers; Developers
Action C-1.12	Where appropriate pursue a legislative agenda to improve financial feasibility of infill projects, and reduce the risk and cost of center and corridor redevelopment. This may entail identifying barriers to innovative development strategies and working toward potential solutions through the legislative process. This may also build on the working relationship with the State Capitol Committee, and others to rectify policies that create unintended regulatory barriers. Form partnerships with statewide organizations to advocate for solutions.	Medium	TRPC; Cities/towns; County	EDC; State
Action C-1.13	Establish a Main Street program or business district in centers where warranted.	Short	Cities/towns	Chambers; EDC

COMMUNITY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL C-2	South County — City/Town Centers: Create safe and vibrant South County city and town centers that foster entrepreneurship, active transportation, civic pride, and a sense of place.			
Action C-2.1	Encourage commercial and cultural activity centers in South County communities.	Underway	South County cities/places	Chambers; EDC; TRPC
Action C-2.2	Continue to support coordinated economic and community building activities among South County communities.	Underway	South County cities/places	Chambers; EDC; TRPC
Action C-2.3	Identify opportunities to support existing and prospective entrepreneurs in South County communities. This includes: conducting interviews of existing businesses; identifying resources that may support those businesses; identifying niche markets where entrepreneurs of any scale can be successful; and, tailoring entrepreneurship training currently delivered in Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater to communities in South County.	Underway	South County cities/places	Chambers; EDC; TRPC
Action C-2.4	Support workforce development training in southern Thurston County to promote new industries.	Short	South County cities/places	Chambers; EDC; TRPC; Higher Ed
Action C-2.5	Improve marketing of potential development and business opportunities available in South County. This includes: conducting an inventory of existing developable lands within South County communities, with the details of properties available to inquiring businesses; identifying potential niche or underserved markets; and making potential opportunities and locations for business more easily available.	Short	South County cities/places	EDC; TRPC

COMMUNITY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action C-2.6	Work on developing an infrastructure for tourism in South Thurston County. This includes: identifying a series of activities throughout the area that could be used to market "A Day in South County" and building on the existing strengths of each community; building a series of distinct events that could bring individuals to each community on multiple days of the year; cross-marketing other South County communities as part of events; developing activities in each community that would engage individuals throughout their stay (e.g., an outdoor coffee shop with nearby shopping, an eatery, a bar, and outdoor recreational opportunities); and, creating places for individuals to stay, such as campgrounds, RV Parks, bed-and-breakfasts, and hotels.	Underway	South County cities/places	VCB; Chambers
Action C-2.7	Build on the quality of place within each of the historic community centers. This includes: ensuring the retention of unique historic architecture and design features during the remodel of storefronts, as well as ensuring that new development complements historic development, when appropriate.	Short	South County cities/places	
Action C-2.8	Develop a coordinated State Route 507/U.S. Highway 12 "Main Street" or economic development program for the communities of Rainier, Tenino, Bucoda, and Rochester. This entails identifying whether a joint program for the communities is desired, and then entails taking steps to share resources on the development and implementation of the program.	Short	South County cities/places	TRPC; Chambers
Action C-2.9	Minimize the impact of highways on each of the historic South County community centers. This entails working with the Washington State Department of Transportation to minimize the impacts of State Route 507 and U.S. Highway 12 on the downtowns of South County communities. Consider strategies to reduce the impacts of high traffic volumes, speeds, and truck traffic on business districts that were originally designed for pedestrians.	Short	TRPC	South County cities/places

COMMUNITY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action C-2.10	Invest public money to attract private investment in the development of the South County centers. This includes: developing an investment strategy for infrastructure and place-making amenities; identifying infrastructure needed (streets, sidewalks, utilities) and leveraging public resources to attract private investments in desired project types; and, evaluating public amenities lacking in centers (street trees, parks, plazas) and developing an investment strategy to complete these over time or as part of development projects.	Medium	South County cities/places	TRPC; Chambers
Action C-2.11	Coordinate with Thurston County to ensure that rural development that generates pass-through traffic within incorporated communities pays its fair share for necessary road improvements.	Short	South County cities/places	TRPC
Action C-2.12	Develop sewer plans for Rainer and Bucoda and ensure that the potential cost burden on residents is a fundamental consideration in the development of the systems.	Short; Medium	Rainier; Bucoda	
Action C-2.13	Develop and implement new and existing master plans such as the Grand Mound master plan.	Short; Medium	County	Tribes; PSE
Action C-2.14	Promote telework in South County towns and cities to keep workers and their dollars local and reduce vehicle miles traveled.	Underway	TRPC	

COMMUNITY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL C-3	Neighborhoods: Create safe and vibrant neighborhoods with places that build community and encourage active transportation.			
Action C-3.1	Conduct neighborhood area planning with the goal of: increasing housing density and diversity; identifying opportunities for small neighborhood commercial centers; and preserving neighborhood character and quality of life. This includes: rezoning neighborhoods to allow for a mix of housing types that include single-family homes and "middle-density" choices such as accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplex, fourplexes, townhouses, and mansion apartments in appropriate locations.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns	County; IT; EDC; Chambers; TRPC; PSE
Action C-3.2	Work to establish "20-minute neighborhoods" that offer most neighborhood residents an array of basic services within a half mile or 20 minute walk from home. This entails: adjusting zoning and regulations to allow neighborhood-scale commercial development with appropriate amounts of parking.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns	IT
Action C-3.3	Encourage appropriately scaled home-based business and live/work opportunities in neighborhoods. This offers less risk for new business startups that foster entrepreneurs and new businesses. Allow historic buildings to be used for otherwise non-permitted uses to encourage preservation.	Short	Cities/towns	
Action C-3.4	Expand transit routes and increase service frequency where the density, land uses, street design, and location of neighborhoods between main activity center destinations will result in good service usage.	Short; Medium; Long	IT; R/T	Cities/towns
Action C-3.5	Rethink low density residential-only zoning districts in the urban areas where there is still greenfield buildable land. These zoning districts encourage development to occur at densities too low to be serviced by transit, creating large neighborhoods that have very few transportation options, and often are far away from jobs, goods, and services.	Short	Cities/towns; County	TRPC
Action C-3.6	Take a comprehensive look at the vacant land supply in the unincorporated urban growth area, and remove any areas that are not suitable for urban development for environmental reasons such as high groundwater, large amounts of wetlands, location in relation to streams, rivers, and floodplains, or steep slopes.	Medium	Cities/towns; County	TRPC

COMMUNITY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action C-3.7	Assess the cost of extending infrastructure to the remainder of the urban growth areas, and consider the full costs of maintenance when determining appropriate areas for urban growth. Place areas of the unincorporated growth area that do not currently have urban infrastructure (sewer or water lines) or where there are no specific plans to extend infrastructure, into longer term holding zones to ensure when development does occur urban infrastructure is available. Consider removing from the growth area undeveloped land that will be too costly to serve with urban infrastructure due to the current land-use pattern, presence of environmentally constrained areas, distance from existing infrastructure, or other factors. Conversely, consider developing infrastructure ahead of time to encourage development in areas of UGA where it is most desirable. Use latecomer agreements, etc. to get reimbursement from developers.	Medium	Cities/towns	County
Action C-3.8	Develop inter-local agreements to resolve annexation issues. Issues between jurisdictions vary, but may include: septic systems, sub-standard development, older, existing housing stock, unincorporated islands, environmental concerns such as high groundwater and possible endangered species listings.	Short	Cities/towns; County	TRPC
Action C-3.9	Identify and build street and path connections within existing neighborhoods and design well-connected streets within any new neighborhoods. This includes identifying funding sources for: connecting neighborhood streets between subdivisions; developing sidewalks where needed; increasing the regional network of bicycle lanes; connecting neighborhood bike/walk networks with schools and regional multiuse pathways; and incorporating traffic calming devices.	Short; Medium; Long	Cities/towns; County	Neighborhoods; IT
Action C-3.10	Increase opportunities for urban agriculture.	Short	Cities/towns	
Action C-3.11	Allow food carts at identified destinations in neighborhoods to offer easy-to-start-up activity in neighborhoods and encourage entrepreneurs. Work with the County Health Department to look at revising regulations to make food carts more viable.	Short	Cities/towns	TCPHSS
Action C-3.12	Offer grants to promote neighborhood innovation and build capacity within neighborhoods.	Short	Cities/towns	

COMMUNITY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL C-4	Rural & Resource Lands: Protect the region's farms, forests, prairies, and open spaces while providing places for those choosing a rural lifestyle.			
Action C-4.1	Set goals for resource and habitat protection such as no net loss of rural farmlands, forest cover, lands designated for long-term forestry, critical prairie habitats, or impervious surface limits.	Short	County	TRPC; Cities/towns; Land trusts
Action C-4.2	Create a new category of agricultural lands called Locally Designated Farm Lands. Eligibility could be open to lands enrolled in the Open Space Tax Program for Agriculture, located outside an Urban Growth Area (UGA), and not zoned for Long-Term Agriculture or Nisqually Agriculture. See below for how this new category of agricultural lands could be used.	Short; Medium	County	
Action C-4.3	Expand the use of the purchase of development rights (PDR) and transfer of development rights (TDR) programs in Thurston County. This can be accomplished by identifying priority farmlands (such as Locally Designated Farm Lands), forest lands, prairie and other critical habitats that may be eligible for the program. Fund the PDR program using local conservation futures funds or through a local bond approved by voters. Develop a cooperative management agreement between Thurston County and local land trusts (e.g., Capitol Land Trust and Nisqually Land Trust) to manage the program.	Short; Medium	County	Cities/towns; Land trusts
Action C-4.4	Strengthen and increase conservancy partnerships (e.g. Capitol Land Trust and Nisqually land Trust) to provide long-term acquisition and habitat management options for high value conservation properties in rural Thurston County.	Short	County; Land trusts	
Action C-4.5	Develop habitat conservation and management plans that will help to preserve suitable tracts of prairie habitat in the rural lands and reduce uncertainty for property owners in impacted urban areas and small cities where growth is intended.	Underway	County; Federal	Cities/towns; State; Port
Action C-4.6	Create a habitat methodology to allow impacts to prairie habitat to be quantified to assign proper mitigation. This methodology can also be used to gauge relative quality of prairie habitat to inform acquisition strategies or conservation easements, and used to establish conservation banking or in-lieu-fee strategies.	Underway	County	Cities/towns; State; Port; School districts

COMMUNITY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action C-4.7	Consider buying property which would need a reasonable use exception because of high habitat or resource value.	Short; Medium; Long	County; Land trusts	
Action C-4.8	Make clear incentives available to reduce tax burden on rural lands.	Short	County	
Action C-4.9	Reexamine rural zoning. Apply science-based reasoning to rezoning rural areas that provide habitat for threatened or endangered species or provide value for watershed protection. Ensure rural zoning adequately identifies and protects remaining agricultural lands with long-term value for food production. Designate more viable forestry lands as long-term resource lands to preserve this important aspect of the rural economy for future generations and maintain what remains of the region's rural character. Reexamine rural 1 per 5 acre zoning designation to ensure that suburban development does not occur in the rural areas and to provide a greater range of rural density. Consider downzone with cluster provisions with the goal of protecting large tracts of forest or agricultural land.	Short	County	
Action C-4.10	Request advance notification and consultation from the State of Washington when changing land use, such as when school forest lands are converted to private ownership for development.	Short; Medium	State	Cities/towns; County
Action C-4.11	Actively promote agricultural use of land through outreach, encouragement and incentive programs such as agricultural direct Nonprofits, and existing community supported agriculture organizations.	Short; Medium	Nonprofits	WSU

Economy

A sustainable economy requires collaboration, commitment, and integration among many Thurston Region partners. Economic opportunity cannot outweigh our responsibility to protect people and preserve healthy ecosystems. At the same time, we must recognize that the health of our social infrastructure and natural environment are tied to economic vitality.

In early 2011, the Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) recruited representatives from local governments, nonprofits, and small and large businesses operating in diverse employment sectors to serve on the Sustainable Thurston project's Blue Ribbon Panel for a Sustainable Economy. The panel — diverse in opinion and experience — conducted a detailed Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis of the Thurston Region that

formed the backbone of a November 2011 sustainable economy white paper. The panel also recommended actions in six broad categories: Coordinated & Efficient Governance; Sector Diversity; Innovation Climate; Physical Infrastructure; Adequate Employment Land Supply; and, Progressive Education System. The goals and actions below underscore that a sustainable community places equal emphasis on people, planet, and profit — the so-called "triple bottom line."

The EDC and its panel drafted a Sustainable Economy Strategy white paper as a companion to *Creating Places, Preserving Spaces — A Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region*. This regional implementation strategy identifies multiple levels of critical participation and includes economic and community development partners. The strategy also recognizes the unique strengths of both public- and private-sector Thurston Region leaders who must come together to support the economic activity that will create a sustainable economy. Supplementary Sustainable Thurston documents, including the strategy paper and white paper, are available at www.sustainablethurston.org.

Sustainable Thurston Foundational Principles & Policies related to the 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 seeking 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 polices that support locally owned businesses including home-based, entrepreneurial, and nonprofit businesses and organizations;
- Nurture urban and rural agricultural, and food-oriented businesses, and protecting resource lands; and,
- Connect economic health with personal health and well-being, and with the advancement of environmental health.
- Add incentives for business to demonstrate their environmental sustainability including reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Coordinated & Efficient Governance

By presenting a clear vision and cooperating on cross-jurisdictional implementation strategies, the Thurston Region can attract investment and resources that meet the needs of its residents. The region consists of seven municipal governments, a county government, and two tribal governments. Three municipalities in our urban core have taken a regional approach to protecting natural systems and integrating infrastructure systems, without losing their unique local identities. A coordinated and collaborative approach to economic development strategies, initiatives, and efforts would build long-term strength, and attract and retain businesses and jobs.

Challenges & Opportunities

Ever-changing planning regulations and permitting processes discourage investors and employers. Establishing consistent rules, to the extent feasible, would help align development with community values, facilitating the investment we need to provide jobs and generate revenue.

The region has created a number of first-class regional governance and operational structures that support quality of life — and, in turn, economic development. Examples include the LOTT Clean Water Alliance (comprised of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Thurston County), Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC), and Intercity Transit. However, additional regional collaboration may be required to continue providing high levels of service in other areas, especially within the tri-city urban core.

Looking at the bigger picture, the Thurston Region does not yet have a clear vision to show where we're headed, how we plan to get there, and who will be involved on an organizational partner level. In addition to addressing strategies for economic vitality, the regional vision should address social services, environmental preservation, housing, and other critical components of "great places." Sustainable Thurston represents a positive first step in that direction.

The goals and supporting actions that follow at the end of the chapter can help the region achieve its economic goals and broader sustainable development vision.

Goal EC-1: Coordinate economic development efforts to attract and retain businesses and jobs.

Sustainability Outcomes

Coordinated and efficient governance for the community's residents and businesses yields benefits for both. If jurisdictions regulate businesses in a consistent and even-handed manner, they will flourish and prosper. Successful businesses will increase hiring, as well as provide additional taxes to the community for the development and maintenance of public infrastructure and recreation areas (e.g., parks, swimming pools, playgrounds, and fields). Everyone benefits from coordinated and efficient governance.

Sector Diversity

For many decades, the Thurston Region's economy has been linked with the budget of Washington State — as both an employer and a supplier of contractually-based economic activities. Historically, this kept our unemployment rate several points below the statewide average. Government wages earned in the Thurston Region continue to represent approximately 45-50 percent of total wages. With recent declines in state government, the region has worked to expand economic diversity. A diverse economy builds community "immunity" — albeit, not completely — against recessionary forces and builds capacity for growing household incomes that supports a larger, more vibrant community. In the years ahead, the region can focus attention and investment in targeted industry clusters to increase local employment, stem imports, and increase the amount of revenue collected and reinvested regionally. It can also take advantage of unique opportunities, including partnerships with regional neighbors, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, and emerging businesses in the health, science, and technology fields.

Courting the 'Creative Class'

The term "creative class," coined by economist and social scientist Richard Florida, refers to people whose economic function is simply to create new ideas, products, and services. Members of the creative class do a wide range of work in a wide variety of industries — from technology to entertainment, journalism to finance, high-end manufacturing to the arts — Florida wrote in an influential article and book more than a decade ago.[1]

They share an ethos that values merit, creativity, individuality, and difference. The key to economic growth lay not just in the ability to attract the creative class, Florida underscored, but to translate it into economic outcomes in the form of new ideas, high-tech businesses, and regional growth.

[1] *Florida, Richard. "The Rise of the Creative Class: Why cities without gays and rock bands are losing the economic development race." Washington Monthly. May 2002.*

Mustering Clusters with Staying Power

The Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council recently commissioned a study to determine and measure the impact of leading industry clusters within the service region encompassing Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston counties. Clusters were isolated through a rigorous analysis of regional wages, sales, imports and exports, location quotients, and other factors. The resulting Targeted Cluster Identification & Strategic Alignment study (EMSI, J Roberson and Company) outlines a series of data-driven strategies designed to strengthen those core industries and capitalize on economic opportunities within their associated supply chains.

Identified clusters include: Food Manufacturing; Wood Products Manufacturing; Life Sciences; Chemical Products Manufacturing; IT/Telecommunication; and, Tourism/Recreation. The partners can track economic conditions through real-time access to key indicator data, including current/future workforce capacity and demand, changes in wages, growing/declining presence of select occupations and industry types, and import-export ratios. Using custom software, economic development practitioners and training/education planners can pinpoint key trends and respond to emerging opportunities.

Case Example: *Annually, between now and 2016, as many as 6,000 military personnel will likely separate from service at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM). Workforce and economic development partners in Thurston County are actively determining what percentage of those service members intend to remain in our region and how they might fit into our local workforce. We have compared the military occupation specialties for the first wave of separating service members to civilian occupation codes. We can then compare the number of people trained or experienced in certain occupations with on-the-ground labor demand. We are doing this in two ways: first, by surveying local employers for immediate job openings; and second, by looking at longer-term employment demand forecasts using industry cluster data. At some point, the partners could also choose to identify specific industry development opportunities based on the cluster analysis, and proactively market JBLM and regional labor pools to companies in those selected sectors.*

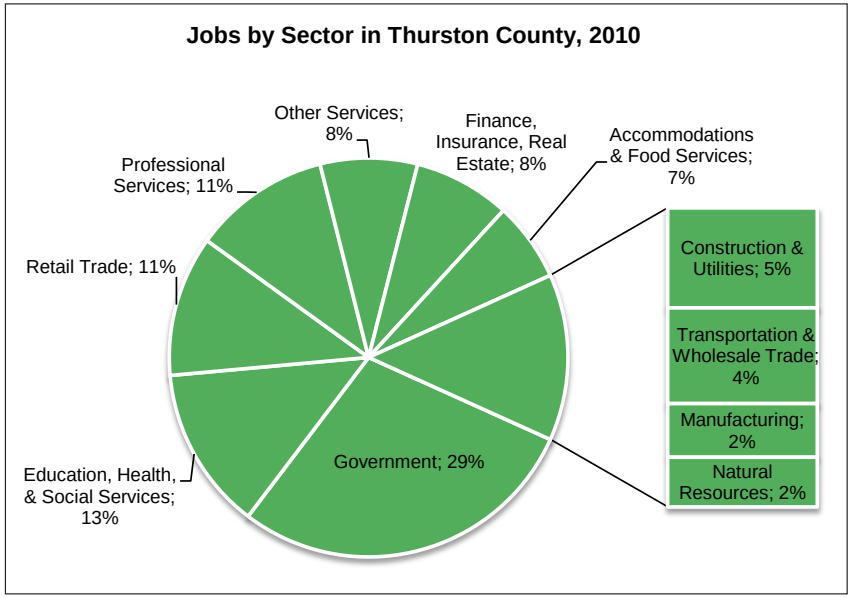
Primary Pacific Mountain Industry Cluster Partners: Pacific Mountain WDC; Lewis Co. EDC; Mason Co. EDC; Pacific Co. EDC; Thurston EDC; Greater Grays Harbor Inc.; Centralia Community College; Grays Harbor Community College; Olympic College; and, South Puget Sound Community College.

Challenges & Opportunities

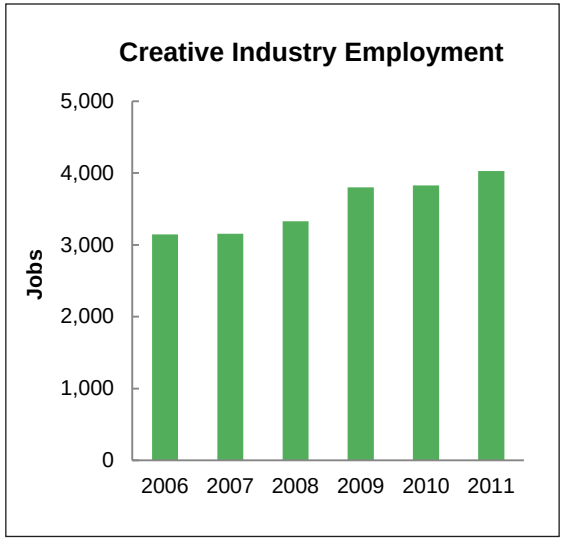
Local economic sectors outside of state government have gained an increasing share of employment over the last 10 years, although at a relatively slow pace. The health care sector continues to be the largest private-sector employer in both wages and number of individuals employed. These jobs generally pay at the higher end of the wage spectrum. Retail — the next-largest sector employer — usually consists of lower-wage jobs.

Manufacturing has declined as a percentage of local employment and revenue, although several recent success stories indicate a potential resurgence. This is important because manufacturing provides a variety of jobs at all wage levels and helps to make a community a net importer of capital.

The region maintains a relatively high number of employees who are paid to think and solve problems — the so-called "creative class" (See sidebar, pg. 88). State government, and jobs that directly support state government, employ the majority of these individuals. The growing arts sector still represents a relatively small percentage of overall employment.



Jobs by Sector in Thurston County, 2010. Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis.



Between 2006 and 2011, creative sector employment grew by 900 jobs, about 200 of which were added in 2011 despite the reduction in State employment. Source: WESTAF, EMSI – Complete Employment 2012 courtesy Economic Development Council.

Goal EC-2: Foster industry clusters to create jobs, and increase revenue circulation locally.

Sustainability Outcomes

By definition, a sustainable economy is one that contains a variety of jobs and businesses. If we want to see our region retain its educated and trained young people, we need to focus on supporting existing community core sectors or being open to new business expansion. Through this strategy, we can supply a variety of jobs to our residents. By offering a variety of job sectors, our community prosperity will not only stabilize, but it will also improve through increased employment, with corresponding improved tax collections from both residents and businesses.

"B"-ing a Better Corporate Citizen

Start a community garden. Open a neighborhood tool library. Carpool. There are plenty of ways residents can become sustainability leaders, but what about companies? How can businesses balance people, planet, and profit and spur other companies to follow? Enter the B Corporation concept. In less than a decade, the Pennsylvania-based nonprofit B Lab has certified almost 800 companies from 27 countries and 60 industries as B Corps. The firms — which range from the outdoor apparel-maker Patagonia Inc. to Seattle's A&R Solar — meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency. Each company must earn 80 out of 200 points on what's known as the B Impact Assessment, which measures impacts on stakeholders. The assessment varies depending on the company's size, sector, and location of primary operation. Once B Lab reviews the assessment and supporting documentation, the company may use its certification as a green marketing tool. To learn more about B Corps, visit www.bcorporation.net.

Innovation Culture

Innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainability are essential components of wealth creation. Growth of industries in any sector depends on the ability to create new products and processes, start up new lines of business or methods of distribution, and offer items and solutions that are environmentally friendly in design and implementation. The Thurston Region can attract and grow economic vitality by offering support for young innovators, becoming an early adopter of new technologies and operational systems, and fostering a cultural shift that encourages a spirit of entrepreneurship.

Challenges & Opportunities

The region's well-established network supports entrepreneurs and start-up businesses. These resources can be found at the Thurston County Chamber of Commerce small business incubator, EDC's Business Resource Center (technical assistance), Enterprise for Equity (advocacy, curriculum, and micro-fund), and the Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater Visitor & Convention Bureau (technical assistance and joint marketing for tourism-based business), to name a few. In addition, the South Puget Sound Community College Small Business Development Center (technical assistance for established business), and four-year higher-education institutions offer training for managers and entrepreneurs. The Thurston County Asset-Building Coalition provides training and resources to emerging entrepreneurs, while New Market Skills Center's array of vocational training programs is the envy of the region. Unfortunately, these organizations face a challenge in that they rely on highly leveraged fiscal resources. While private-sector support has been strong, public-sector investment has been inconsistent. As a result, successful service programs lack sustainability.

While no formalized technology-transfer program currently exists at the higher-education institutions, local leaders have expressed considerable interest in the potential value such programs could create. Desirable factors include leveraging local institutions, creating home-grown enterprises, and using private-sector expertise to bring research products to market.

While the region is making strides in creating vital urban places, it lags behind other major metropolitan areas. Puget Sound and nearby natural amenities clearly create a draw, and the range and quality of local arts and entertainment continues to evolve. However, we do not yet have the highest-caliber or quantity of 18-hour destinations — "third places" where people can convene outside of work and home — found in nearby peer communities (Tacoma, Seattle, Kent, Portland). We also lack a vital "innovation culture," where highly skilled, creative-class professionals can come together and find encouragement and capital to develop new ideas and products.

Goal EC-3: Create an innovation culture to encourage entrepreneurship.

Sustainability Outcomes

What does it mean to create and support innovation? While creating "innovation" in a person may be problematic, we do know that innovative and creative people share similar expectations about where they choose to live and work. Therefore, taking the right tangible steps to create an innovative environment can help create community wealth. Many people enjoy the natural environment, but innovative and creative people also seek out the built environment. This includes opportunities to live in activity centers close to amenities such as Olympia's Percival Landing with its walkway and businesses. Support of the arts in the region also will help attract an innovation culture adjacent to the boardwalk and support local artists. Financial support of innovation carries risks, but our region will prosper if it can support the ventures of those individuals with an inclination to create.

Sustainability Activities Already Underway

Turning a Good Idea Into a Great Company

South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC) and the Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) have entered into a collaborative agreement to establish an entrepreneurial center at the future Rowe Six campus of SPSCC on Sixth Avenue in downtown Lacey. As part of its expansion, SPSCC will move the functions of its entire Hawks Prairie Campus to the new site, which consists of five existing office buildings totaling 100,000 square feet. In addition, the Thurston EDC will also move its entire operations to the campus, allowing both organizations to capitalize on the strengths of the other to ensure that the highest-quality business resources are provided to Thurston County.

The concept for this collaboration is the outgrowth of conversations that executive staff at SPSCC and Thurston EDC — along with partner organizations City of Lacey, Thurston Chamber of Commerce, Saint Martin's University, and leaders at Joint Base Lewis-McChord — have had on how to best move forward as a community to support industry cluster development and entrepreneurial growth. The EDC and SPSCC have complimentary long-term objectives to visualize a model for sustainable regional economic development, and they are actively envisioning the scope of the new facility and its offerings.

SPSCC plans to develop academic programs that would support the entrepreneurial and innovation center. The Thurston EDC will provide high-value services to the business community, including business counseling, government contracting, and a variety of business-development resources to continue efforts to recruit, retain, and expand market opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs throughout the region.

The college is embarking on an $8 million renovation of the first building on the Rowe Six property. The renovation of the 50,000-square-foot structure is slated to be complete by the end of 2014, with both organizations moving into the space soon thereafter.

Physical Infrastructure

Historically, the region's economy has relied heavily on infrastructure to generate and support economic activity. Essential infrastructure components for a sustainable economy include housing, roads/bridges, utilities (water/sewer/electricity), rail, port facilities, and fiber telecommunications. Infrastructure will be no less important in the future. The region should proactively plan for, fund, and implement infrastructure improvements that stimulate investment, facilitate the movement of goods and services, and reduce our dependence on natural resources and our carbon footprint. With adequate infrastructure and strategic investment in our employment base, we can reduce the number of vehicle trips people take out of the community to work, facilitate economic investment, and capture additional revenues to fund essential services.

Challenges & Opportunities

Our region fared better than many comparable communities in the Pacific Northwest during the recent recession. The metropolitan planning organization — TRPC — has an excellent track record of building consensus on regional transportation infrastructure funding priorities. In an era where traditional transportation funding sources have become scarce, regions like ours that have identified priorities score higher than those that have not prioritized or created consensus.

There is continued concern that, although there is a strong telecommunications framework throughout the region, some necessary connections are still not available for private-sector business.

The Port of Olympia is important to long-range economic diversification, because it increasingly serves as an economic engine for the entire South Puget Sound region. A countywide district, the Port serves communities beyond the core urban area and provides a crucial link to international markets dependent upon deep-water access. This access needs to be maintained and supported.

Other utility infrastructure, such as power lines, telecommunications, and natural gas, are vital to the economic sustainability strategies of job retention and innovation support. Without these elements, sustaining economic activity would be difficult. We should strongly support the growth of infrastructure elements.

Goal EC-4: Provide robust infrastructure to support economic development.

Sustainability Outcomes

The support and maintenance of a strong physical infrastructure helps our community and its residents through the consistent flow of communication, goods and services, energy, and transportation. Both businesses and residents expect an infrastructure system that functions smoothly and efficiently. If this system is not maintained and expanded to meet new demands, then community wealth will decrease through population loss and a loss of expansion opportunities.

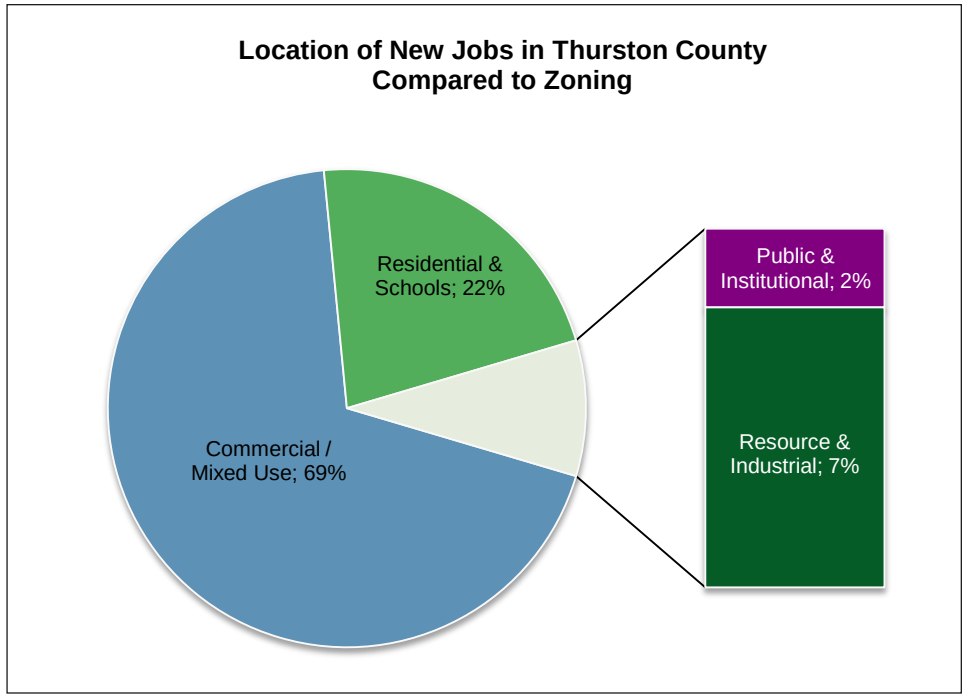
Employment Lands Supply

A region's ability to manage its growth and potential for growth extends beyond the regulatory environment. The Thurston Region must adopt a strong, consistent approach to protecting land for future employment as a component of long-term health. The region can help ensure economic vitality and a high quality of life for years to come by ensuring the availability of an adequate shovel-ready inventory of land along primary transportation corridors, as well as by investing in redevelopment of underutilized industrial and commercial properties.

Challenges & Opportunities

Since the late 1970s, TRPC has produced estimates of the buildable land supply in Thurston County, and it provides data to cities and towns that identify the densities and availability of land necessary to accommodate planned growth. Based on policies adopted in 2012, TRPC concludes there is sufficient land supply to accommodate 20 years of projected population growth in the urban areas.

TRPC also projects that, by 2035, under moderate growth scenarios, the county will create 60,000 new jobs — located throughout the region. Current projection models indicate that 22 percent of the new jobs will be in areas zoned for residential or school zones, 69 percent in commercial or mixed-use zoning, 7 percent in industrial or resource zoning areas, and 2 percent in public- or institutional-zoned lands.



People often think of jobs locating in industial or commercial areas, but residential areas contain about a quarter of the jobs in the Thurston Region today, and such areas will get about 22 percent of the new jobs between now and 2035. Most of these jobs will be in schools, churches, and home-based employment. Source: Thurston Regional Planning Council.

The latest buildable lands evaluation indicates there is enough vacant, partially used, and re-developable land to support the projected job growth. By design, the estimate does not address key investment decision factors such as location relative to economic activity and transportation access, suitability for development given environmental constraints, distance of development sites to critical infrastructure connections, and other factors. Anecdotal feedback from employers looking to locate or expand here suggests some level of additional investigation may be required to understand the amount and quality of available development sites.

Goal EC-5: Ensure adequate supply of shovel-ready land along primary transportation corridors and invest in commercial and industrial redevelopment.

Sustainability Outcomes

By maintaining an adequate supply of land to offer businesses the opportunity to expand or relocate their facilities here in the Thurston Region, the community avoids the loss of jobs and businesses to other counties or states. In addition, this assures companies from outside the area considering the region as an expansion location that there are opportunities to site their business. This results in community wealth through a stable employment tax base and funds for local government public services.

Progressive Education System

Key factors cited by the private sector when locating or expanding operations include access to qualified labor and availability of quality education for employees' families. Prospective businesses do not question the size of the labor pool, but rather the availability and readiness of both technical and professional skills necessary for their operations. A progressive education system is critical to maintaining a high quality of life for residents. Educational attainment begets higher community participation, lower crime rates, and an overall higher standard of living. The Thurston Region can become a net importer of students and learners by offering targeted employment training, top-tier K-12 education for working families, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programming for all ages. If successful, the region can advance opportunities to recruit new industries, encourage a culture of innovation, and ensure our children are trained to fill the jobs we intend to grow here.

Challenges & Opportunities

Despite its modest size, the Thurston Region boasts a four-year state college, private university, and a community college located within 10 miles of each other. Our K-12 education system consistently produces test scores at or above state averages for achievement, and new residents and employers often cite "good schools" as one of the primary factors in their choice to locate here. Nontraditional educational opportunities abound as well, headlined by New Market Skills Center and Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council job-training programs.

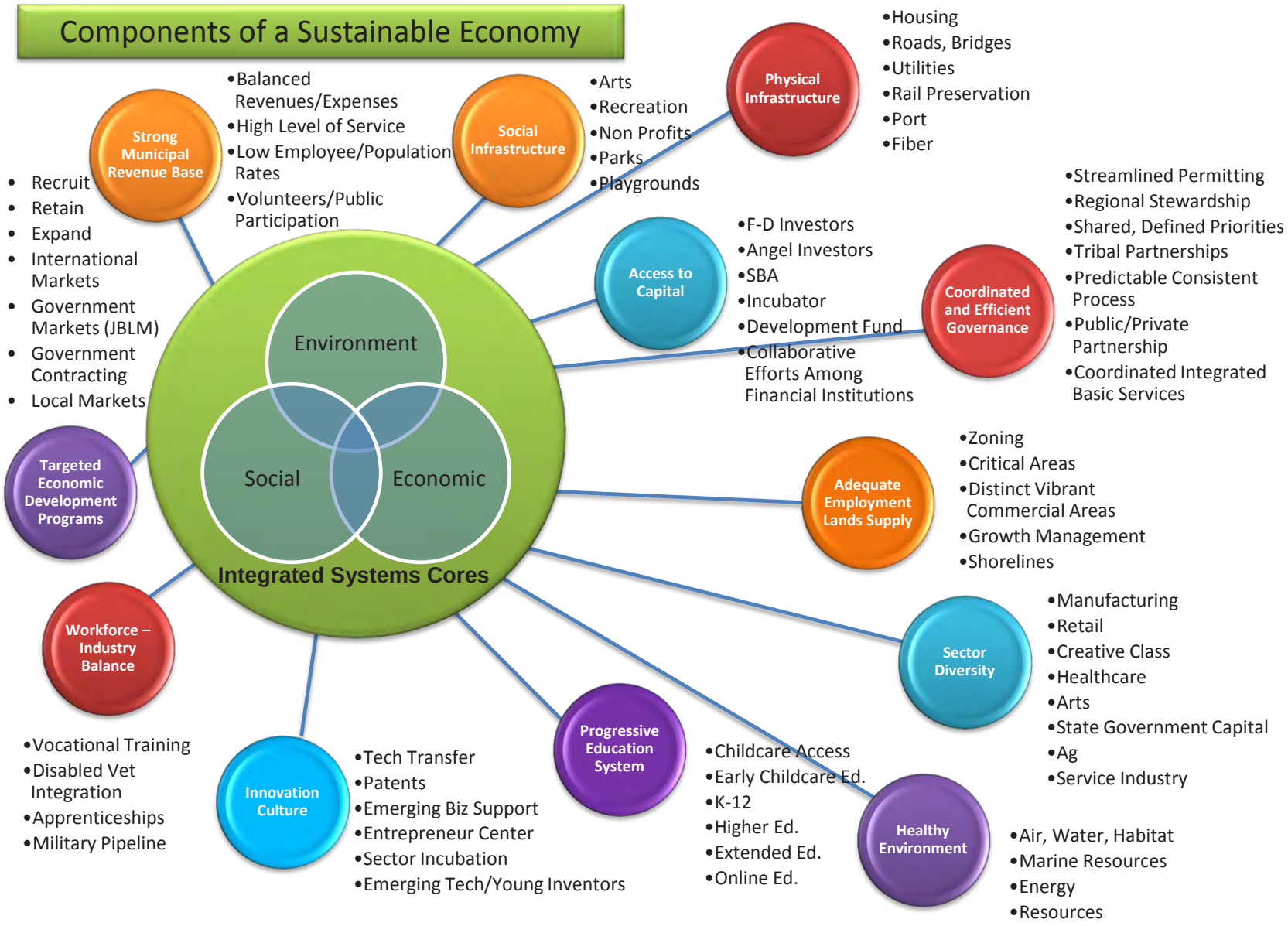
There also is growing awareness and support for early-childhood learning programs within the community. Organizations such as the United Way of Thurston County and the Boys & Girls Club of Thurston County have championed these programs in both rural and urban areas. We can improve these programs, however.

Few internship, apprenticeship, or high-technology training opportunities for youth exist here. We can develop technology-transfer systems, whereby educational institutions and private-sector partners collaborate to bring research products to market and grow locally sourced industry. It is imperative that we promote the value of vocational training. Not every student will go to a four-year college, and most high-paying jobs (most common among innovation and manufacturing employment) require some degree of hands-on training. The community must work to eradicate the stigma around vocational training and promote it as one of many career pathways available to our youth.

Goal EC-6: Foster a progressive education system to match worker skills with employer needs.

Sustainability Outcomes

A progressive education system that offers varying levels of education and training for its residents will result in reduced unemployment rates and increased community prosperity due to the variety of jobs at all levels of ability and training. In addition, a well-trained labor force that matches job requirements will provide local businesses the opportunity to expand their operations. An education system that supports early-childhood education benefits the community in two ways: Parents can enroll their young children in classes that will encourage and help their education, and those parents can return to the workforce earlier than anticipated.


Components of a Sustainable Economy
Strong Municipal Revenue Base
•Balanced Revenues/Expenses
•High Level of Service
•Low Employee/Population Rates
•Volunteers/Public Participation
Social Infrastructure
•Arts
•Recreation
•Non Profits
•Parks
•Playgrounds
Physical Infrastructure
•Housing
•Roads, Bridges
•Utilities
•Rail Preservation
•Port
•Fiber
Access to Capital
•F-D Investors
•Angel Investors
•SBA
•Incubator
•Development Fund
•Collaborative Efforts Among Financial Institutions
Coordinated and Efficient Governance
•Streamlined Permitting
•Regional Stewardship
•Shared, Defined Priorities
•Tribal Partnerships
•Predictable Consistent Process
•Public/Private Partnership
•Coordinated Integrated Basic Services
Adequate Employment Lands Supply
•Zoning
•Critical Areas
•Distinct Vibrant Commercial Areas
•Growth Management
•Shorelines
Sector Diversity
•Manufacturing
•Retail
•Creative Class
•Healthcare
•Arts
•State Government Capital
•Ag
•Service Industry
Healthy Environment
•Air, Water, Habitat
•Marine Resources
•Energy
•Resources
Progressive Education System
•Childcare Access
•Early Childcare Ed.
•K-12
•Higher Ed.
•Extended Ed.
•Online Ed.
Innovation Culture
•Tech Transfer
•Patents
•Emerging Biz Support
•Entrepreneur Center
•Sector Incubation
•Emerging Tech/Young Inventors
Workforce – Industry Balance
•Vocational Training
•Disabled Vet Integration
•Apprenticeships
•Military Pipeline
Targeted Economic Development Programs
• Recruit
• Retain
• Expand
• International Markets
• Government Markets (JBLM)
• Government Contracting
• Local Markets
Environment
Social
Economic
Integrated Systems Cores

The following table includes Economy goals and actions, as well as the timeline, lead, and partners for each action. Timeline definitions are as follows: Underway, Short (1-3 yrs); Medium (3-10 yrs); Long (10-20 yrs). See Appendix for lead and partner acronyms and explanations.

ECONOMY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL EC-1	Coordinate economic development efforts to attract and retain businesses and jobs.			
Action EC-1.1	Develop an intergovernmental collaboration and coordination panel focused on sustainability and aligned with economic development organizations. Use existing resources and build on successful organizations.	Medium	EDC; Chambers	Cities/towns; IT
Action EC-1.2	Establish and update a matrix of development processes — and publish a white paper as the guidepost for comprehensive plan updates and local land use issues.	Medium	Chambers	Cities/towns; County; EDC; Tribes; TRPC
Action EC-1.3	Recognize the importance of continuing regular meetings with regional partners to identify and pursue shared economic opportunities.	Underway	TRPC; EDC	
Action EC-1.4	Review and make recommendations to zoning along inter-jurisdictional urban corridors.	Short	Cities/towns	Chambers; EDC; TRPC
Action EC-1.5	Coordinate within and across jurisdictions to advocate for permitting vision, clarity, and predictability.	Short	Cities/towns	Chambers; EDC; TRPC
Action EC-1.6	Promote development of urban corridors that interconnect across municipalities.	Underway	EDC	Cities/towns; Chambers; IT
Action EC-1.7	Create a community-wide vision and action plan for coordinated and efficient governance that enlists multiple organizations in the implementation of defined community priorities and goals.	Short	TRPC	Cities/towns; Chambers; County; EDC; Tribes; TRPC; LOTT; Port; IT

ECONOMY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL EC-2	Foster industry clusters to create jobs, and increase revenue circulation locally.			
Action EC-2.1	Utilize the Regional Cluster Analysis and Market Report, and identify and then focus increased market presence of significant clusters (food, wood, IT/Telecom, life sciences, chemical production).	Underway	EDC	Chambers
Action EC-2.2	Commit to workforce diversity, and maintain innovative workforce training and education programs.	Short	Higher Ed; School districts	Chambers; EDC
Action EC-2.3	Establish a local angel investor network. An angel investor is typically a wealthy individual who invests his or her money in start-up companies in exchange for an equity share of the businesses.	Underway	EDC	Chambers
Action EC-2.4	Establish a strategic economic development fund that would provide bridge capital as an incentive to "closing the deal" with new critical employers for development of their facilities.	Short	EDC	Chambers
Action EC-2.5	Explore establishment of endowment programs for educational funding.	Medium	Higher Ed	Chambers; School districts
Action EC-2.6	Generate support in the Washington State Legislature for creation of business tax incentives/credits — e.g., "Main Street."	Medium	Chambers	Cities/towns; County; TRPC

ECONOMY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL EC-3	Create an innovation culture to encourage entrepreneurship.			
Action EC-3.1	Promote the Thurston Region as a "hub" for innovation with higher-education as the nucleus.	Medium	Higher Ed	Chambers; EDC; School districts; TRPC
Action EC-3.2	Develop a technology/knowledge-transfer process between the Thurston Region and state government.	Medium	Higher Ed	State; School districts; EDC
Action EC-3.3	Explore public-private partnerships for creation of a community artist's center as a place for arts to exist and interact.	Underway	Nonprofits	Cities/towns; Chambers; EDC
Action EC-3.4	Encourage community foundation and philanthropic organizations to fund innovation.	Short	EDC	Chambers; Nonprofits
Action EC-3.5	Support business incubation and research.	Underway	Chambers	EDC; Higher Ed; School districts
Action EC-3.6	Evaluate the potential for creating a South County telework center, perhaps co-located with a small business incubator, library, or other appropriate use.	Underway	TRPC	South County cities/places; Chambers; EDC
Action EC-3.7	Recruit arts and entertainment service providers to increase "third-place" opportunities that create vital urban places that make community an exciting place to live and attract young innovators.	Short	Chambers; EDC	Nonprofits; Cities/towns

ECONOMY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL EC-4	Provide robust infrastructure to support economic development.			
Action EC-4.1	Preserve economic/transportation functions at key transportation nodes.	Short	TRPC	Port; North County cities; EDC; IT; Chambers
Action EC-4.2	Support/preserve long-term investment in multimodal transportation.	Medium	Port	Cities/towns; TRPC; IT
Action EC-4.3	Advocate for Port of Olympia infrastructure development to support shipping operations and long-term maintenance of shipping lanes, shoreline access, and essential transportation distribution logistics (TDL) function.	Medium	Port	Chambers; EDC; TRPC
Action EC-4.4	Support and encourage diversity in Port of Olympia functions as allowed by state law.	Long	Port	Chambers; EDC; TRPC
Action EC-4.5	Build capacity in telecommunications and fiber networks for commercial & industrial properties/business parks and employment centers.	Medium	Utilities	Cities/towns; County; Chambers; EDC; PUD; Port; EDC
Action EC-4.6	Require local governments to identify telecom/infrastructure gaps in the network, and place conduit during public works construction projects.	Medium; Long	Cities/towns	TRPC
Action EC-4.7	Explicitly consider "last mile" freight delivery needs when developing site design and ingress/egress requirements, street standards, and neighborhood – commercial circulation. "Last mile" refers to freight delivery in the local street network to individual businesses.	Medium	Cities/towns; County; TRPC	Chambers; EDC; Port
Action EC-4.8	Advocate for sustainable funding mechanisms.	Underway	TRPC	All

ECONOMY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL EC-5	Ensure adequate supply of shovel-ready land along primary transportation corridors and invest in commercial and industrial redevelopment.			
Action EC-5.1	Assess buildable land availability/readiness.	Medium	EDC	Cities/towns; Chambers; County; PSE; Tribes; TRPC
Action EC-5.2	Advocate for protection of employment-bearing property.	Medium	Chambers	EDC; TRPC
Action EC-5.3	Protect employment-bearing lands and ensure an adequate supply to match target industries (medical, manufacturing, food, chemical).	Short	EDC	Chambers; TRPC; Cities/towns; County; Port
Action EC- 5.4	Advocate for an adequate supply of shovel-ready development sites and mitigate where necessary.	Short	EDC	Chambers; TRPC; Port
Action EC-5.5	Complete the last-mile infrastructure to available commercial lands (for priority employment clusters). Last-mile infrastructure in this context could refer to completing the telecommunications grid or making local street improvements to create investment-ready areas.	Medium	Various	Chambers; EDC; PUD; Port; PSE; Utilities; Developers
Action EC-5.6	Support brownfield clean-up strategies/planned actions for development and redevelopment.	Medium	Cities/towns; County; EDC	Chambers; TRPC; Port

ECONOMY

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL EC-6	Foster a progressive education system to match worker skills with employer needs.			
Action EC-6.1	Support New Market Skill Center programs for technology, innovation, and manufacturing.	Underway	School districts	Higher Ed; EDC; Chambers
Action EC-6.2	Support nimble/agile education systems through public/private partnership — e.g., robotics, math. Engage entrepreneurs around the community in the educational resources, entrepreneur center.	Underway	School districts; EDC	Higher Ed; Chambers
Action EC-6.3	Identify and promote internship opportunities and apprenticeship programs.	Short	Chambers	EDC; Higher Ed; School districts
Action EC-6.4	Explore greater use of public buildings (schools) for community members to learn — e.g., night classes.	Long	School districts	Higher Ed; Chambers
Action EC-6.5	Develop a technology-transfer program with the region's higher education institutions. Technology-transfer is the process of transferring skills, knowledge, technologies, methods of manufacturing, samples of manufacturing and facilities among governments or universities and other institutions.	Medium	Higher Ed	Chambers; EDC; TRPC; JBLM
Action EC-6.6	Promote the value of and raise the profile of vocational education.	Short	School districts	Higher Ed; Chambers; EDC

Opportunities & Choices

Leveraging our opportunities and understanding the effects of our choices will lead to community resilience and sustainability. We are beginning to think in generations, not years, to ensure that we plan for a changing population and changing needs.

Sustainable development balances economic, environmental, and social aspects of our community. This chapter looks at many of the social aspects — housing, health and human services, local food systems, access to schools, and the transportation network that knits the region together into a complete community.

What is a complete community? One that contains affordable, safe, quality, and energy-efficient housing that, through safe and efficient transportation, has access to:

- Affordable healthy food;
- Family-wage jobs and job training;
- Parks, natural resources, and cultural activities; and,
- Quality education.

What is safe and efficient transportation? It's more than just a street network for cars. Our region has long recognized and invested in "complete streets" that include sidewalks and bike lanes supporting safe travel for people walking and biking or riding in a car or a bus. But it hasn't always been that way.

Suburban home-building, automobile ownership, and interstate highway construction exploded in the wake of World War II. A single-family home with a little more elbow room and a picket fence epitomized the American dream for many people. However, this shifting land-use pattern made it difficult for these new suburbanites to access grocery stores, jobs, schools, and parks without an automobile. These areas don't work for everyone today. "Drive mostly" neighborhoods mean dependence on cars to fill every day-to-day need — difficult for the very old, the young, and those who can't afford multiple car ownership and use.

One example is the Millennial Generation — generally, defined as people born between 1980 and 2000. The percentage of 16-to-24-year-olds with a driver's license has dropped to less than 70 percent for the first time since 1963. For this generation, safe and efficient transportation assumes walkable neighborhoods, safe bicycle routes, and frequent transit service.

Baby Boomers — born between 1946 and 1964 — who raised families in newfangled suburbs, are also reshaping land use as they retire. Some Boomers aim to age in place, while others will downsize and seek more convenient and accessible housing choices. If we want to attract the Millennials and retain the Boomers, we need to create complete communities that offer a full range of housing. These trends led to Sustainable Thurston goals to create walkable urban areas — places that provide people opportunities to live, work, shop, and play without having to depend on a private automobile.
This is great news for our health. People living in auto-oriented

suburbs tend to drive more, weigh more, and walk less than people living in walkable neighborhoods. Walking reduces the risk of obesity. With many of our neighborhoods built during the latter half of the 20th century designed around cars, the prevalence of obesity may result in today's generation of children being the first in more than 200 years with a shorter lifespan than their parents.

Creating complete communities will also help eliminate food deserts — parts of the community with little or no access to the fresh, affordable food essential to maintain a healthy diet. Throughout the Sustainable Thurston process, community members have expressed concerns about the affordability and accessibility of fresh and local food.

"The draft plan... places appropriate emphasis on the important role that the local food system plays in achieving our shared vision of a more sustainable future for Thurston County."

-Thurston Food System Council

Sustainable Thurston Foundational Principles & Policies related to Opportunities & 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, allowing and encouraging flexible work schedules, and telework; and,
- Encourage development of local services for food, clothing, and other basic human needs.

This West Olympia farm stand is along a bus route and within walking distance of several housing developments.

5 ELEMENTS OF A WALKABLE URBAN CENTER

PEOPLE
People living, working, shopping, and recreating in compact centers are an indicator of walkable urban places. People add vibrancy and liveliness to city streets, generating walk-up customers for local businesses and growing the market for more walkable urban development. It takes a concentration of people in a compact area to support the kind of activities that define a walkable urban center.

PUBLIC AMENITIES
Public investment in well-designed streets and sidewalks, parks and plazas, public buildings and civic institutions are key to the viability of walkable centers. The most urban of these walkable centers feature a prominent role for public transportation and station areas that enhance the public realm.

PARKING POLICY
Parking is a necessary part of walkable centers, but effective policies guide the price, supply, and design so that parking does not undermine an area's walkability. Free parking is minimized, parking supply requirements emphasize "maximum amounts" instead of "minimum amounts", and design standards locate parking behind buildings or within structures

PROXIMITY
Walkable centers need a diversity of destinations and activities that are within walking distance of each other to support the needs of people who live and work there. This includes grocery stores and pharmacies, retail and services, entertainment venues and restaurants, parks and recreational opportunities, in addition to housing. Larger centers with a diversity of destinations and activities in close proximity allow more people to live a "car-lite lifestyle", offering a range of viable travel choices.

PHYSICAL FORM
Both public and private realms in successful walkable centers have physical forms that make walking a pleasant, safe, and convenient alternative to driving. Carefully designed sidewalks, transit stations, parks and streets are built on well-connected grids of short city blocks. Distinctive architectural details like windows, doors, awnings, and step-backs characterize buildings – most of which are multi-story with ground-floor uses oriented around retail or services. The public and private realms come together in walkable centers to create places that are welcoming to pedestrians and supportive of business and the local economy.

Why are we so interested in Walkable Urban Centers?

Walkable urban centers offer people a lifestyle option that is different than that offered elsewhere in our cities, suburbs, and rural communities. Walkable urban centers provide people with the opportunity to live, work, shop, and play without having to rely on driving to meet every daily need. Walkable urban centers attract 21st century jobs, and nurture innovation and social exchange. They are fertile ground for local businesses, artists, and other entrepreneurs. The array of housing choices offered in these places meet the needs of many people in different stages of life, from the Millennial Generation to retired Boomers. Walkable urban centers are inherently more energy efficient than any other community development pattern, which is good for the environment and for household budgets. They offer an array of viable, active travel choices for people of all abilities and incomes, travel choices that reinforce healthy lifestyles and enable independence for those who don't drive.

Despite their benefits, walkable urban centers are not easy to create. Obstacles include high land prices and construction costs, difficult financing and fees, and cumbersome regulatory processes. Alignment of rent structures and other market forces is more difficult than it is for typical neighborhood and suburban development. Studies indicate, though, that there is pent-up demand for walkable urban lifestyle choices in the Thurston region, which is why cities continue to work to overcome these obstacles and increase this opportunity for area residents and businesses.

Housing

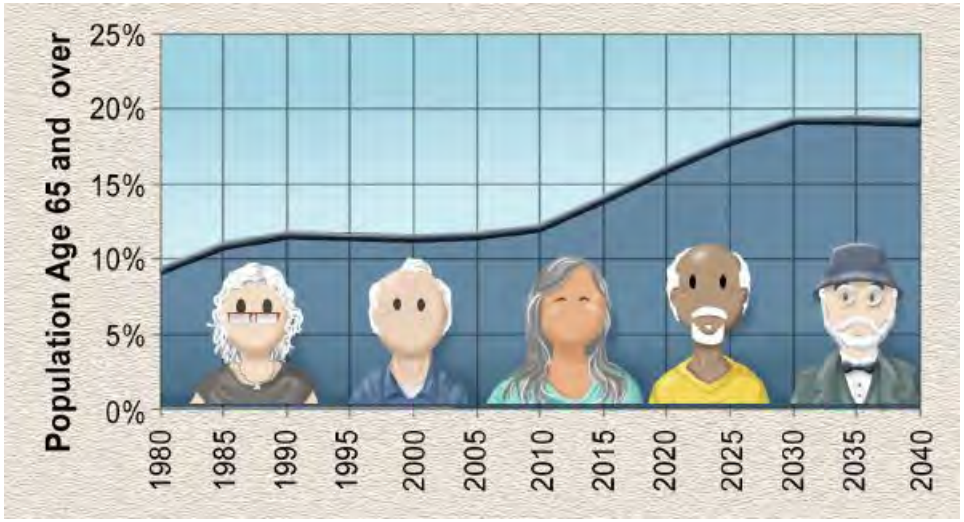
People want more housing choices that will meet their needs throughout their life. Rural, suburban, urban, small city, or town living opportunities should be among the choices available in coming decades. This will require providing more choice and access to housing for all ages and incomes in locations that offer people easy access to goods and services.

Challenges & Opportunities

Our region's wants and needs are changing. The share of the population age 65 and older is projected to grow from 12 percent today to 19 percent in 2035. Many young people are foregoing or delaying marriage and parenthood. New high school and college graduates are substituting smart phones for shiny cars and seeking urban areas instead of suburbs. We have around 108,000 housing units on the ground today. If our region continues to grow at the rate we have in the past, this will increase by around 52,000 units. This means a third of the homes in 2035 will have been built between now and then, providing a clear opportunity to change our current housing patterns.

While plenty of single-family housing exists in the region's suburban and rural areas, there is pent-up demand and significant opportunity for a full range of smaller housing types. These include multifamily buildings amid the urban centers of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, and Yelm, along the major transit corridors that connect them, and in the smaller communities of Bucoda, Rainier, Tenino, and Grand Mound. Major financial, regulatory, infrastructure, and perception barriers stand in the way of increasing housing density, diversity, and affordability amid these urban areas, as well as in neighborhoods with the potential to support more small-scale shops and businesses.

This Plan's Preferred Land-Use Scenario calls for "actively creating vibrant centers, corridors, and neighborhood centers while protecting rural residential lands, farmlands, prairies, and forest lands." This future imagines:



- City and town centers that support thriving business districts with a walkable, urban form;
- Neighborhoods close to urban centers and corridors supporting more access to goods, services, and housing choices to fit the needs of a changing population;
- Suburban single-family neighborhoods that provide housing choices for families and others who value quiet streets and private spaces; and,
- Rural areas that remain a mixture of homes, farms, forests, and natural areas with markedly lower densities of residential development than the urban areas.

This Plan, as well as the companion *Regional Housing Plan*, include a consistent series of goals and actions to address the challenges noted below. The goals and actions are essential to achieving the Preferred Land-Use Scenario and broader sustainability goals, as well as to address the specific challenges identified by the Sustainable Thurston Housing Panel:

- Permit Delays & Resistance to Change: In some areas, permit-approval processes will be difficult and time-consuming unless neighborhood- or area-level planning can answer questions up-front and create enough clarity about desired street and building design to overcome residents' resistance to change. **(Goal H-1)**
- Patchwork Policy: Development policy and support varies between jurisdictions, making it difficult for developers to build projects across the region. **(Goal H-1)**

- Center and Corridor Housing: We need more housing in centers and along — or close to — major corridors. These areas offer more transportation options such as walking, biking, and riding transit, and greater access to jobs, shopping, and services. **(Goal H-2)**
- Insufficient Incentives: We do not have sufficient incentives to encourage the development of a full range of housing choices, especially housing with safe and convenient walk, bike, and transit travel. Without incentives, the cost of infill and redevelopment can outweigh the revenue (in rents or sale prices), making new projects financially unfeasible. **(Goal H-2)**
- Development Fees: Jurisdictions collect development impact or mitigation fees to ease the fiscal impacts of growth on local government. The impacts of growth on public infrastructure and facilities can vary, however, resulting in an undue effect on shaping the size, type, and location of new housing. **(Goal H-2)**
- Affordable Housing Supply: The growing cost of housing in the region has generally outpaced income growth during the past two decades so low- and moderate-income households face difficulties accessing, affording, and keeping housing that meets their needs. **(Goal H-3)**
- Affordable Housing Funding: Federal austerity measures threaten to reduce foreclosure prevention assistance for financially distressed households and reduce funds for renter vouchers and HOME grants for building and rehabilitating affordable housing units. Private lenders are also tightening the availability of mortgage and housing acquisition/rehabilitation loans. **(Goal H-3)**
- Aging Infrastructure: Some communities lack or have antiquated sewer systems and substandard road, sidewalk, and stormwater infrastructure that needs replacement as the region grows. **(Goal H-4)**
- Land of Last Resort: New development in the region's urban centers and along or near corridors often depends on using economically and environmentally challenged infill parcels. For example, some are former industrial sites or are located along shorelines, landfills, and other environmentally sensitive areas. **(Goal H-4)**
- Service-Enriched Programs: The region needs more tailored programs that provide the social and other services needed to place and stabilize chronically homeless and other high-risk tenants. Zoning is also a significant barrier to locating such facilities near areas with transit, services, and other amenities. **(Goal H-5)**

- Low-Density Zoning: Many local communities favor zoning that maximizes lower-density housing over multifamily housing. This preference limits mixed-use development that offers multifamily units above or close to places to shop, work, and access transit. **(Goal H-6)**
- Barriers to Small Housing: Development costs, inadequate financing, code requirements, and neighborhood opposition provide barriers to expanding the stock of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and other microhousing — space-efficient housing that is generally more affordable and resource-efficient than single-family homes. **(Goal H-6)**
- Environmental Performance: Code regulations and limited home weatherization and energy retrofit incentives and funds curb improved environmental performance of homes. **(Goal H-7)**
- Energy Efficiency Appraisals: Building valuations do not often include energy efficiency savings, affecting the loan amount available to housing builders and buyers. **(Goal H-7)**

Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory dwelling units, or ADUs, are also called accessory apartments, second units, or granny flats. These additional living quarters on single-family lots offer an independent living space — with a kitchen and bathroom. They can be attached or detached from the main structure, built over the garage, in the back yard, or attached to the side of the original house. They offer a second living unit for relatives, caregivers, or rental income.

Goal H-1: Improve regulatory clarity and predictability to encourage urban infill and redevelopment.

Sustainability Outcomes

Meeting housing needs on less land takes the pressure off of rural lands, including farms, forests, and resource lands. Offering more housing close to services will cut car use and dependence, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce the volume of pollutants from brakes, tires, and exhaust in the air and water. Support for more types of housing — especially multifamily — will build with collaborative neighborhood and activity center planning. Such strategies create clarity about street and building design outcomes before development is proposed. This is more efficient for everyone involved and attracts investors because of the clarity and predictability.

By collaborating with private-sector housing specialists and other jurisdictions, the region's communities could reduce the patchwork of development policy and clear the way for an adequate supply of both resource-efficient and affordable housing to meet the needs of residents in coming decades.

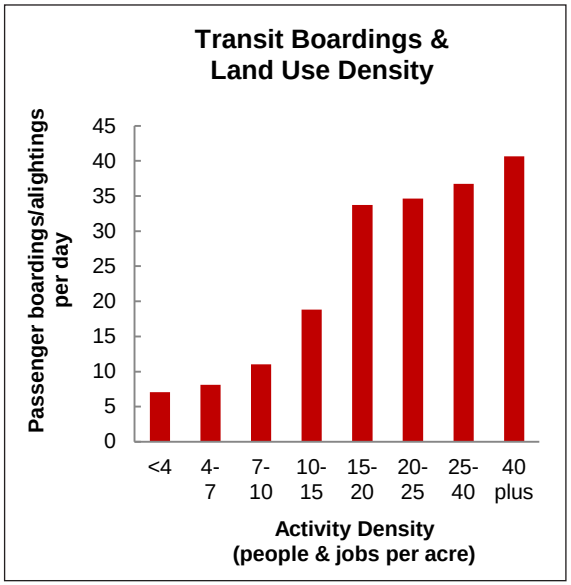
Goal H-2: Increase housing amid urban corridors and centers to meet the needs of a changing population.

Sustainability Outcomes

Building housing units along and close to major arterials encouranges transit use and the viability of frequent transit service.

Police and fire departments can serve centrally located homes and buildings more quickly and economically. Per-household costs decrease with compact development when compared with low-density suburban and rural development.

More housing types in locations offering less car dependence strengthens household and community economics.



Transit (bus) boardings on the Intercity Transit network increase with land-use density. The more people who live or work near a transit line, the more efficient the transit service.

About 80 cents of every dollar spent on gas pays for oil production and refining — money that leaves our local economy.

Goal H-3: Provide sufficient housing for low- and moderate-income households within each jurisdiction.

Sustainability Outcomes

Locations that offer a range of housing types with easy access to goods and services near employment centers and transit can offer the affordability and accessibility that meets the needs of all ages and incomes.

Weatherizing homes that are located near transit and are affordable for low- and moderate-income households helps meet multiple economic, social, and environmental sustainability goals.

Goal H-4: Maximize opportunity to redevelop land in priority areas by investing in infrastructure and environmental remediation.

Sustainability Outcomes

Cleaning and redeveloping contaminated urban infill sites can improve human health, create jobs, and increase local tax revenues. This can also encourage creation of investment-ready places that attract development to city and town areas already developed and slow development outside of the urban activity centers on undeveloped land. Public investment in housing and infrastructure challenges available funding sources but will reap economic, social, and environmental returns on investment worth many times their value.

Housing Affordability

Providing sufficient housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households is a key challenge for the region's cities and towns. Today, 38 percent of Thurston County's households earn less than 80 percent of the county's median income ($60,621 in 2011). These are referred to as "moderate-income" households, while "low-income" households earn less than 50 percent of the county's median income. Of these low- and moderate-income households — 64 percent report that they are cost-burdened, or pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Breaking it down further — a third of households earning less than 80 percent of median income report that they are severely cost-burdened, or pay more than half of their income on housing.

Redevelopment offers the oppurtunity to add stormwater infrastructure (where lacking), to capture rain runoff from impervious pavement and treat it before it returns to groundwater, streams, or Puget Sound. It is also an opportunity to improve a street's feel and function. Landscaping is a comparatively inexpensive way of enhancing shading and aesthetic appeal that increases walkability.

Goal H-5: Provide sufficient service-enriched housing for homeless and high-risk populations.

Sustainability Outcomes

A full range of housing amid urban corridors, centers, and other close-in areas means that people can meet some daily needs without a private automobile. This supports active transportation, improves health outcomes, and increases equitable access to opportunity — no matter a person's economic status. Housing for at-risk populations should include — or have ready access to — social services.

Goal H-6: Encourage housing density and diversity in neighborhoods to add vibrancy and increase equitable access to opportunity.

Sustainability Outcomes

Multifamily housing is generally cheaper to rent/buy, heat, and maintain. Mixing housing types within neighborhoods enables people of a range of all incomes, ages, and abilities to interact and access opportunities equitably. Increasing neighborhood density also provides enough customers to support small-scale businesses (cafes, bakeries, dry cleaners) and encourages walking in neighborhoods.

Well-designed accessory dwelling units and other small housing types (duplex, triplex, townhouses, mansion apartments) can add "gentle" density that creates a sufficient customer base to support public transit and neighborhood-scale businesses. Accessory dwelling units can also serve as an income source for homeowners/landlords, and an affordable and accessible housing option for elders, singles, and others who live on a limited budget.

Accessory dwelling unit located along an alley in West Olympia.

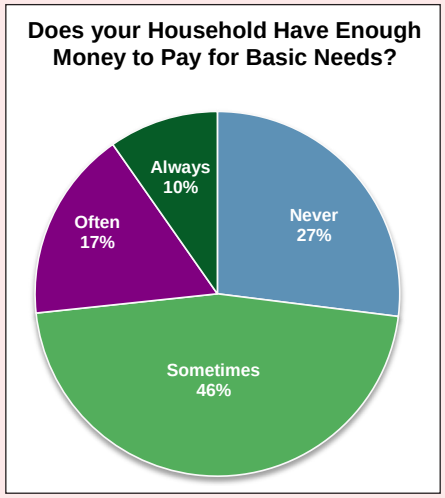
Goal H-7: Encourage the construction, weatherization, and operation of homes to boost energy efficiency.

Sustainability Outcomes

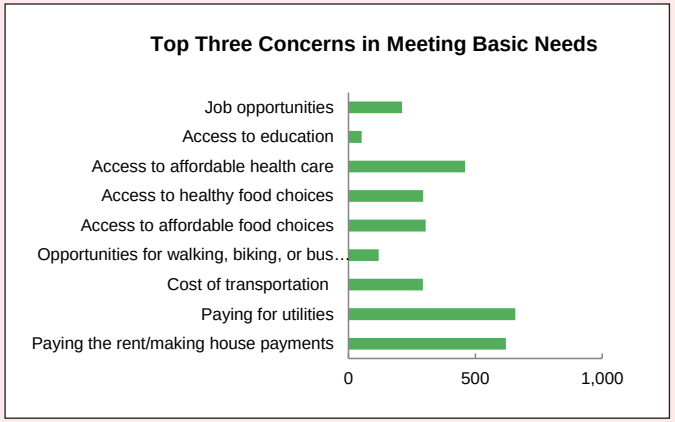
Many of the region's older — and, often, most affordable — homes have poorly insulated walls, windows, and doors, and inefficient heating and ventilation equipment. A household can shrink its electricity bill and carbon footprint by using energy more wisely and eliminating waste.

Sustainable Thurston "Basic Needs" Survey

A "Basic Needs" survey was distributed by TRPC partners including the Thurston County Housing Authority, Community Action Council, Family Support Center, and Thurston County Food Bank. Surveys were available in English and Spanish. This survey reached a demographic that traditionally does not participate in planning processes. Over 1,000 surveys were returned. A full summary of survey results is available at www.sustainablethurston.org.



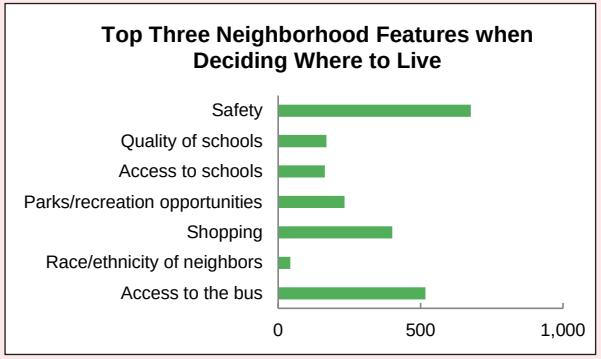
The survey was distributed through community organizations to reach households that were likely to have trouble meeting their daily needs. This allowed the Sustainable Thurston team to hear from people who do not traditionally participate in planning processes.



Asked about their top three concerns in meeting daily needs - paying for utilities, paying for housing, and access to affordable health care were at the top of the list. This emphasizes the need for focusing on energy efficiency and water conservation to lower utility bills.

Other figures — of the people that responded:

- 72 percent have an annual household income under $15,000. Only 6 percent of households countywide fall into that income category.
- 75 percent ride the bus
- 46 percent don't own a car
- 53 percent live in homes without energy efficient features (of respondees that know if their homes have had energy efficient upgrades).
- 53 percent cannot afford to heat their home sufficiently in the winter
- 88 percent sometimes, often, or always do not have enough money to buy food
- 55 percent report that buying organic or local food is moderately to very important; but only 14 percent often or always are willing to pay more to buy organic or locally grown food.



After safety, access to the bus and shopping were important neighborhood features for deciding where to live. This underscores the need to provide a range of housing choices in areas with frequent transit service and in close proximity to shopping and services.

The Chehalis Western Trail, a former rail line, connects Lacey and Olympia.

Health & Human Services

Residents of the Thurston Region envision a healthier community, where health and human services supports, and is supported by, a vital economy, health-promoting environments, and good social systems. Working together, jurisdictions can create vital and resilient communities — with more healthy choices for physical activity, clean air and water, nutritious food, and opportunities to find needed care for physical or behavioral problems.

Challenges & Opportunities

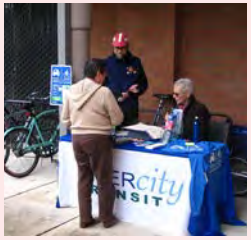
The health of our community's residents depends on much more than clinical health care or the varied services provided by the health providers. Among the other key factors in health outcomes are the physical environment, behavior, education, and income. Connections between health, housing, economics, environment, and food systems are vital to the ongoing sustainability of our community. Investment in health and human services networks and programs will avoid costs to law enforcement and emergency services, jails, and health care.

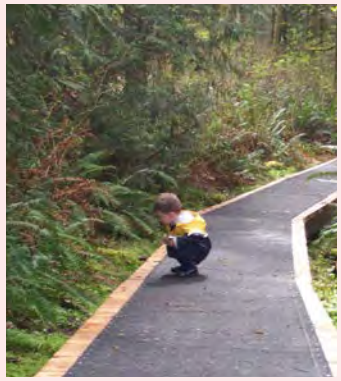
The many health and human services providers in our community do great work and contribute to the betterment and health of the Thurston Region. There are also many examples of cross-sector collaboration focused on addressing the health of our community, such as Safe Routes to School projects, workplace wellness efforts, and coalitions focused on health improvement for particular groups (Thurston Council for Children and Youth, Thurston Coalition for Women's Health). Providers of health and human services should continue to collaborate among themselves and with partners outside of the health arena to improve our community's built environment and mental, physical, and oral health, and to decrease problems associated with chemical dependency.

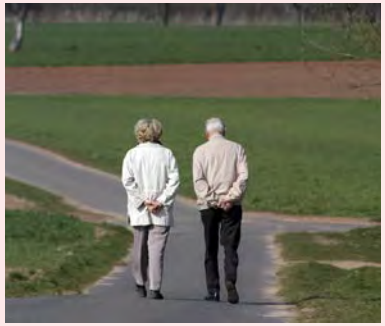
Sustainability Activities Already Underway

Helping the Thurston Region Thrive

Thurston Thrives is the Thurston County Board of Health's initiative to improve the health of residents around the region through collaborative partnerships and community engagement to address key factors in community health outcomes. The Sustainable Thurston Health & Human Services white paper and vision/strategies recognized the importance of social determinants of health, such as how our community is built and what economic opportunities it provides. The paper identified the need for a process to create an action agenda, with shared measurement and aligned activities to ensure that our community moves together toward better health. In 2013, the Board of Health, with the assistance of the Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department, began engaging community leaders from business, education, local government, neighborhoods, medical care organizations, and local nonprofits and social groups to focus on the initiative. They used the white papers and other Sustainable Thurston materials to kick off these efforts. The strategy development and action planning of Thurston Thrives are being carried out by nine action teams, forming in 2013, whose members include the implementing partners for efforts on the health objectives pertaining to: 1) water, air, disease carriers, and the physical environment; 2) food systems; 3) housing; 4) education; 5) economy and income; 6) community design; 7) youth development and resilience; 8) clinical prevention, medical and behavioral treatment; and, 9) community resilience. The Board of Health and a new community advisory council will consider each team's recommendations and shape a final action agenda. To learn more, visit www.ThurstonThrives.org.

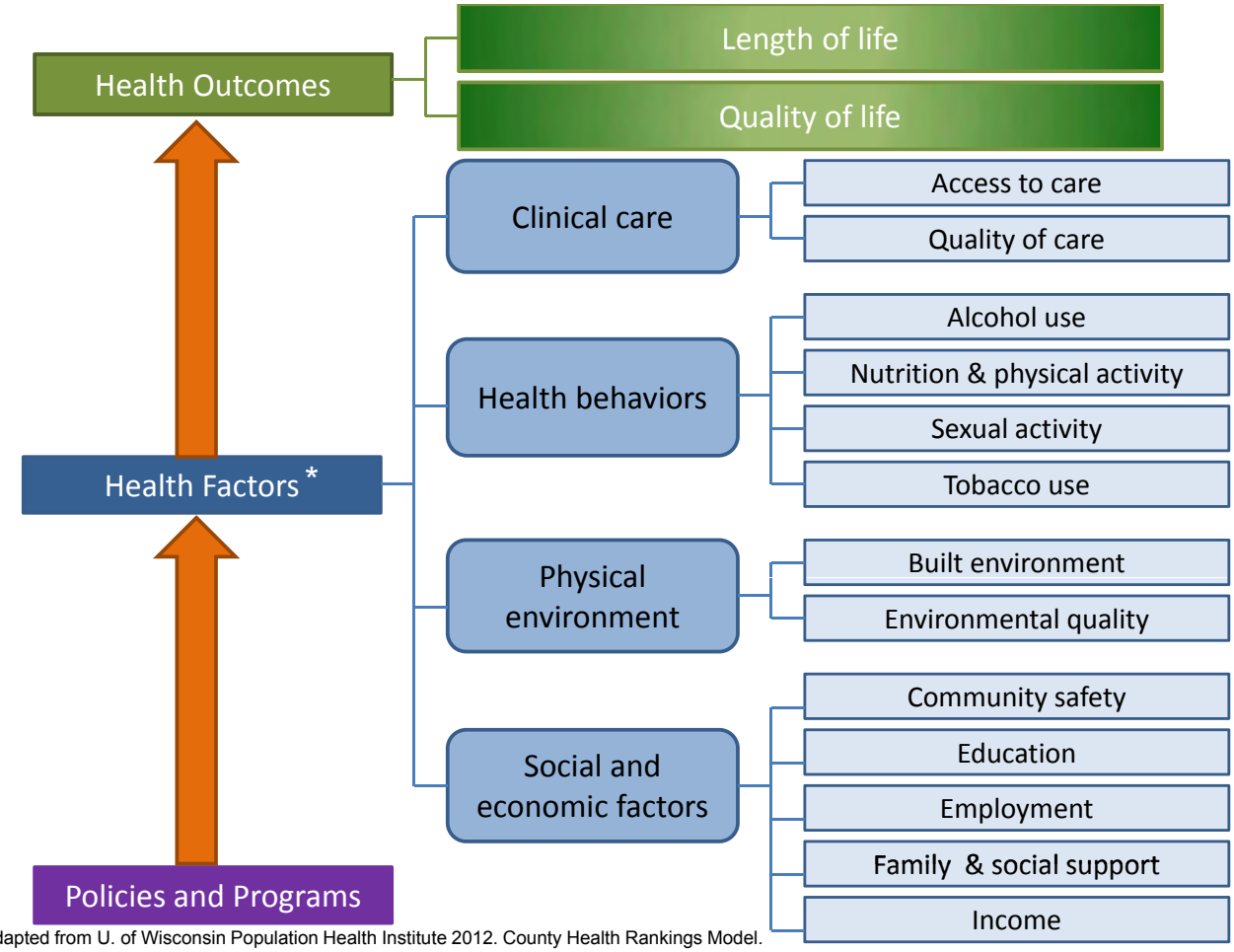






Our transportation and land-use patterns shape our health outcomes (see County Health Rankings model). Thurston County ranks 24th out of Washington's 39 counties in terms of physical environment, which factors in air pollution, recreational facilities access, drinking water safety, and fresh food availability (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin analysis). Half of the region's restaurants are fast-food eateries — reflecting our reliance on automobiles to access jobs, goods, and services and our fast-paced lives that leave little time for family meals at home.

Our aging population will place a strain on both our health system and our emergency services system. As we age, we become more dependent on health and emergency services such as the advanced life support system, which supplies emergency services. Providing opportunities for seniors to live near existing hospitals and medical clinics will create efficiencies in providing emergency and health services. Equally important, enhancing opportunities for seniors to age in place - whether their existing home or cummunity - will help them remain active and connected to friends and neighbors.

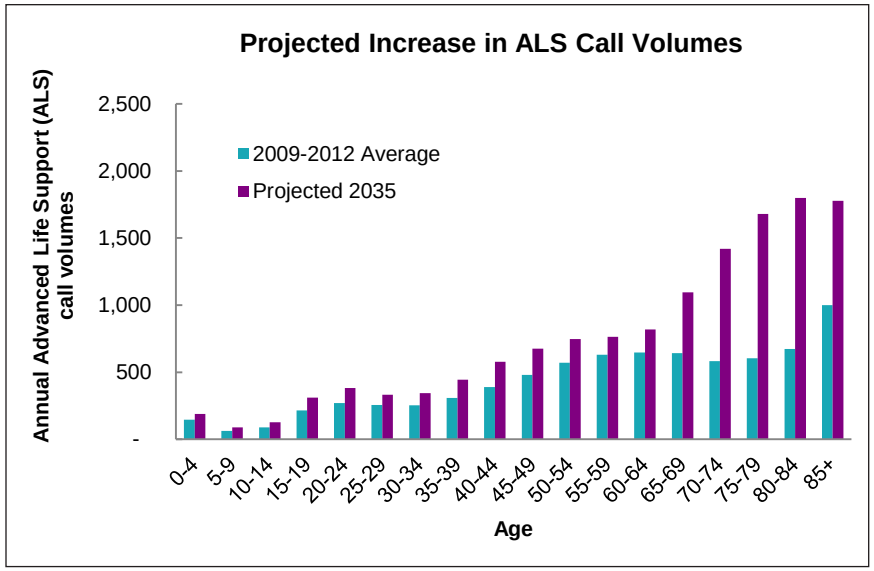


Adapted from U. of Wisconsin Population Health Institute 2012. County Health Rankings Model.

The County Health Rankings model illustrates factors that influence our health.

Challenges the Thurston Region faces include (related goals in parentheses):

- Insufficient Provider Network: The region lacks sufficient health care providers (for mental health, primary care, and treatment for chemical dependency), limiting our ability to care for those with the greatest risks of disease and disability. (Goal HHS-1)
- Aging Population: While there are programs to support the health of people of all ages, our community must advance a stronger focus on older people because they are an increasing share of our population. (Goal HHS-1)
- Rural-Urban Divide: Rural areas face different challenges than urban ones when it comes to health. (Goal HHS-1)
- Tobacco Use: Thurston County has one of the highest tobacco use rates among adults and youth in Washington State. (Goal HHS-2)
- Development Patterns: Auto-dependent community patterns inhibit active transportation and promote sedentary lifestyles that contribute to increasing rates of obesity and other chronic health conditions. (Goal HHS-2)
- Obesity: Many of our children and adults are overweight and at risk for developing chronic diseases. (Goal HHS-2)
- Prevention: An increased focus on prevention will improve health and decrease costs for service delivery in health and human services. (Goal HHS-2)



With our aging population, we are expecting a large increase in emergency service call volumes. Providing opportunities for seniors to live close to existing medical and emergency centers will make providing service more efficient.

Achieving the following goals, and taking the actions outlined at the end of the chapter, will improve community health and provision of human services.

Goal HHS-1: Provide sufficient health and human services for all county residents.

Sustainability Outcomes

Maintaining the health of local residents means increased readiness to learn and less time lost from work. Preventative actions and programs can reduce health care costs and increase productivity.

Goal HHS-2: Reduce the incidence of preventable disease.

Sustainability Outcomes

Changing to more compact patterns of development, with a mix of close-by goods and services, results in more active transportation (walk, bike, transit) and alternative transportation (carpooling and vanpooling). Such development patterns, ultimately decrease car dependence, and increase physical activity. Decreasing rates of obesity are vital to the economic and physical health of households and communities.

Sustainability Activities Already Underway

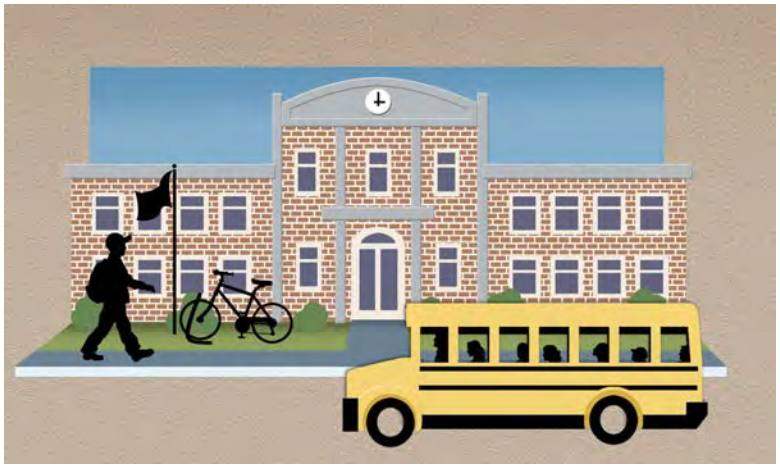
Supporting Strategic Social Service Planning and Funding

A few years ago, forward-thinking elected officials contemplated more strategic ways to manage scarce social service resources. Officials envisioned a single governing entity and a streamlined approach for project solicitations and contracting — operating under a comprehensive county-wide regional plan.

Since early 2012, TRPC has facilitated this Health & Human Services Planning group. The elected officials, city managers, and staff members considered the requirements and focus of each funding source, as well as past practices and potential collaborative efforts. By the end of 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development blessed a county Community Development Block Grant entitlement program, and the jurisdictions signed interlocal agreements to move the collaborative-planning effort forward.

School children who attend Michael T. Simmons Elementary School in Tumwater participate in the Walk & Roll program that encourages active transportation.

Schools & Transportation



Residents of the Thurston Region want schools that function as centers for the surrounding neighborhoods and communities and that are easily accessible for children and others by foot, bike, or bus.

Challenges & Opportunities

Sprawling school grounds and large-lot neighborhood designs that lack street connections discourage walking and increase vehicle trips to and around the neighborhood and school. The cost to school and household budgets for drive-only access is a growing problem, as is the lack of exercise that results in youth prone to health problems throughout life and high health care costs.

Some of the effects of this include the following national trends[1]:

- Within the span of one generation, the percentage of children walking or bicycling to school has dropped precipitously, from approximately 50 percent in 1969 to just 13 percent in 2009;
- In 2009, U.S. families drove 30 billion miles and made 6.5 billion vehicle trips to take their children to and from schools, representing 10-14 percent of traffic on the road during the morning commute;
- Over the past 40 years, rates of obesity have soared among children of all ages in the United States, and approximately 25 million children and adolescents — more than 33 percent — are now overweight or obese or at risk of becoming so;
- Kids are less active today. Twenty three percent get no free time physical activity at all;

- A 5 percent increase in a neighborhood's "walkability" reduces vehicle miles traveled by 6 percent; and,
- Returning to 1969 levels of walking and bicycling to school in the U.S. would save 3.2 billion vehicle miles, 1.5 million tons of carbon dioxide, and 89,000 tons of other pollutants — equal to keeping more than 250,000 cars off the road for a year.

In coming years, we can build schools and neighborhoods that encourage walkability — with sidewalks, bike lanes, safe street crossings, inviting school entryways, and enough residential density to make those investments worthwhile. Careful location and design of schools will offer safe and efficient access for students, as well as for surrounding residents who use the facility as a neighborhood center and recreation site. Coordination and cooperation by school districts, jurisdictions and residents will be needed to plan and build schools in a way that makes active travel to schools a central component of a healthy, active school community and neighborhood.

Goals and actions that follow at the end of the chapter are designed to address these specific challenges:

- School Buses: Dependence on school buses drives up costs for school districts. Students living too far away from school rely on the school bus or family automobiles to transport them to school. **(Goal S-1)**
- School Siting: Currently consideration of school siting decisions does not take into account long-term transportation costs to households or community health. **(Goal S-1)**
- Inefficient Land Use: Large-acreage school sites in low-density neighborhoods use excessive land and discourage active transportation. Residents and schools that are not close together may not have safe or inviting walk or bike routes and the more sprawling pattern increases cost to build the routes. **(Goal S-1)**
- Coordination & Collaboration: Creative thinking about co-location of schools with other facilities is difficult without close collaboration on capital facility plans among jurisdictions and school districts or cooperation on funding mechanisms and grant applications. **(Goal S-2)**
- Density Difficulties: It is difficult to add housing to existing neighborhoods. Increasing density could maximize the investment already made in existing schools, streets, and sidewalks. **(Goal S-2)**
- Financial Constraints — School Sites and Transportation: Large school site parcels in close-in urban areas are difficult to find and expensive for schools to purchase, which continues to push new schools to the urban fringe where driving is the only feasible travel option. Rural housing development increases the cost of transportation to school for school districts and households. **(Goal S-2)**

- School Design and Location: The location and design of some schools and the lack of safe walk and bicycle infrastructure discourage active transportation. **(Goal S-3)**

Goal S-1: Encourage safe and active school transportation to improve community health, economic, and environmental outcomes.

Sustainability Outcomes

Schools sited within neighborhoods with easy and safe walk and bike access to recreation and sociability support health and well-being. The goal is reduction of short- and long-term transportation and health costs to the community, including school districts and households. Neighborhood schools with good connections provide a destination and an activity center — an asset for the entire neighborhood.

Goal S-2: Improve community coordination to create schools that use land, tax dollars, and other resources efficiently.

Sustainability Outcomes

Close coordination among school district and jurisdiction planners and leaders will maximize efficient use of these valuable public assets. Such collaboration could result in creative thinking about locations of schools, siting to encourage safe walk and bike access, form that uses as little land as possible, co-location of parks, or other community services at schools, reduction of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, and shared maintenance agreements. Multistory school buildings use less energy to heat and cool.

Goal S-3: Improve infrastructure around schools that results in safe pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access.

Sustainability Outcomes

Schools sited within neighborhoods offer a walkable destination if they have good street and path connections and safe sidewalk and bike routes. Such schools offer opportunity for lower household and school district transportation costs, healthier student and neighborhood residents, and chances for students to learn and practice safe travel and independence skills.

Sustainability Activities Already Underway

Supporting Healthy Kids and Safe Streets

"Why can't kids walk and bike to school?" Thurston Region community members asked this question at a forum about health and how neighborhood design discourages or encourages walking and biking. A series of small grants, the support of community leaders, and a partnership between TRPC, Intercity Transit, municipalities, school districts, and Safe Kids Thurston County led to development of the Healthy Kids – Safe Streets Action Plan. The goal is to build a generation of healthy and safe walkers, bicycle and bus riders, reinforce good traffic safety skills, and promote regular physical activity so students stay healthy and ready to learn.

A "Walk & Roll" program in several schools offers education and encouragement for students and their families to walk, bike, or take the bus to school. Walk route maps identify the safest routes and include safety tips. Partners work with schools to design programs that are fun and that reinforce the health and safety benefits. Several of the schools include special days when students, families, teachers, the principal, and a police escort meet about a half-mile from school and walk together. In addition, a volunteer-led "Bike Partners" program teaches bike maintenance and safety skills and refurbished bikes to students who need them.

An additional goal of the plan is to form a closer relationship between the school district and jurisdiction planners. The challenge is sustaining collaboration on the siting and design of schools and prioritizing the development of safe walk and bike networks around schools.

Local Food Systems

Residents of the Thurston Region envision a thriving, just, and inclusive local food system that enhances the health of people, diverse communities, economies, and environments.

Challenges & Opportunities

A sustainable local food system — just like access to housing, schools, and transportation — affects social, environmental, and economic elements of community health by:

- Supporting a stable base of family farms that are less chemical- and energy-intensive, emphasizing local outputs, and improving working and living conditions for farm labor;
- Fostering a business environment where food, community food enterprises and agriculture-related businesses promote local food whenever possible, create jobs, circulate financial capital within the community, and contribute to diversifying our community's economic development;
- Developing marketing and processing practices that create more direct and beneficial links between producers and consumers, reducing resources needed to move food;
- Improving access to fresh foods and educating on all aspects of food;
- Reducing waste through education about efficient and safe home and institutional meal planning, purchasing and storing, and supporting efforts that use food as food as long as safely possible — and when food becomes waste, recovering and composting it at the home and industrial levels; and,

- Managing costs and eliminating food insecurity with a coordinated system of service delivery, and improving access by all community members to culturally appropriate, adequate, healthy, and affordable food.

Goals and actions that follow at the end of the chapter address the following challenges:

- To meet its vision, the community needs a group focusing on local food systems, collecting data, and creating a formal action plan. The Thurston Food System Council is beginning to coordinate these efforts. **(Goal F-1)**
- Traditional agriculture is a major contributor to greenhouse gases and other pollutants. **(Goal F-2)**
- Participants in the local food system, such as farmers and producers, have difficulty making a living wage, identifying markets for their products, or finding economical avenues for marketing and delivery. The region also lacks commercial kitchens and food-processing facilities that the public can access for personal or business use. **(Goal F-2)**
- Some residents face transportation and economic challenges. A growing number of community members are facing hunger and food insecurity. **(Goal F-3)**
- Many people don't know where to purchase and how to prepare local foods. **(Goal F-4)**

This plan makes supporting local food systems a priority. The goal is to increase community resilience, health, and economic prosperity. As a first step, the region needs to develop local food systems plans.

Goal F-1: Coordinate local food planning efforts to create a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable regional system.

Sustainability Outcomes

A robust local food system increases community health, resilience and prosperity. Fresh, local and preserved food travels a short distance from farm to table. Food and food production was identified as one of the regional economic clusters with potential for increasing local employment, growing, processing and producing more food products locally, and creating an opportunity to recirculate and reinvest revenue collected from local food businesses. A local food system that offers fresh food and local food production will help with community prosperity and resiliency.

Goal F-2: Enhance the economic viability of the local food system.

Sustainability Outcomes

Opportunities abound for exploring alternative energy sources for growing, processing, distributing, and refining food processes that will decrease the cost of production and transport, making more efficient use of existing energy sources. Some products of the food system can also generate energy — for example, using waste products and biofuels.

Disconnect

Forty percent of people in the Thurston Region feel it is important to have a grocery store within walking distance; only 13 percent live within a half-mile of a grocery store.

Source: Sustainable Thurston Survey and TRPC data program.

Goal F-3: Ensure universal access to secure, nutritious, and affordable food in the Thurston Region.

Sustainability Outcomes

Housing with adequate food storage, especially in low-income housing, enables people to take advantage of bulk purchasing and seasonal availability of larger quantities of food from emergency food providers.

Having enough accessible/affordable, safe, nutritious foods for residents of the Thurston Region is a major factor in health. Securing sufficient land in the Thurston Region for food production creates jobs, decreases farm-to-table travel time, cost and greenhouse gas emissions, and contributes to a resilient food system.

Goal F-4: Enhance public education and outreach related to the local food system.

Sustainability Outcomes

Ready access to healthy food, the skills to use it, and understanding the value of supporting local producers increases the economic and personal health and well-being of the region.

Sustainability Activities Already Underway

Breaking Bread and Working Together

In the Thurston Region, people are talking about local food systems. We're seeing more urban gardening, school gardens, more farmers' markets and farm stands, more grocery stores featuring local foods, and more interest in where our food comes from. We are also experiencing growing needs for emergency food. The regional food bank's lines grow, especially with those newly unemployed. The demand for school backpack programs and free and reduced lunches rises and the burgeoning senior population struggles to make their fixed incomes stretch in response to rising food costs.

With all of the interest and need, this region is talking, planning, and taking action. Advocacy groups and nonprofits collaborate with local and regional governments to address issues and take advantage of opportunities. The Local Food Systems Panel — part of the broader Sustainable Thurston project spearheaded by TRPC — partnered with Sustainable South Sound to host a well-attended food summit in 2012. The partners collected data, envisioned the future, and agreed on planning action steps. The partners also worked together to form the Thurston Food Systems Council. At this table, organizations such as Sustainable South Sound, Slow Food, the Farm Bureau, TRPC, and Washington State University are working together to create "Local Food Systems 101" presentations for regional policymakers and considering ways to support local farmers and offer fresh food access to all incomes. The partners may not always agree on the urgency of the problem or the specific strategies to move forward, but they stay at the table — talking, planning, and eating together.

Transportation Systems

Residents of the Thurston Region want to satisfy the diverse transportation needs of people today without diminishing opportunities for tomorrow's residents. People expect an appropriate mix of transportation facilities and services that provide reasonable travel options, depending on where they live.

Challenges & Opportunities

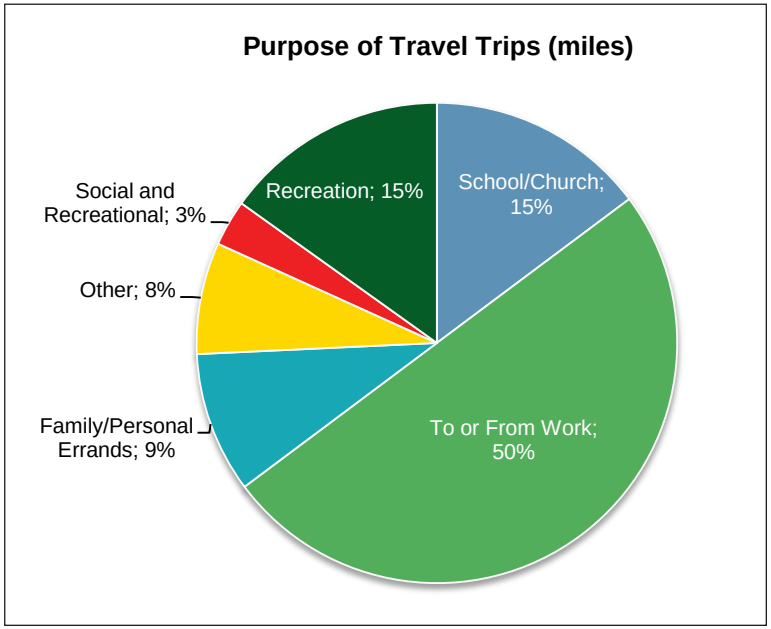
Our transportation network knits our region together and provides access to and from our communities and outlying regions. This essential public infrastructure supports community access to basic needs and services, economic vitality, and has large implications for our fiscal and environmental health.

Despite many successes in achieving the region's shared transportation vision, several challenges still must be addressed:

- How will we pay for what we need and want?
  We have more than 2,100 miles of roads in the Thurston Region's cities, towns, and rural areas. It costs between $250,000 to $500,000 dollars per mile to resurface one lane of roadway every 10 to 15 years. Funding for transit, new sidewalks, and maintaining street and landscape areas is already a challenge, yet residents want and expect increased services and amenities. Despite interest in some sort of high-capacity transit option (such as bus rapid transit) with links to outlying regions, the regions' low population and low-density land-use patterns will not support this type of transit investment for decades. In addition, despite growing demand for travel between Thurston and Pierce counties — especially to and from Joint Base Lewis-McChord — there are few options for increasing capacity during the next 20 years.

- How will we improve the efficiency of our transportation system and reduce our impacts on the natural environment?

  Our community has set a target to reduce vehicle miles traveled. Focused growth in city and town activity centers, transit corridors and urban areas, with much less growth in rural areas, will be critical, as will the following transportation strategies:
  - Aggressively encourage employees and employers to participate in the state Commute Trip Reduction Program;
  - Manage parking supply — including paying for parking (essential in activity centers with safe walk, bike, transit opportunities); and limit large expanses of surface parking that erode walkability and vitality;
  - Use pricing mechanisms such as toll roads with higher fees during peak hours;
  - Increase access to transit in locations with enough density, destinations, and design to support use;
  - Connect streets and trails to provide multiple safe travel routes and shorter distances for all travel modes;
  - Encourage carpools, vanpools, transit, and other commute alternatives;
  - Increase opportunities to work from home; and,
  - Increase opportunities for home businesses.



We travel for a reason. Almost half of our travel trips are to and from work, which is why there is focus on reducing the number and length of commute trips. Source: 2009 National Household Travel Survey.

- How will we move freight in and out of our community to support our regional economy?
  As our business districts and downtowns transition to a more walkable urban form, we need to address the inherent conflicts between moving freight in large vehicles and a more compact urban form. We must also address existing challenges relating to our railroad infrastructure.

- How do we better align our transportation and land-use plans and investments?
  Challenges include the large amounts of land used for surface parking that chills the ability to get the densities and walkable design that supports transit. It is difficult to plan future land use without considering the effects on the transportation network, and it is difficult to plan a transportation network without a land-use plan in place.

Goals and actions that follow at the end of the chapter are designed to address the following challenges:

- Jurisdictions struggle to pay for maintenance and upkeep of the existing transportation system. **(Goal T-1)**
- Future fuel price volatility will negatively impact municipal, transit, school district, and household budgets, cutting into their ability to pay for other essential services and needs. **(Goal T-1)**
- Inter-regional express transit service between Thurston and Pierce counties improves Interstate 5 (I-5) mobility but is paid for with Thurston County tax revenues, limiting funds available for expanding local transit service. **(Goal T-1)**
- Historically, rural areas have not supported tax increases to provide or increase public transportation services. **(Goal T-1)**
- Transportation accounts for 44 percent of our region's greenhouse gas emissions. **(Goal T-2)**
- Rural residents drive more miles per capita than urban-area residents, but the nature of rural travel makes riding transit, walking, and biking impractical. **(Goal T-2)**
- Changing demographics will increase the demand for rural transit options as local population ages. Traditional fixed-route service such as that found in the region's urban core is not a workable model in rural areas and small cities. **(Goal T-2)**
- Demand for I-5 travel between Thurston and Pierce counties during peak travel times exceeds highway capacity. Widening I-5 is unlikely to happen within the next 20 years. **(Goal T-2)**
- More than 152,000 vehicles travel through Joint Base Lewis-McChord gates every day, more than 80 percent using I-5. Seventy percent of personnel live off base. More than 30 percent of these people live in the Thurston Region. Use of

transportation demand management measures to reduce single-occupancy trips is limited due to the high share of active-duty personnel and requirements of base security. **(Goal T-2)**

- Freight access needs to be an integral consideration for all commercial areas, but especially in city centers that have constraints on space, turning radius, and access points. **(Goal T-3)**
- Not all parts of the metropolitan area can now, or will — in the foreseeable future — be able to support fixed-route bus service, even though demand for the service is growing. It is difficult for developers, employers, and residents to predict when or if service will arrive. **(Goal T-4)**
- Despite increasing interest in some sort of high-capacity transit option in urban Thurston County, the region's low population and predominately suburban land-use patterns will not support this type of transit investment for decades. **(Goal T-4)**

Goal T-1: Ensure adequate funding for maintaining and improving an efficient multimodal transportation system that efficiently moves people and goods.

Sustainability Outcomes

The Thurston Region's sustainable economy will rely on a well-maintained transportation infrastructure. Efficiency is an essential component of sustainability as budgets tighten. The goal is to maximize use of the transportation network already in place. The Preferred Land-Use Scenario reduces the need to expand miles of road, limiting the jurisdiction's responsibility to build and maintain additional lane miles.

A multimodal transportation system includes walk, bike, bus, carpool, vanpool, telework, car, truck, and rail transportation systems. To be used efficiently it should be supported by well-designed, denser activity centers, urban corridor nodes of activity, and some additional commercial destinations within neighborhoods. Such improvements will increase travel options, decrease per capita vehicle miles traveled, create the types of places our community envisions, and improve health and access to goods and services.

Goal T-2: Reduce transportation congestion and environmental impacts.

Sustainability Outcomes

Reducing transportation congestion, and meeting regional goals for reducing vehicle miles traveled, will lead to lower greenhouse gas emissions, less car dependence, more active travel by walk and bike modes, and more transit, carpool, vanpool travel. Fewer miles traveled results in less pollution from brakes, tires, and exhaust and less new road construction — saving huge development and maintenance costs over time.

Goal T-3: Consider freight mobility needs in local and regional planning.

Sustainability Outcomes

A sustainable economy requires efficient and predictable freight movement. When we include the needs of freight to and through our region as part of transportation and land-use planning, we can reduce or eliminate conflicts within existing and future freight corridors.

Goal T-4: Integrate transportation considerations into land-use decisions, and vice versa.

Sustainability Outcomes

Achieving the Plan's Preferred Land-Use Scenario requires significant land-use changes and infrastructure investments for city, town, and neighborhood places to emerge as envisioned over time. These places reduce the need to drive by enabling shorter vehicle trip distances or making alternatives to driving more practical options.

Economic, personal, and community health and prosperity will benefit as we take action on land-use and transportation goals. Less car dependence means local "gas" dollars could be available for other goods, activities, and services in the region. More active travel (walk, bike) also improves health and reduces health care costs.

The following table includes Opportunities and Choices goals and actions, as well as the timeline, lead, and partners for each action. Timeline definitions are as follows: Underway, Short (1-3 yrs); Medium (3-10 yrs); Long (10-20 yrs). See Appendix for lead and partner acronyms and explanations.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Housing				
GOAL H-1	Improve regulatory clarity and predictability to encourage urban infill and redevelopment.			
Action H-1.1	Conduct neighborhood area planning. Involve the neighborhood in the process, answer questions up front, and encourage sharing of ideas and information with the goal of creating clarity and predictability about outcomes. Processes include discussions about: density and design, showing how to integrate additional housing to achieve desired vision and goals; and, using form-based codes or other tools that may streamline the permit process by creating more certainty about outcomes that may reduce opposition and costly delays.	Underway	Cities/towns; County	Neighborhoods; Civic groups
Action H-1.2	Make sure that housing as envisioned in different areas is feasible to finance and build. Do this by commissioning pro forma-type analyses as development code is updated.	Short	Cities/towns; County	Developers; Finance
Action H-1.3	Share green building design and construction best practices; be receptive to new building technologies and practices, and support Washington State Building Code Council amendments to the state building code that support market adoption of such technologies and practices.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	State; Developers; Nonprofits; PSE
Action H-1.4	Offer financial incentives for reducing environmental impacts. Engage landlords, realtors, and other community stakeholders, to enable anyone, anywhere to live in a healthy, energy- and water-efficient home. Create incentives for stormwater retrofits in existing neighborhoods, disconnect downspouts to allow for infiltration, add rain gardens, rain water harvesting, porous patios and driveways, etc.	Underway	Cities/towns; County	Finance; Developers; Nonprofits; PSE
Action H-1.5	Create a local or regional standing committee, composed of public- and private-sector representatives, tasked with maximizing collaboration and cooperation toward achieving shared housing goals.	Underway	TRPC	Cities/towns; County; Developers; Finance; Nonprofits

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL H-2	Increase housing amid urban corridors and centers to meet the needs of a changing population.			
Action H-2.1	Review regulations that stymie or prevent housing development near or within urban corridors and centers. Offer more opportunities for young, aging, and single populations to meet housing needs, especially in centers and transit corridor areas where there will be a choice for a less car-dependent lifestyle. For example, cities could use zoning to cluster senior care facilities near corridors and medical facilities to provide more efficient delivery of medical services.	Short	Cities/towns; County	Developers; Neighborhoods; IT
Action H-2.2	Remove barriers or "right-size" regulations to achieve goals. Regulatory barriers include: parking requirements, setbacks, building height limits, and barriers to building green or retrofitting existing housing.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	Developers; Neighborhoods; PSE
Action H-2.3	Identify priority areas ripe for housing development that will meet multiple goals. These include areas that offer more transportation choices, such as urban corridors. Focusing housing and jobs may eventually achieve the density needed to support long-range goals for higher-capacity transportation such as bus rapid transit. Increased housing density is also needed to create the "places" envisioned in the Plan, such as vibrant urban centers and corridors, or to support neighborhood activity hubs. Support developments that meet these objectives. Reduce review and approval times and consider providing infrastructure to support this type of development. Expect neighborhood opposition and plan for it.	Short	Cities/towns	IT
Action H-2.4	Examine ways to encourage smaller, affordable housing units through the fee structure, especially in centers, corridors or adjacent to neighborhood service hubs.	Short	Cities/towns	Developers; Neighborhoods
Action H-2.5	Reduce local jurisdiction-specific impact fees where there is less impact (fewer trips due to proximity of services, transit, sidewalk, and bicycle networks; park fees in centers where the parks serve the entire community).	Medium	Cities/towns; County	Developers; Neighborhoods

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action H-2.6	Use tax exemptions, such as Special Valuation (multifamily tax exemption), or other financing tools to make projects financially feasible. Special Valuation allows property tax exemptions in return for development of four or more low-income or market-rate housing units in designated areas. Where feasible, savings could be passed down to the purchaser or renter.	Medium	Cities/towns; County	Developers; Neighborhoods
Action H-2.7	Identify opportunities to aggregate properties where housing density is needed to achieve community goals and make multifamily projects feasible to build and finance.	Short; Medium; Long	Cities/towns	Developers; Neighborhoods

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL H-3	Provide sufficient housing for low- and moderate-income households within each jurisdiction.			
Action H-3.1	Set goals and policies to provide sufficient housing for low- and moderate-income households within each jurisdiction.	Short; Medium; Long	Cities/towns; HOME Consortium	Nonprofits; Developers
Action H-3.2	Expand and collaborate on efforts to educate tenants and landlords about housing rights and responsibilities.	Long	Cities/towns; Nonprofits	Nonprofits; Landlord organization
Action H-3.3	Collect and review housing benchmark data.	Long	HOME Consortium	Nonprofits
Action H-3.4	Incentivize developers to set aside a percentage of multifamily housing units for low- and moderate-income buyers and renters.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	Developers; Neighborhoods
Action H-3.5	Provide funding for shared-equity policies — via community land trust or down-payment assistance models — to make buying housing of all types (single-family homes, condos, duplexes) affordable.	Short; Medium	Nonprofits; Cities/towns; County	Nonprofit funders; Finance
Action H-3.6	Encourage the bulk purchase of delinquent mortgages from lenders to prevent foreclosures and stabilize communities.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	Finance
Action H-3.7	Encourage re-entry into the housing market by fostering Housing Ownership Reengagement Centers. They offer services such as home ownership preparation and foreclosure assistance and prevention.	Short; Medium; Long	Cities/towns; County; Nonprofits	Realtors
Action H-3.8	Encourage rapid build-up of equity through financial innovations so homeowners are less likely to default when market conditions are unfavorable.	Short; Medium; Long	Finance	Nonprofits; State; Federal

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL H-4	Maximize opportunity to redevelop land in priority areas by investing in infrastructure and environmental remediation.			
Action H-4.1	Mitigate the additional cost of development in centers and corridors by making public infrastructure investment that adds value, safety and public enjoyment for the entire community and that result in appropriate public return on investment when adjacent properties are developed (increases area's tax base, activity and livability). Allow for latecomers and other methods of repayment for government outlay for infrastructure.	Underway; Short; Medium; Long	Cities/towns; County; IT; LOTT	Developers; Neighborhoods
Action H-4.2	Identify additional funding sources to make building infrastructure as part of a priority infill housing project more financially viable.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	Finance; Developers
Action H-4.3	Do soil and groundwater assessments and evaluate appropriate remediation options where contaminated soils and groundwater exist. Identify funds for assessment and remediation. Apply for grants and loans to complete clean-up.	Short; Medium; Long	Cities/towns	State; Federal
GOAL H-5	Provide sufficient service-enriched housing for homeless and high-risk populations.			
Action H-5.1	Include shelters, group homes, transitional housing, and permanent housing with social services in zoning codes and locate where these facilities have access to transit, parks, and other amenities.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	Nonprofits; IT; Neighborhoods

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL H-6	Encourage housing density and diversity in neighborhoods to add vibrancy and increase equitable access to opportunity.			
Action H-6.1	Review and amend residential zoning policies to provide opportunity for the mix and density of housing needed to meet the needs of changing demographics, use land wisely, and support nearby transit and businesses. Remove barriers to providing for "middle density" types of housing, such as duplexes, fourplexes, and mansion apartments in neighborhoods close to transit corridors. Consider innovative housing options such as "new" boarding houses, or aPodments, which have common kitchen and living spaces and little or no onsite parking. This will offer those wishing to live in a walkable urban are an alternative to suburban single-family homes, which can then be sold to newly forming households with children.	Medium	Cities/towns; County	IT
Action H-6.2	Encourage "gentle densification," such as accessory dwelling units, small houses on small lots, attached housing types or appropriately scaled multifamily buildings, cottage housing, and village cohousing developments in neighborhoods. Make desired outcomes clear, identify infill opportunity sites, and resolve issues to achieve desired results. Create pre-approved housing templates to reduce fees and processing times.	Short	Cities/towns; County	

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL H-7	Encourage the construction, weatherization and operation of homes to boost energy efficiency.			
Action H-7.1	Prioritize home weatherization funds to preserve affordable housing (units for low- and moderate-income households) and further other sustainability goals.	Short	Cities/towns; County	State; Federal; Nonprofits; PSE
Action H-7.2	Support and expand current funding and incentive programs that encourage building owners and occupants to choose resource-efficient appliances and weatherize homes.	Underway	Cities/towns; County; PSE; TE; LOTT	
Action H-7.3	Engage landlords and property managers in energy efficiency efforts.	Underway	Cities/towns; County; TE	Housing Authority; PSE
Action H-7.4	Work with local financial institutions to facilitate affordable financing of energy upgrades.	Short	Cities/towns; County	Finance; PSE
Action H-7.5	Encourage energy audits of large power consumers to identify efficiency improvements.	Short	Cities/towns; County	PSE
Action H-7.6	Work collaboratively to adopt uniform energy-efficiency building standards and engage in continuous improvement.	Short	Cities/towns; County	Nonprofits; State; PSE

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Health & Human Services				
GOAL HHS-1	Provide sufficient health and human services for all county residents.			
Action HHS-1.1	Implement Affordable Care Act provisions. Develop health homes that include treatment and prevention activities (primary care, mental health, chemical dependency, and oral health). Use information technology to support better coordination and communication, and integrate services.	Underway; Short	Federal HHS	DOH; HCA; Local health care providers
Action HHS-1.2	Continue promising, evidence-based practices to address violence, particularly against young women.	Underway	TCPHSS	Thurston Coalition for Women's Health
Action HHS-1.3	Implement innovative approaches and expand on proven ways to improve service delivery. Examples of promising practices include: MedMAN, a program to develop a common approach and shared resources for treating patients with complex medication management needs; and, introducing and implementing PEARLS, an evidence-based program for treating depression in the elderly (www.pearlsprogram.org).	Short; Medium; Long	Various	
Action HHS-1.4	Develop a robust, sustainable funding system for evidence-based, promising practices to support health and human services.	Underway; Short; Medium; Long	Thurston County BOH	Various – involved in TT
Action HHS-1.5	Increase the number of health care providers for the population. Example: Expand the Providence St. Peter Family Medicine Residency Program	Medium	Various	Hospitals
Action HHS-1.6	Develop public/private partnerships to accomplish improved health promotion and service delivery both within the Thurston Region and across a multi-county region.	Short; Medium; Long	Thurston County BOH	Multiple TT action teams
Action HHS-1.7	Include health and human service goals, objectives and policies in local comprehensive plans.	Underway; Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL HHS-2	Reduce the incidence of preventable disease.			
Action HHS-2.1	Thurston Thrives Develop a community-wide health action agenda for sustainable health improvement. The health agenda will establish population-wide indicators, improvement targets, strategies and partnerships in each major domain of community health including: water, air, disease carriers and the physical environment, our food system, housing, education, income, community design, community cohesion, youth development and resilience, clinical prevention, and medical and behavioral treatment. [Also Action L-2.5]	Underway (Phase 1 2013-2014)	Thurston County BOH	Cities/towns; TRPC; Nonprofits; Businesses; IT
Action HHS-2.2	Expand programs or measures to reduce tobacco and other drug use. This includes: continuing/expanding youth programs to prevent initiation of tobacco use; expanding or establishing new smoke/tobacco free areas around the county; and, introducing and implementing measures to curtail tobacco marketing and sales.	Short; Medium; Long	TCPHSS; TOGETHER!	Cities/towns
Action HHS-2.3	Continue expanding Early Childhood Education and Assistance Programs (ECEAP).	Short; Medium; Long	School districts	State; Federal
Action HHS-2.4	Expand evidence-based home visitation programs and parent education offered in neighborhood areas, especially for low-income new parents.	Short; Medium; Long	Various	
Action HHS-2.5	Continue to review projects/development applications for health impacts.	Underway; Short; Medium; Long	County (Environmental Health)	Cities/towns
Action HHS-2.6	Review land-use regulations/regulatory changes for their health impacts; implement more extensive health impact assessment. Example: Add analysis that address how the project helps or hinders access to healthy foods or opportunities for physical activity.	Medium	Cities/towns; County	IT
Action HHS-2.7	Amend state law to make it easier for cities to annex areas with an identified health problems that could be corrected by the addition of sewer, water, or stormwater infrastructure.	Medium	State (Legislature)	Cities/towns; County

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Schools & Transportation				
GOAL S-1	Encourage safe and active school transportation to improve community health, economic, and environmental outcomes.			
Action S-1.1	Acknowledge primary responsibility of schools for education as well as common interest in the health and safety of students.	Short; Medium; Long	School districts; Cities/towns; County	TRPC; IT
Action S-1.2	Continue to support and act on the Healthy Kids – Safe Streets Action Plan and other programs that are working to build a generation of healthy and safe walkers, bicycle, and bus riders. Offer education and encouragement programs and build the necessary sidewalk, bike lane and other safety improvements necessary to increase student physical activity, safe travel knowledge and practice, and reduce car trips and traffic around schools especially during peak travel times.	Short; Medium; Long	School districts; Cities/towns; TRPC; IT	County; Nonprofits
Action S-1.3	Commit to early and frequent collaboration between school districts and jurisdictions on school siting, design, and safe travel infrastructure around schools to encourage walk, bike, and bus trips to school.	Short; Medium; Long	School districts; Cities/towns	TRPC; IT
Action S-1.4	In new neighborhoods, site and design schools that maximize opportunity for neighborhoods and the community, and encourage travel to schools on foot, by bike or by bus.	Short; Medium; Long	School districts; Cities/towns	IT
Action S-1.5	Develop new public/public or public/private partnerships to maximize and leverage revenue for schools and other facilities, including surrounding safe walk/bike routes.	Short; Medium; Long	School districts; Cities/towns	County; IT

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action S-1.6	Maximize use of Intercity Transit and school district buses for trips to and from school. Look for opportunities to coordinate systems where efficiencies will result.	Short; Medium; Long	School districts; IT	Cities/towns; County
Action S-1.7	Incorporate "peaceful school bus" training in schools (program teaches good travel behavior, including anti-bullying education and safety for walkers, bike riders, and bus riders).	Short; Medium; Long	School districts	IT
Action S-1.8	Organize seniors to be a safety resource for students (block watch and "walking school bus" monitors — adults walk with groups of students to school on a fixed route through the neighborhood).	Short; Medium; Long	School districts	TRPC; IT
GOAL S-2	Improve community coordination to create schools that use land, tax dollars, and other resources efficiently.			
Action S-2.1	Require school district and jurisdiction planners to meet at least twice annually to share information and discuss issues related to long- and short-term planning for schools, parks, bike/pedestrian/bus network or other facilities. Build relationships and share issues and information to encourage creativity, innovative thinking, and collaboration.	Short; Medium; Long	School districts; Cities/towns	TRPC; County; IT
Action S-2.2	Commit to long-range cost/benefit analysis when making school siting, design and infrastructure investment decisions. Ensure analysis considers community and household transportation and health costs, as well as cost to build sidewalk connectivity within a quarter to half mile radius of school. Consider changing demographic needs (younger and older households needing safe, accessible walk routes and neighborhood destinations).	Short; Medium; Long	School districts; Cities/towns	County; IT
Action S-2.3	Explore innovative strategies, such as public-to-public land swap opportunities, to create suitably-sized parcels for new schools close to existing neighborhoods or where there is convenient access to good transit service.	Short; Medium; Long	School districts; Cities/towns	IT; County
Action S-2.4	Build multistory schools, and co-locate facilities to use less land and maximize use of public facilities and funds (schools, athletic facilities, parks, street, sidewalk, trail improvements).	Short; Medium; Long	School districts; Cities/towns	

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action S-2.5	Identify joint use and cost-sharing opportunities when co-locating facilities or making infrastructure investments. Make it easy to allow secondary uses (daycare centers) at school sites.	Short; Medium; Long	School districts; Cities/towns	Nonprofits
Action S-2.6	Create incentives to locate schools within walking distance of large student populations or near available transit routes.	Medium	School districts; Cities/towns	State; TRPC
Action S-2.7	Create incentives that support retrofit and maintenance of existing schools, and infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks.	Medium	School districts; Cities/towns	State; TRPC
Action S-2.8	Create funding for school land acquisition, including incentives for purchases, land swaps, and other avenues for obtaining land inside the Urban Growth Area.	Medium	School districts; Cities/towns; County	State; TRPC
Action S-2.9	Increase state compensation to school districts for construction costs of schools sited within the Urban Growth Area.	Medium	School districts; Cities/towns	State; TRPC
Action S-2.10	Change state law to simple majority vote for school bond measure approval.	Medium	School districts; Cities/towns	State; TRPC

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL S-3	Improve infrastructure around schools that results in safe pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access.			
Action S-3.1	Identify and collaborate on funding support for safety education and infrastructure improvements around schools (transportation and safe routes to school funds).	Short; Medium; Long	Cities/towns; School districts	TRPC; IT; State
Action S-3.2	Adopt policy in jurisdiction plans to make improvements around schools a high priority. Prioritize, fund, and build improvements within one mile of school — focusing effort within a quarter to half-mile of schools.	Short; Medium; Long	Cities/towns; School districts	TRPC; IT
Action S-3.3	Include infrastructure improvements in bond measures when building or retrofitting schools (sidewalks and paths, safe crossing and safe access for walkers, bike and bus riders arriving at school).	Short; Medium; Long	School districts	Cities/towns
Action S-3.4	Review capital facilities plans and implement school impact fees countywide to help cover the cost of infrastructure needs as growth occurs.	Short	County; School districts	Cities/towns
Action S-3.5	Identify targeted revenue source for sidewalk and safety improvements around schools — especially those with walk and bike safety education and encouragement programs.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	IT; TRPC
Action S-3.6	Recognize the needs of small Cities/towns and school districts to collaborate with the Washington State Department of Transportation to meet challenges. This includes building frontage roads as part of development when locating schools adjacent to state highways, and slowing speeds on portions of state highways in close proximity to schools crossing areas.	Short	State; Cities/towns	

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Local Food Systems				
GOAL F-1	Coordinate local food planning efforts to create a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable regional system.			
Action F-1.1	Convene a food policy council/advisory group, bringing all the food "players" to the table and develop a local food systems plan, including a production capacity analysis. [Also Action L-2.2]	Underway	Thurston Food System Council	Cities/towns; Chambers; County; EDC; Higher Ed; Nonprofits; School districts; TESC
Action F-1.2	Plan for gardens when developing plans for schools and other public facilities (i.e. provide/include a water source).	Long	School districts	Cities/towns; County
Action F-1.3	Consider food-related places as "destinations" in land-use and transportation planning. Consciously plan where to locate a food bank, a meal program, a farm, or a store.	Medium	Cities/towns; County	IT; School districts; Nonprofits; State; TRPC; WSU
Action F-1.4	Encourage more sustainable agriculture processes.	Long	WSU	Cities/towns; County; Higher Ed; Land trusts; Nonprofits; TESC; Tribes
Action F-1.5	Explore less land-intensive farming models such as aquaculture and vertical gardening.	Long	WSU	Cities/towns; County; Higher Ed; Land trusts; Nonprofits; TESC; Tribes
Action F-1.6	Increase regional seed production.	Medium	WSU	Cities/towns; County; Higher Ed; Nonprofits; TESC; Tribes
Action F-1.7	Find creative ways to protect and replenish soil.	Medium	WSU	Cities/towns; County; Nonprofits; TESC; Tribes

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL F-2	Enhance the economic viability of the local food system.			
Action F-2.1	Help support living wages for farmers, including year-round farmers' markets and community-supported agriculture, farm stands, farm stays, and agritourism.	Underway	Agritourism; STEDI; Thurston Food System Council	Cities/towns; County; Higher Ed; Land trusts; Nonprofits; School districts; Tribes; TESC
Action F-2.2	Work with long-established entities, such as granges and the Washington State University Extension, to help food businesses network and gain information.	Underway	WSU	EDC; Higher Ed; Land trusts; Nonprofits; State; Tribes
Action F-2.3	Work with the banking industry and local investors and lenders on models to support small food-related business.	Underway	Thurston Food System Council	Cities/towns; Chambers; County; EDC; Finance; Nonprofits; State; Tribes
Action F-2.4	Create a regional food center with space for food growing, processing, training, storage, and restaurants. (Assessment underway)	Long	Thurston Food System Council	Cities/towns; Chambers; County; EDC; Finance; Higher Ed; Nonprofits; Port; State; Tribes
Action F-2.5	Create cooperatives that allow businesses and community members to share processing facilities, equipment, and food storage space. A good local example is the grain-buyers coop. (Assessment underway)	Medium	Thurston Food System Council	EDC; Higher Ed; Nonprofits; Tribes
Action F-2.6	Consider developing small agricultural processing plants and mobile operations to increase opportunity and economic viability.	Medium	WSU	Cities/towns; Chambers; County; EDC; Higher Ed; Nonprofits; Port; State; Tribes

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action F-2.7	Encourage farmers' transportation co-operatives for taking goods to market and to central distribution points. (Assessment underway)	Medium	TRPC; WSU	Cities/towns; Chambers; County; EDC; Higher Ed; Nonprofits
Action F-2.8	To support no-net loss of agricultural and resource lands, a primary sustainability goal, create cooperative opportunities for joint purchase of land and incentives for using lands for farming, and zone existing farmlands for agriculture.	Medium	Cities/towns; County	Land trusts; Nonprofits; State; WSU
Action F-2.9	Encourage urban and rural agriculture by lowering the cost of water, including subsidizing or providing reclaimed water options at a lower rate. Encourage State Department of Ecology to expand allowable rainwater harvesting without violating water rights law to support agriculture.	Long	Cities/towns; County; State	LOTT; Nonprofits; Port; State; Federal
Action F-2.10	Work with waterfront property owners on voluntary oyster seeding and other shellfish production. This should include public and private owners, including TESC.	Long	Cities/towns; County; State	LOTT; TESC; Nonprofits; Port; State; Federal
Action F-2.11	Track rural area issues and conflicts, and implement strategies to resolve these. Examples include dairy cow manure-to-biogas operations, eco-tourism, and other value-added activities that increase economic viability of agricultural operations.	Underway	Cities/towns; County	Chambers; EDC; Higher Ed; Land trusts; Nonprofits; Port; PUD; PSE; State; STEDI; TCAT; TE; TESC; Utilities
Action F-2.12	Encourage entrepreneurial food truck businesses. Examine health and safety regulations, zoning and other policies and adapt as necessary to support this industry while still protecting public health. Explore centralized commercial kitchens to support this type of business opportunity.	Short	Cities/towns; County; TCPHSS	Chambers; EDC; Nonprofits; Enterprise for Equity; TESC

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL F-3	Ensure universal access to secure, nutritious, and affordable food in the Thurston Region.			
Action F-3.1	Implement more mobile food delivery, working with neighborhood associations and community organizations (e.g., the bookmobile model).	Medium	Cities/towns; County	Chambers; EDC; Higher Ed; Nonprofits
Action F-3.2	Create a "food hub" that connects producers with users. This may include connecting farmers with restaurants/stores that need local produce or with locations to process or distribute products.	Medium	Thurston Food System Council	Chambers; EDC; Higher Ed; Nonprofits; School districts; State; Tribes
Action F-3.3	Identify locations to serve as hubs for food distribution, such as worksites that allow community-supported agriculture deliveries, and explore integration with the emergency food system.	Medium	Thurston Food System Council	Higher Ed; Nonprofits; School districts; State; Tribes
Action F-3.4	Identify opportunities to buy fresh food at rural commercial hubs.	Medium	Thurston Food System Council	Cities/towns; Chambers; County; EDC; Higher Ed; Nonprofits; School districts; Tribes
Action F-3.5	Identify public spaces to use for community gardens and other food production. Consider underused school property and encourage neighborhood/school cooperative gardens.	Underway	Thurston Food System Council	Cities/towns; County; Higher Ed; Housing Authority; Land trusts; Nonprofits; School districts; State; TESC; WSU
Action F-3.6	Encourage large public worksites with plentiful free parking to make some spaces available to food trucks to bring diverse meal options and fresh produce to workers.	Long	Cities/towns; County; State; TRPC	Chambers; EDC; Nonprofits
Action F-3.7	Create systems to support food donations by hospitality industry and other institutional food producers. Support local business and encourage local food donations. Create additional incentives for farmers to encourage gleaning. Support distribution model that improves access of low income households to food throughout county.	Underway	Thurston County Food Bank; Senior Services for South Sound	Cities/towns; Chambers; County; EDC; Nonprofits; Tribes

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action F-3.8	Encourage food production in urban areas/neighborhoods.	Underway	Cities/towns; County	Nonprofits; School districts
Action F-3.9	Explore disincentives — such as taxes on junk food — for nutritionally deficient foods.	Long	Cities/towns; County; State	Nonprofits
GOAL F-4	Enhance public education and outreach related to the local food system.			
Action F-4.1	Establish a local branding campaign that helps the public recognize and value "produced in Thurston Region" products.	Medium	Agritourism; STEDI; Thurston Food System Council	Cities/towns; Chambers; County; Nonprofits; Tribes
Action F-4.2	Create a central website for food and food-related activities, events, and information. Provide education/training on all aspects of the food system.	Underway	Thurston Food System Council	Cities/towns; Chambers; County; EDC; Higher Ed; Nonprofits; School districts; State
Action F-4.3	Market food activities as part of a larger education campaign. This may include National Food Day.	Underway	Thurston Food System Council	Cities/towns; County; Higher Ed; Nonprofits; School districts; Tribes; VCB
Action F-4.4	Organize ceremonies and celebrations around food and include local food in existing community events.	Underway	Thurston Food System Council	Cities/towns; Chambers; County; Higher Ed; Nonprofits; School districts; Tribes; VCB
Action F-4.5	Provide education and outreach about "when is food trash." Explain pull dates, expiration dates, and other coding.	Medium	TT; Thurston County Food Bank; Thurston Food System Council	Cities/towns; County; Higher Ed; Nonprofits; School districts

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Transportation System				
GOAL T-1	Ensure adequate funding for maintaining and improving an efficient multimodal transportation system that efficiently moves people and goods.			
Action T-1.1	Dedicate sufficient revenue to pay for system maintenance and preservation, raise additional revenues for this purpose if necessary through Transportation Benefit Districts or other means. Include a coordinated, regional approach to maintaining the regional trail system.	Short	Cities/towns; County	Federal; State; TRPC
Action T-1.2	Pursue state funding support for interregional express transit service that relieves demand for additional interstate capacity. Continue to explore partnerships with Sound Transit to share express service responsibilities between Thurston and Pierce counties.	Underway	IT	Cities/towns; County; State; TRPC
Action T-1.3	Conduct an alternatives analysis, a specific type of analysis used to determine what types of high capacity transit the region may be able to support in the future, and which is required to apply for federal funding.	Long	TRPC	IT; Cities/towns; County
Action T-1.4	Building on the current Rural & Tribal Transportation Service (R/T), continue to explore models for providing rural transit services tailored to the needs of rural communities. Identify potential sustainable funding sources.	Short	TRPC	Cities/towns; IT; Federal; State

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL T-2	Reduce transportation congestion and environmental impacts.			
Action T-2.1	Explore ways to increase the use of alternative forms of travel (walk, bike, bus, carpool, vanpool, telecommute). Develop and maintain incentives for employers and jurisdictions that encourage Commute Trip reduction for their employees.	Underway	TRPC; Cities/towns; County; State	IT; R/T; State
Action T-2.2	Expand travel options for rural residents by establishing park-and-pool facilities that increase vanpool and carpool options in the small cities and rural communities – especially around Bucoda, Rainier, and Tenino.	Underway	STEDI	Cities/towns; County; IT; State
Action T-2.3	Connect urban and rural bicycle and pedestrian pathways with parks and open spaces to encourage more active transportation and use of natural areas.	Short	Cities/towns; County	TRPC
Action T-2.4	Explore "hard shoulder running" to add a high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane between Thurston and Pierce counties within the existing I-5 paved right-of-way.	Short	WSDOT	Cities/towns; County; TRPC; IT
Action T-2.5	Explore congestion pricing between Thurston and Pierce counties to encourage transit, vanpool, and carpool use on I-5 during peak commute periods. Target revenues to projects that enhance system efficiency.	Short	TRPC	State; Federal; IT
Action T-2.6	Promote increased use of vanpool and carpools by Joint Base Lewis-McChord personnel living in the region, supporting these efforts by taking a leadership role.	Underway	JBLM; IT; PT	Cities/towns; County; State; TRPC
Action T-2.7	Pursue changes in U.S. Department of Defense policies that restrict demand management measures such as parking pricing, flex schedules, and funding of on-base shuttles.	Short	TRPC; Federal	IT; State

OPPORTUNITIES & CHOICES

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action T-3.1	Ensure that transportation plans and funding strategies explicitly consider the need to move goods and services within and between local communities, and between the Thurston Region and other markets.	Medium	Cities/towns; County; TRPC	Port; State
GOAL T-4	Integrate transportation considerations into land use decisions, and vice versa.			
Action T-4.1	As land use plans are updated, assess zoning densities and location of urban neighborhoods and activity centers and identify areas where density can increase. Change urban zoning and land-use rules so that a more compact form of development can be created to ensure that future land-use patterns will be efficient to serve with transit, freight or other transportation infrastructure.	Short	Cities/towns; County	IT
Action T-4.2	Establish time-lines and criteria for expansion of transit to existing and newly emerging activity centers.	Short	IT; TRPC	Cities/towns; County
Action T-4.3	Align transportation infrastructure funding to support the region's preferred land-use vision for vibrant centers, corridors, and neighborhood centers while protecting rural residential lands, farmlands, prairies, and forest lands.	Underway	TRPC; Cities/towns; County	IT; Port
Action T-4.4	Evaluate integration of location-efficiency into transportation impact fee structures. Impact fees could be adjusted depending on location within a city. Some areas such as centers are more location-efficient as jobs, housing and shopping are in close proximity. This means that new buildings (commercial and residential) located in these areas tend to have less impact on the existing street network than development in more suburban or rural locations, where people tend to be more auto-dependent and drive greater distances.	Short	Cities/towns; County	TRPC
Action T-4.5	Work with interested stakeholders to create transportation management areas where traditional fixed-route transit service is not feasible. This will help identify and implement alternative models of employee-oriented transit service funded by the transportation management area.	Short	TRPC	Cities/towns; County; IT

Investment

Reinvestment in existing places rather than expanded investment in new infrastructure to outlying, low-density areas will create long-term financial resiliency and stability for our community.

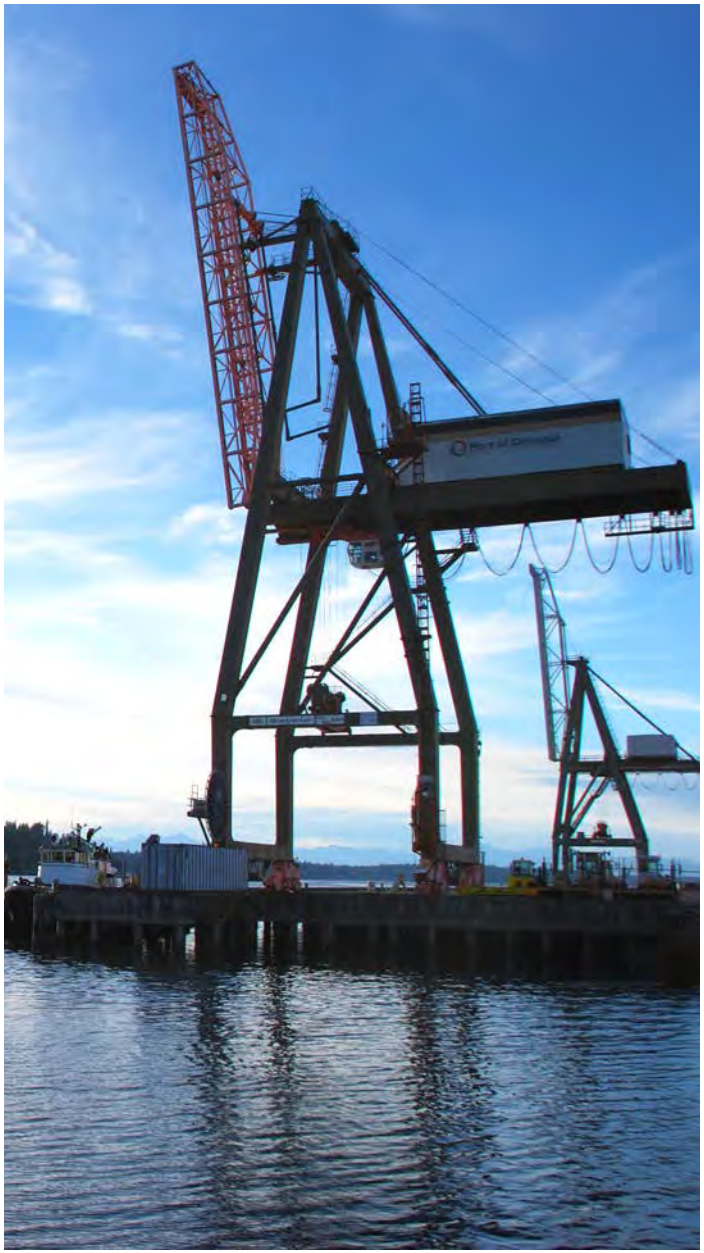
Providing infrastructure and services for the current population of 252,000 people in the Thurston Region is difficult. Providing infrastructure and services for an additional 120,000 by 2035 will be even more challenging. The state's Growth Management Act calls for concentrating growth in the urban areas, the most efficient and environmentally safe way to accommodate development. Our existing

land-use plans and regulations envision compact growth, and the Preferred Land-Use Scenario sets an ambitious target of accommodating 95 percent of growth in our existing and planned urban areas. This could lead to $1.6 billion savings in road and associated infrastructure for residential development alone, as well as spur reinvestment in our existing city and town centers. Such savings could help address our aging infrastructure, provide for a more efficient delivery of essential services, and create vitality that will increase tax base return on investment.

The following pages of this chapter include general goals, actions and sustainability outcomes related to Infrastructure, Energy, Public Safety, and Solid Waste. Taking the actions will help the region achieve its priority goals and targets.

Sustainable Thurston Foundational Principles & Policies related to Investment include:

- Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and assets. Leveraging 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 costs when investing in infrastructure;
- Provide and maintaining municipal services (water, sewer, solid waste, public safety, transportation, and communication networks) in a sustainable and cost-effective manner; and,
- Champion energy efficiency and renewable energy strategies that contribute to energy independence, economic stability, reduced climate impacts, and long-term household and community health.



Port of Olympia cranes.

Water Infrastructure

Residents of the Thurston Region want clean water that is sufficient to meet their daily needs. Water and wastewater entering and leaving homes and business should be delivered in a cost-effective and environmentally safe way.

Challenges & Opportunities

Water Infrastructure includes drinking water, wastewater, reclaimed water, and stormwater infrastructure. Each of these plays an important role in maintaining the quality and quantity of local water resources. Protecting our water resources is one of the region's highest priorities.

The Thurston Region benefits from past decisions to build major facilities such as the LOTT Clean Water Alliance's sewage treatment facility [LOTT is composed of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater and Thurston County], which required many years to plan, fund, and construct. In the coming decades, choices about how we grow, where we grow, and efficiency of systems in new or retrofitted housing and commercial buildings will determine how cost-effective and environmentally safe our water infrastructure will be.

Many local and state regulations seek to protect groundwater, surface water, and aquatic resources from development impacts, but these regulations represent only one piece of a larger puzzle. Protecting water quality and quantity will require cooperation and collaboration between our local, state, and tribal governments. They will all share the burden of maintaining existing water infrastructure, as well as any infrastructure added to the water system. The challenge to our regional water system is to do more with less.

Goals and associated actions at the end of the chapter are designed to address the following challenges:

- Water Resources: Water resources span jurisdictional boundaries requiring collaboration between communities for effective management. Maintaining, protecting and building water infrastructure is difficult — and it becomes more difficult with tight budgets. (Goal WI-1)
- Water Availability: The number of water rights owned and the success of conservation efforts limits the amount of water available to cities and water districts now and in the future. Both acquisition of water rights and conservation involve a long and difficult process. Drilling wells without any new water rights (exempt wells) is often less expensive than connecting to sewer. (Goal WI-1)
- Cost of Septic Systems versus Sewer: Adding septic systems is often less expensive than connecting to sewer. This encourages growth to occur in areas and in a manner that threatens clean water. (Goal WI-2)
- Growth Constraints: Commercial growth and economic development envisioned for Bucoda and Rainier cannot happen without significant investments in a public sewer system. (Goal WI-2)
- Septic Systems: Even properly functioning septic systems introduce damaging nitrates to waterways. Improperly functioning septic systems or a high concentration of septic systems — such as in higher-density residential neighborhoods — can pollute ground and surface waters. Providing new public sewer systems to existing or new neighborhoods is expensive. (Goal WI-2)
- Groundwater Pollution: Most of the water used within the county is groundwater, which requires resources to monitor and understand. You can't see it, and it can be polluted by transportation spills, inappropriate land-use practices, stormwater, and septic systems. (Goal WI-2 and 3)
- Stormwater Treatment: Few stormwater treatment systems exist in rural Thurston County neighborhoods, increasing risk for flooding of buildings and roads in some areas, as well as adding pollutants to groundwater and surface waters such as Puget Sound or the Deschutes River. (Goal WI-3)
- Reclaimed Water: Additional investment in reclaimed water systems needs clarity about use and required standards. Communities are looking to reclaimed water systems for opportunities to stretch drinking water supplies and mitigate new water rights. (Goal WI-4)

Drinking Water: water that is suitable for human consumption.

Drinking Water Infrastructure refers to the systems used to collect, store, pump, and convey water to users.

Wastewater: water that has been used for domestic, commercial, or industrial purposes and then discarded.

Wastewater infrastructure refers to the systems used to collect and treat wastewater so that it can be released back into the environment. These systems include sewer systems and wastewater treatment plants, or septic systems that serve one or more properties.

Reclaimed Water: water that is produced by treating wastewater to a high quality so that it can be used for non-drinking purposes such as irrigation, dust suppression, and toilet flushing.

Reclaimed Water Infrastructure refers to the systems used to treat and convey reclaimed water to areas where it is put to use.

Stormwater: water that accumulates from precipitation, including rain or snow events, which can increase in quantity as impervious surfaces increase.

Stormwater infrastructure refers to the systems used to collect and treat stormwater, including storm drains, piping networks, and retention ponds.

Goal WI-1: Provide efficient and effective drinking water infrastructure.

Sustainability Outcomes

Managing water resources holistically and collaboratively using the best information available will help local jurisdictions stretch limited fiscal resources. Reducing new development on individual wells, and providing incentives to encourage infill where there is water system capacity will make the best use of existing water infrastructure. This will also limit the need to expand and maintain existing systems. The health of residents and the natural environment depends on safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Goal WI-2: Manage wastewater in a cost-effective and environmentally sound way.

Sustainability Outcomes

Addressing septic system threats to groundwater, lakes, streams, and Puget Sound will help protect the environment, including shellfish beds.

Encouraging infill and redevelopment in areas with existing sewer infrastructure will limit the cost of expansion and maintenance, making the best use of public dollars.

Goal WI-3: Manage stormwater in a cost-effective and environmentally sound way.

Sustainability Outcomes

We must manage stormwater to protect streams and water quality, as well as to prevent flooding and the costs to individuals, the region, and the nation. Use of new technology, research and innovation, as well as education that affects personal behavior, leads to cost-effective and environmentally positive outcomes.

Goal WI-4: Expand the utilization of reclaimed water for non-potable uses.

Sustainability Outcomes

Reclaiming water helps reuse our limited water resource by replenishing groundwater and stretching the supply of drinking water. Reclamation acknowledges that water is a precious resource that deserves to be conserved and reused wherever possible. Taking advantage of new reuse technology will contribute to other conservation efforts to help ensure a continued supply of water to meet the needs of residents now and in the future.

Energy

Thurston Region residents envision a community that reduces its dependence on fossil fuels and emissions of greenhouse gases. Pursuing energy-efficiency and renewable energy strategies will help the community become more energy-independent, economically stable, and contribute to long-term household and community health and resilience.

Challenges & Opportunities

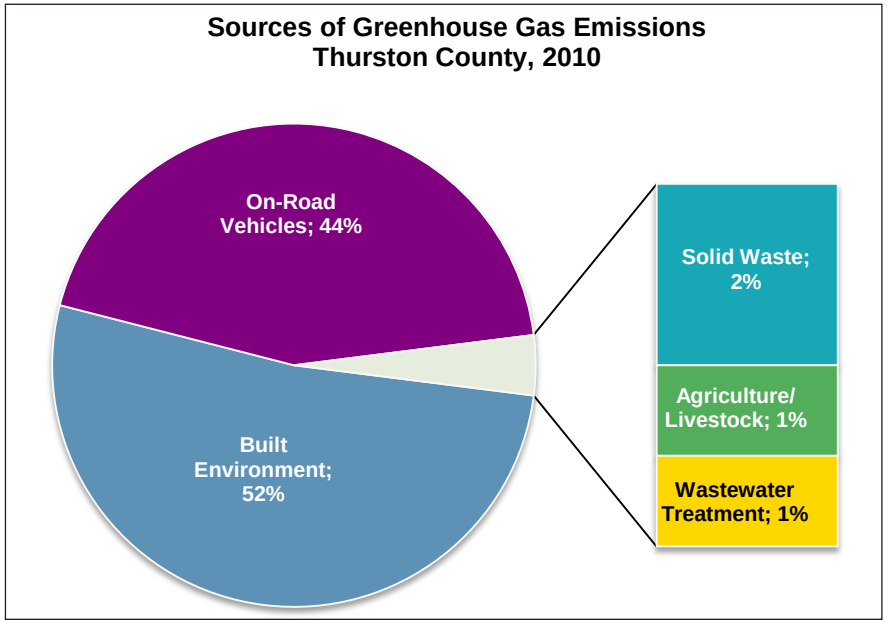
Leveraging the value of existing assets and infrastructure will help build vital, healthy, and economically viable communities. Achieving the community's goal of maintaining a sustainable electric grid system that is affordable, reliable, and based diminishingly on fossil fuels means pursuing the following strategies:

- Increasing the supply of renewable and distributed energy generation;
- Building energy-efficient and net-positive buildings ("net-positive" buildings generate more energy than they use);
- Developing energy-efficient commercial processes;
- Adopting grid-scale distributed energy storage technologies as they develop;
- Making incremental "smart-grid" improvements;
- Increasing availability of electric vehicle charging stations.

A "smart grid" is a modernized electrical grid that uses information and communications technology to gather and act on information about the behaviors of suppliers and consumers in an automated fashion to improve the efficiency and reliability of electricity production and distribution.

The built environment poses significant challenges to achieving the community's goals. In 2035, slightly more than two-thirds of the homes (more than 108,000) and 19 million square feet of commercial and industrial space will have been built prior to 2010. This means a huge amount of the housing stock will need energy retrofits. Further, we designed much of our existing infrastructure around the automobile. A key question: What can we do to reduce auto dependence, yet still provide access?

We need to develop tools to monitor progress toward our goals, including tracking energy expenditures. Good starting points for residential usages are per-residential unit and per capita consumption of electricity and natural gas. For commercial use, we can start with per-business unit and per-worker consumption.



Sources of greenhouse gas emissions for Thurston County, Washington.
Source: Thurston Climate Action Team.

Powerlines in Tumwater with Mount Rainier in the distance.

Sustainability Activities Already Underway

Turning Vision 2 Action

The Olympia-based Northwest EcoBuilding Guild, with support from the Thurston Climate Action Team and other partners, is hosting quarterly symposia dedicated to improving the sustainability of the built environment. Recent Vision2Action discussions and exercises have focused on cutting the carbon footprint of buildings by boosting energy efficiency, adding accessory dwelling units and other forms of "gentle density" to neighborhoods, and encouraging active transportation by creating housing, shopping and transit hubs along the region's major urban corridors — key components of this plan and the companion Urban Corridor Communities project (www.trpc.org/regionalplanning/landuse/Pages/ucc.aspx). The Vision2Action series, which continues into 2014, is a prime example of community leadership and participation in action. To learn more, visit www.Vision2Action.us.

Goals and associated actions at the end of the chapter address the following challenges and will help the region achieve our sustainability goals *(Note: Goals related to transportation energy efficiency are located in the Opportunities & Choices chapter)*:

- Carbon Footprint: Energy generated from coal and other fossil fuels produces carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases that contribute to global climate change. **(Goal EN-1)**
- System Improvements: We need equipment upgrades, grid-scale energy storage, and partnerships to achieve efficiency goals. **(Goal EN-2)**
- What Gets Measures Gets Managed: Programs that track progress toward energy goals and per-unit and per capita consumption of energy are not adequate. **(Goal EN-2)**
- Retrofit Needs: More than two-thirds of housing units available in 2035 will have been built before 2013. Many of these will require energy retrofits to contribute to energy conservation. **(Goal EN-3)**

Goal EN-1: Increase energy generation from renewable resources to reduce the region's carbon footprint.

Sustainability Outcomes

Reducing our region's dependence on fossil fuels will contribute to greenhouse gas reductions and move our region toward a carbon-neutral future. Local household and community resilience will increase with fewer local dollars being spent on gas and other fuels — dollars that leave our region and won't be available to recirculate within our community. Clean air and water, and human health benefits accrue with less use of fossil fuels.

Goal EN-2: Enhance the region's electricity distribution, monitoring and storage infrastructure to support adoption of cleaner technologies and practices.

Sustainability Outcomes

Becoming leaders in energy-efficient technologies and practices will strengthen our economy and result in long-term financial savings for the community.

Goal EN-3: Increase energy efficiency and conservation to reduce the region's carbon footprint.

Sustainability Outcomes

Reduced per capita energy use and greater emphasis on renewables will limit household and community exposure to future higher fossil-fuel energy costs.

Reduced dependence on fossil fuels and more reliance on renewable energy sources will decrease carbon emissions and pollutants in air and water.

Greater energy efficiency will enable residents to spend a smaller portion of their income on electricity and natural gas. That frees up disposable income for other purposes.

Less use of fossil fuels helps maintain clean air and decrease health risks such as asthma.

Public Safety

Residents and businesses expect their community to be safe and secure. In coming decades, the Thurston Region should maintain dependable emergency services — responding with appropriate resources in the most efficient, cost-effective manner possible.

Challenges & Opportunities

Public safety is important for jobs, industry, transportation, housing, schools, health care, sanitation, utilities, and energy. The long-term viability and sustainability of a community depends on its resilience to natural disasters and its ability to protect life-sustaining resources. Providing emergency services requires timely delivery of appropriate resources in the most efficient, cost-effective manner possible.

Goals and associated actions at the end of the chapter were designed to address the numerous challenges of maintaining and enhancing the region's public safety:

- Declining Revenues: Declining tax revenues jeopardize police, fire, and emergency medical response. Without long-term, stable funding, public emergency services will have difficulty keeping pace with future service demands. (Goal PS-1)
- Diminishing Services: Diminishing social and mental health care services and facilities mean less treatment for drug abuse and criminal victimization or perpetration — all of which leads to increased demands for emergency medical, law enforcement, justice, and corrections services. (Goal PS-1)

- Changing Technologies: Changes in building construction and communications, as well as society's growing energy demands, require significant investments in infrastructure and emergency services that can keep pace with emerging technologies. (Goal PS-1)
- Hazard Risks: The Thurston Region is vulnerable to the effects of severe storms and earthquakes. Climate change is projected to exacerbate weather-related hazards. An increasing frequency and severity of disruptions to essential services will strain government budgets and emergency resources. (Goal PS-2)
- Public Preparedness: Public safety begins with the public. Many people, especially those who are low-income, elderly, or disabled, are inadequately prepared to sustain themselves through disasters or prolonged power outages. (Goal PS-2)

Goal PS-1: Provide emergency services in a dependable and efficient manner to meet the dynamic needs of a diverse society.

Sustainability Outcomes

Economic vitality requires community and workplace safety. Safe communities foster new businesses, stabilize local markets, and expand opportunities. Equity in job access and employment security enables more people to become self-sufficient. Economically vibrant communities enjoy lower crime rates and reduced demand for social safety services.

Health & Human Services: 9-1-1 can't solve everyone's problems. Communities bolster public safety when government, the private sector, and faith-based organizations maintain easy-to-access social services. Individuals, households, neighborhoods, and businesses that create social networks and establish caring relationships can offer essential needs, supplementing over-taxed public safety services during and after a disaster.

Goal PS-2: Create a resilient region by improving disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, as well as by expanding public safety education.

Sustainability Outcomes

Keeping people and property out of areas prone to floods, landslides, and other hazards helps to avoid disasters. Increasing defensible spaces around structures in forested or heavily vegetated areas reduces the risk of wildfires spreading to property and can serve to protect watersheds.

Sustainability Activities Already Underway

Making Every EMS Dollar Count

The long-term viability of a community's Emergency Medical Service (EMS) system requires a sustainable source of funding. A steady revenue stream is critical for both the ongoing operations and maintenance of the system as well as building an adequate reserve for contingencies. EMS system components must be financially solvent to allow the uninterrupted delivery of essential services. A poorly funded system will struggle to meet service goals, result in deferred maintenance on equipment and vehicles, and impact capital facilities. Most importantly, inadequate funding risks jeopardizing lifesaving services to seriously injured or sick individuals. Once service levels degrade, it is difficult and expensive to elevate system performance to desired standards.

In late 2012, TRPC was commissioned by the Thurston County Emergency Medical Services Council to assess the region's EMS system. TRPC assessed the system's finance, service delivery model, system performance, governance, and planning functions and identified 20 recommendations in a report prepared for the EMS Council. TRPC's observations and recommendations revolve around the principal that the collective acts of many exceed the singular efforts of a few. Funding for EMS services is stretched to meet growing system demands, let alone maintain existing service levels. The region's EMS providers and stakeholders will be challenged with a task to plan for future EMS services in a manner never performed in the region. TRPC's report gives the region's stakeholders justification for doing so.

A copy of the draft report is available online at www.trpc.org.

Aerial view of the Roosevelt Regional Landfill in Klickitat County — the disposal site of Thurston County's waste.

Solid Waste

Residents of the Thurston Region envision an effective and efficient trash collection system that maintains cleanliness and does not contribute to air, water, and soil contamination from solid or hazardous waste. People envision a future with a greater emphasis on waste reduction, reuse of materials, and recycling.

Challenges & Opportunities

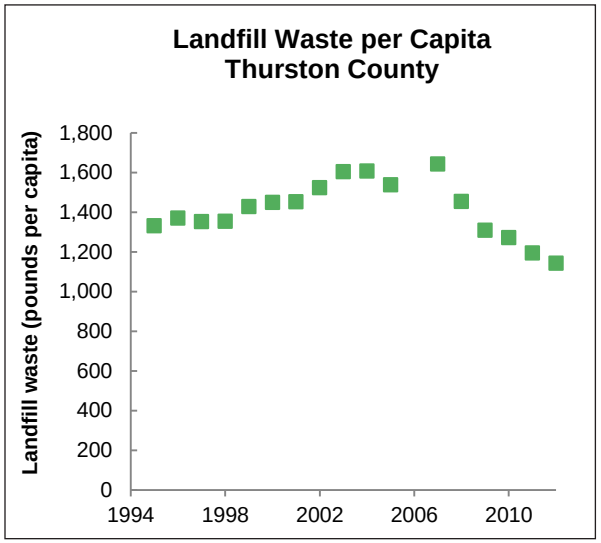
Solid waste management is an essential public service in the Thurston Region. Residents expect a community with regular trash collection — a community where they do not have to worry about air, water and soil contamination from solid or hazardous waste.

Our waste management system works well today. But during the Sustainable Thurston process, we heard people express a vision of a greater emphasis on waste reduction, reuse of materials, and recycling. People may want less trash, but we are a consumer society desiring goods that often come in bulky packaging. Some communities regulate packaging on the goods produced in their area.

While we produce less solid waste today than a decade ago, the future remains unclear. Did the recession cause this reduction? Will we return to our past disposal rate when times are better? Reduced rates will extend the useful life of the current Waste and Recovery Center (WARC), but it has a finite capacity. Depending on future disposal rates, the region may need a similar facility in southwestern Thurston County as part of a multijurisdictional project.

Greater emphasis on reducing items that are entering our waste stream is one of the action items in the Plan.

Goals and associated actions at the end of the chapter will help address the following challenges:



We've seen a sharp decrease in the amount of solid waste per person produced in Thurston County since the recession. Will these trends continue?
Source: Thurston County Solid Waste.

- Waste Generation Planning: We need up-to-date, accurate data collection and forecasts of volumes and types of solid waste to track the lifespan of the WARC. Adequate financing, including rate-setting plans, is needed to meet the needs of future populations and to ensure funding for waste-reduction programs. (Goal SW-1)
- The WARC at Hawks Prairie requires South County haulers to travel a long distance for disposal. Volumes are increasing as South County populations increase. (Goal SW-1)
- Reducing the Waste Stream: Both residential and commercial customers produce large amounts of solid waste. Reducing different types of waste from residential, commercial, and construction requires analysis to identify different approaches, facilities, funding opportunities, coordinated education, and outreach. We also need incentives to reduce, reuse, and recycle. (Goal SW-1)
- Convenience and Accessibility: Poorly planned and inconvenient recycling and waste-disposal areas will result in minimal recycling and make collection more difficult and costly. (Goal SW-1)
- Reliance on Market Forces: Market forces and profit motives can change the collection, processing, recycling, and disposal of waste. Recycling and diversion rely on ever-evolving national and international markets. Customers become confused with too-frequent changes in collection schedules and lists of what is recyclable/compostable. This can undo education and outreach efforts, increase handling costs, and discourage recycling. (Goal SW-1)
- No Contingency Plan: The garbage train carrying our waste travels on Interstate 5 (I-5) to Lewis County before continuing to Klickitat County for final disposal. Floods have closed I-5 multiple times and landslides pose a threat on the 250-mile journey of our waste to Eastern Washington. We have no plan for waste disposal in the event of a major disaster. (Goal SW-1)

- Unaccounted for Hazardous Waste, New Chemicals of Concern: Estimates suggest that we improperly dispose of a large amount of hazardous material. Newly emerging chemicals also raise concerns about safe disposal. (Goal SW-2)
- Lack of Resources for Education and Awareness Programs: The community devotes few resources to identifying, carrying out, and measuring the effectiveness of hazardous waste disposal awareness campaigns. Residents know little about the need for hazardous waste disposal of some readily available household, personal care products, and medicine. (Goal SW-2)
- Unequal Access for Hazardous Waste: Not all areas have equal access for recycling and proper disposal of hazardous waste. (Goal SW-2)

GOAL SW-1: Plan and take action to reduce, reuse, and recycle as much waste as possible and meet the needs of current and future populations.

Sustainability Outcomes

Today, trucks haul our garbage to Centralia where it is loaded on a train for the 250-mile trip to Klickitat County. Some people envision a time when we have reduced our waste stream enough so that we don't have to send our waste — and our local dollars — to another county. Reducing the amount of all types of waste at the source saves the most by eliminating any handling. Education programs based on good data, coordination, incentives, and outreach benefit the region by engaging residents and businesses in actions that support "reduce, reuse and recycle" efforts.

GOAL SW-2: Continue to plan for, educate, assist, and offer access to safely and efficiently manage disposal and reduce hazardous waste.

Sustainability Outcomes

Awareness of what constitutes hazardous waste and the importance of proper hazardous waste disposal means that engaged residents and businesses work together to make sure that air and water resources, humans, and animals are protected from the effects of improper disposal. Reducing the production and use of hazardous products at their source means fewer waste products needing disposal and reduced cost for disposal or hazardous waste cleanup.

The following table includes Investment goals and actions, as well as the timeline, lead, and partners for each action. Timeline definitions are as follows: Underway, Short (1-3 yrs); Medium (3-10 yrs); Long (10-20 yrs). See Appendix for lead and partner acronyms and explanations.

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Water Infrastructure				
GOAL WI-1	Provide efficient and effective drinking water infrastructure.			
Action WI-1.1	Continue to advance hydrogeological modeling to better quantify the region's available groundwater resources. This includes continuing to collect water monitoring data, building a strong data-management system, investing in software and technology, providing for community access to the data, and addressing water issues of regional importance.	Short; Medium; Long	County; Cities/towns; State	
Action WI-1.2	Identify methods to reduce new development on individual or exempt wells. This may include changing state law on exempt wells and focusing growth in urban areas where urban infrastructure is available.	Short; Medium; Long	State	County; Cities/towns
Action WI-1.3	Develop a water systems plan that includes an exploration of ways to manage water resources within the region more holistically and in collaboration among state and local governments. [Also Action L-2.4]	Medium	County	Cities/towns; PUD; Tribes; State
GOAL WI-2	Manage wastewater in a cost-effective and environmentally sound way.			
Action WI-2.1	Develop a regional sewerage plan. This should include a strategy to ensure all septic systems are monitored and maintained, that failing septic systems are identified and repaired, and a strategy and policy in place to evaluate existing developments with septic systems to determine if conversion to sewer is needed due to impacts on water resources and/or human health. [Also Action L-2.3]	Short; Medium	County	LOTT; Cities/towns; TRPC

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action WI-2.2	Build governmental capacity to address septic system conversions. May include: identifying problem areas, assessing infrastructure needs, determining priority areas for conversion, and securing funding.	Short; Medium	County; Cities/towns	LOTT; Cities/towns; TRPC
Action WI-2.3	Continue conversions from onsite septic systems to sanitary sewers in the incorporated cities and within the urban growth boundaries where septic systems are impacting water resources.	Underway; Short; Medium; Long	County; Cities/towns	State; Federal
Action WI-2.4	Where sewers are available, require new developments and infill lots within 300 feet of existing sewer infrastructure to be connected to them.	Short	County; Cities/towns	
Action WI-2.5	Enforce or add a new automatic conversion requirement to city sewer systems for properties within a specific number of feet of a sewer system.	Short; Medium	County; Cities/towns	
Action WI-2.6	Encourage new research on septic system design and evaluate public health and environmental risks posed by chemicals of concern if warranted by research.	Underway	State	County; Cities/towns; Tribes
Action WI-2.7	Expand the region's operation and maintenance programs to educate septic owners and ensure that onsite systems are maintained and kept in proper working order.	Short	County	Cities/towns; State
Action WI-2.8	Adopt septic system management areas for stream basins flowing into Puget Sound, and use a phased, multiyear approach. Use the model established in the successful Henderson Watershed Protection Area program. Use the planned update of the Thurston County On-site Sewage System Management to determine if other areas in Thurston County should have enhanced septic system management programs.	Medium; Long	County	Cities/towns; State
Action WI-2.9	Track septic system failures and areas where cumulative impacts of septic systems are degrading water quality or causing public health concerns.	Short	County	State

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL WI-3	Manage stormwater in a cost-effective and environmentally sound way.			
Action WI-3.1	Encourage jurisdictions to explore new technology to sweep streets to prevent stormwater pollution at the source.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	
Action WI-3.2	Support applied research in Western Washington on cost-effective stormwater management technologies, routine maintenance, and low-impact development (LID) practices.	Short	Cities/towns; County	TRPC; State
Action WI-3.3	Encourage greater coordination between cities and Thurston County to meet stormwater goals by watershed. This can include updated stormwater and land use development codes, and creating incentive programs to encourage rainwater harvesting, porous pavement, and rain gardens on individual existing lots to improve stormwater quality.	Short	Cities/towns; County	TRPC; State
Action WI-3.4	Identify suitable locations and collaborate on developing regional infiltration, detention, and treatment stormwater facilities.	Long	Cities/towns; County	
Action WI-3.5	Impose the same stormwater treatment and well-head protection standards for rural residential development as is required in urban areas.	Medium	County	Cities/towns
Action WI-3.6	Encourage innovative and creative solutions for addressing stormwater runoff. Examples include reduced building fees for use of innovative technologies, and creating impervious surface limits and trading to reduce stormwater impacts. Another example is using in-lieu fee and off-site mitigation as an alternative when soil composition prohibits the ability to comply with the new low-impact development flow standard.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	
Action WI-3.7	Retrofit existing developments with stormwater infrastructure that meets current standards. Establish a mechanism to fund stormwater retrofits including use of incentives.	Short; Medium; Long	County; Cities/towns	State; TRPC

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action WI-3.8	Conduct comprehensive stream restoration plans for high priority streams in Thurston County to include plans for in-stream improvements, stormwater retrofits, riparian and wetland restoration.	Short; Medium	County; Cities/towns	Tribes; State; TRPC
Action WI-3.9	Increase awareness of personal behaviors that pollute water. For example: pet waste disposal, fertilizer use, car maintenance.	Underway	Cities/towns; County	LOTT
GOAL WI-4	Expand the use of reclaimed water for non-potable uses.			
Action WI-4.1	Recognize the changing and expanding role of reclaimed water to benefit the region, which may include the following: using non-potable water to stretch drinking water supplies; mitigating new water rights; meeting pollution-reduction goals in total maximum daily load (TMDL) implementation plans; and replenishing the groundwater aquifer.	Underway	LOTT	County; Cities/towns; Tribes; State
Action WI-4.2	Support efforts to restart the state rule-making process for reclaimed water.	Short	State	LOTT; County; Cities/towns; Tribes
Action WI-4.3	Pursue additional science regarding chemicals of concern in drinking water (private wells and municipal supplies), wastewater, reclaimed water, and septic effluent. This could include supporting the LOTT Cleanwater Alliance's Groundwater Recharge Scientific Study, which will examine these chemicals, their fate in the environment, and potential impacts to human health or aquatic species.	Underway	LOTT	County; Cities/towns; State; Tribes

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Energy				
GOAL EN-1	Increase energy generation from renewable resources to reduce the region's carbon footprint.			
Action EN-1.1	Explore "on bill" financing of distributed generation installations (spread over time).	Short	Nonprofits	PSE; State (WUTC); WSU; Finance
Action EN-1.2	Recognize and support clean-energy jobs. Link to education system — provide training opportunity.	Short; Medium	EDC	Higher Ed; School districts
Action EN-1.3	Explore incentives for the installation of distributed generation equipment, such as rooftop solar panels.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; Nonprofits	PSE; WSU; Commerce; WUTC; Finance
Action EN-1.4	Investigate large-scale renewable energy projects (e.g., large-scale solar arrays).	Medium; Long	Cities/towns; Nonprofits	PSE; EDC; WUTC; Higher Ed
Action EN-1.5	Investigate a legislative solution to permit Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) in Washington State. Advocate if solution is identified. PACE financing supports energy efficiency and renewable energy projects by providing up-front capital that is subsequently paid back though a special assessment on participants' property taxes.	Short	Nonprofits; TCAT	County; State; Cities/towns; TRPC
Action EN-1.6	Explore the viability of energy generation at solid waste facilities. This could include exploring the Environmental Protection Agency's RE-Powering America's Land Program.	Short	County	PSE; State; WUTC; EDC
Action EN-1.7	Adopt uniform building codes and permitting practices in jurisdictions to make the installation of solar panels, or other distributed generation technologies, easier and faster.	Short; Medium	County; Cities/towns	TRPC; TCAT

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL EN-2	Enhance the region's electricity distribution, monitoring and storage infrastructure to support adoption of cleaner technologies and practices.			
Action EN-2.1	Monitor system, or grid-scale, energy storage innovations, and learn from the experiences of communities that begin to deploy them.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	PSE; TE; TCAT; Higher Ed
Action EN-2.2	Support energy suppliers' equipment upgrades, new programs, and service offerings related to adding information technology to the system or grid.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	PSE; TCAT; TE; Nonprofits
Action EN-2.3	Partner with energy providers to test innovative system-scale, grid-scale, energy storage solutions in isolated, controlled conditions. If, and when, technological progress is proven, partner with energy providers for deployment of such storage solutions.	Medium	Cities/towns; County; WSU	PSE; Higher Ed;
Action EN-2.4	Support voluntary programs for adding vehicle chargers to homes, businesses, and public parking infrastructure.	Short	County; Cities/towns	PSE; Nonprofits
Action EN-2.5	Promote integration of electric vehicle infrastructure into residential building codes and public and private facilities, including allowances in zoning regulations for charging stations in locations where they are needed.	Underway	Cities/towns; County	PSE; TCAT; Developers
Action EN-2.6	Create local projects to increase the existing electric vehicle fleet.	Short; Medium; Long	Cities/towns; County; Nonprofits	PSE
Action EN-2.7	Encourage energy providers make incremental improvements in the energy system using information technology to increase reliability to bring back systems online after power outages and to decrease transmission losses.	Short; Medium	PSE; Nonprofits	WUTC; State; County; Cities/towns
Action EN-2.8	Encourage a change in state policies to increase the utility share of funding for undergrounding of overhead wires to reduce power outages.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County; State	PSE

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL EN-3	Increase energy efficiency and conservation to reduce the region's carbon footprint.			
Action EN-3.1	Explore variable electric and natural gas rates: Reward lower-volume usage with lower rates. Some jurisdictions already do this with water rates.	Short; Medium	PSE	WUTC; Nonprofits
Action EN-3.2	Develop new incentives for green buildings (e.g., Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design – LEED), both commercial and residential.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County; State	PSE; Nonprofits; TE
Action EN-3.3	Jurisdictions consider complementary ordinances that require solar orientation for all new construction.	Medium; Long	County; Cities/towns	Nonprofits; Developers
Action EN-3.4	Continue to work with businesses to increase the energy efficiency of processes and facilities.	Short; Medium	PSE; Cities/towns	TE; EDC; State; Finance
Action EN-3.5	Offer incentives for the use of ductless and high efficiency heat pumps.	Underway	PSE; TE	State; Finance; WUTC
Action EN-3.6	Offer incentives for the use of roof-mounted solar water heaters.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns	PSE; Finance; State; TE
Action EN-3.7	Increase the energy efficiency of the region's water infrastructure. This includes replacing pumps and other systems that consume large amounts of energy.	Medium; Long	County; Cities/towns; LOTT	State; PSE
Action EN-3.8	Work regionally to adopt uniform energy-efficiency building standards and engage in continuous improvement.	Medium; Long	County; Cities/towns	Developers; Finance; Nonprofits; PSE
Action EN-3.9	Continue conversion of public fleets to hybrid, natural gas, and electric vehicles. Lead by example.	Medium; Long	County; Cities/towns; State; IT	
Action EN-3.10	Consider adopting policies that require residential and commercial properties to undertake an energy audit at time of sale or during substantial remodel, including, if deficiencies are found, encouraging energy retrofits to upgrade properties to a specified level.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	Developers; Finance; Nonprofits; PSE

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Public Safety				
GOAL PS-1	Provide emergency services in a dependable and efficient manner to meet the dynamic needs of a diverse society.			
Action PS-1.1	Convene the region's health, social service, and public safety partners to seek opportunities to bridge the area's safety gaps.	Medium	County	Cities/towns; Fire districts; TCOMM; Nonprofits; School districts
Action PS-1.2	Maintain ongoing efforts of the Juvenile Justice Coalition to monitor, evaluate, suppress, and counter risky behaviors among youth and gang-related activities. Collaborate to develop evidence-based practices which support resiliency and healthy life styles among youth in Thurston County.	Underway	Juvenile Justice Coalition	Courts; County; School districts; Cities/towns; Nonprofits
Action PS-1.3	Support the initiatives of the Thurston County Law and Justice Council; 2013 goal -promote public safety by addressing mental health issues county-wide and provide alternatives to incarceration for mentally ill adults.	Medium	Law and Justice Council	Courts; County; Cities/towns; Fire districts; Nonprofits
Action PS-1.4	Continue fostering ongoing innovative programs such as the Thurston County Drug Court, Veteran's Court, and the Veteran's Assistance Program.	Long	County	Cities/towns
Action PS-1.5	Modify building codes where necessary to address emergency service radio communications, fire sprinkler systems in all new residential and commercial construction, and access and egress issues for emergency response and equipment.	Long	County Cities/towns	TCOMM; Fire districts
Action PS-1.6	Upgrade all emergency services radio communications equipment and infrastructure to a robust countywide platform that is responsive to changes in technology.	Medium	TCOMM	Cities/towns; Fire districts; IT

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action PS-1.7	Emergency service agencies and departments will regularly engage their communities about the cost of delivering and maintaining adopted levels of public safety services.	Underway	County; Cities/towns; Fire districts	TCOMM; Utilities
Action PS-1.8	Explore the feasibility of expanding opportunities to share resources or consolidate (functional or administrative) law enforcement, fire protection, or emergency medical service agencies to determine if service level improvements or cost savings could be achieved.	Long	Cities/towns; Fire districts; County	Courts; Nonprofits
Action PS-1.9	Expand planning processes and outreach to address the unique risks of vulnerable sectors of the population, such as youth, elderly, people with disabilities, impoverished neighborhoods, and non-English speaking communities.	Medium	County	Cities/towns; School districts; Fire districts; Nonprofits; IT

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL PS-2	Create a resilient region by improving disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, as well as by expanding public safety education.			
Action PS-2.1	Fund an update to the region's Federal Emergency Management Agency-approved Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan every five years.	Underway	County; TRPC	Cities/towns; Fire districts; School districts; Utilities; Federal
Action PS-2.2	Encourage local governments, tribes, schools, special-purpose district, and major private employers, such as hospitals, to participate in a regional risk-assessment process and adopt local plans.	Short	TRPC	County; Cities/towns; IT; Tribes; Utilities
Action PS-2.3	Identify cost-effective mitigation actions that provide all sectors of the community protection from disaster events.	Short	County; Cities/towns	TRPC; Fire districts; School districts; Utilities; Tribes; Nonprofits; Federal; State
Action PS-2.4	Consider emergency facilities in community planning and permitting.	Medium	County; Cities/towns	TCOMM; Fire districts; School districts; Utilities; IT
Action PS-2.5	Prioritize relationship building among public safety agencies and other entities to leverage response capacities during disaster events.	Medium	County	Cities/towns; Fire districts; School districts; Utilities; Port
Action PS-2.6	Participate in regional emergency exercises and recovery planning processes.	Underway	County	Cities/towns; Fire districts; TCOMM; Port; State; Utilities; IT

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action PS-2.7	Convene recovery committees immediately after a disaster to prioritize restoration of vital public safety facilities and other essential community assets.	Underway	County	Cities/towns; School districts; Utilities; Port; State; IT
Action PS-2.8	Train personnel in best practices following lessons learned.	Underway	Cities/towns; Fire districts; County	Utilities; Port; Nonprofits
Action PS-2.9	Build residents' capacity to mitigate hazards. This includes urging residents: to install and maintain fire extinguishers and smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in every living space; to reduce fire fuels around living structures in wildland-urban interface areas; to perform seismic stabilization retrofits of older homes; and in remote, hard-to-reach areas to install fire sprinkler systems.	Medium	Cities/towns; Fire districts	County
Action PS-2.10	Build residents' capacity to respond to and recover from hazards. This entails: broadly publicizing the locations and descriptions of community disaster shelters to all sectors of the community; encouraging residents to stock rations, medications, backup heating, and emergency supplies to maintain self-sufficiency for at least 72 hours, preferably seven to ten days; and, building relationships among neighbors to leverage skills and resources to assist those in need when public safety services are overextended during a disaster (e.g., build upon the successes of community education and outreach activities like Thurston County's Crime Watch and Map Your Neighborhood programs).	Underway	County	Cities/towns; Fire districts; School districts; Utilities; Nonprofits
Action PS-2.11	Enhance local government awareness of the risks of transporting hazardous materials via pipeline, road, rail, marine, and air routes through the region.	Medium	County	Utilities; Federal; Cities/towns; Fire districts; Port; State
Action PS-2.12	Increase support for hazardous materials inspection, planning, management, and disposal.	Long	County; Cities/towns	State; Fire districts

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action PS-2.13	Establish trusting relations with private utility companies to maintain awareness of community risks from major gas and electrical distribution systems.	Underway	County; Cities/towns	PSE; Utilities
Action PS-2.14	Ensure that adequate response contingencies are in place to swiftly address hazardous materials release.	Medium	County	Cities/towns; State; Fire districts
Action PS-2.15	Jurisdictions with adopted hazard-mitigation plans should actively pursue funding opportunities to implement their highest-priority mitigation actions.	Medium	Jurisdictions with adopted plans	State; Federal
Action PS-2.16	Coordinate on strategies for containing urban wildfires.	Medium	Cities/towns; Fire districts	County; TCOMM
Action PS-2.17	Expand the eligibility of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mitigation grant programs to allow replacement of aging structures (i.e. facilities such as water reservoirs, fire stations, transportation facilities, emergency coordination shelters, and buildings used as emergency shelters that are better suited to serve communities in the future).	Long	County	Cities/towns; Federal; Utilities; School districts; Fire districts; IT

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Solid Waste				
GOAL SW-1	Plan and take action to reduce, reuse and recycle as much waste as possible and meet the needs of current and future populations.			
Action SW-1.1	Generate the information needed to keep the Solid Waste Management Plan reflective of the needs – as well as the financial resources – to achieve the most efficient and sustainable waste reduction possible.	Short; Medium; Long	County; Olympia (Solid Waste)	Cities/towns
Action SW-1.2	Evaluate the need for facility expansion and new facility needs for both north and south county. Focus programs to reduce commercial waste as well as the waste from the growing multifamily residential sector. Update the disposal rates to achieve "reduce, reuse, recycle" goal.	Short; Medium; Long	County; Olympia (Solid Waste)	Cities/towns
Action SW-1.3	Expand waste prevention education, outreach and technical assistance programs to reduce the need for waste collection, transport, and processing. Use community based social marketing techniques so that recycling, composting, and waste reduction become the norm.	Short; Medium; Long	County; Olympia (Solid Waste)	Cities/towns
Action SW-1.4	Work with regional jurisdictions to build consistent recycling/compostable material lists and messaging so that consumers understand what is recyclable/compostable no matter where they live.	Short; Medium; Long	County; Olympia (Solid Waste)	Cities/towns
Action SW-1.5	Collaborate with jurisdiction departments during planning and review of multifamily, commercial and mixed use projects to accommodate easy and convenient recycling for occupants to divert waste and for haulers to collect recyclables and garbage.	Short; Medium; Long	County; Olympia (Solid Waste)	County; Cities/towns

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action SW-1.6	Expand recycling to new product areas including construction debris, textiles, plastics, and electronic waste as well as waste streams that may have tangible cost benefits to the county (e.g., silver recovery unit at HazoHouse, used oil, batteries).	Short; Medium; Long	County; Olympia (Solid Waste)	Cities/towns
Action SW-1.7	Support the development of local uses for recycling/composting of materials to minimize reliance on national and international markets.	Short; Medium; Long	County; Olympia (Solid Waste)	County; Cities/towns; EDC
Action SW-1.8	Support statewide product stewardship initiatives that require producers to be responsible for funding end-of-life disposal of their products and packaging. Consider container deposits, as well as consider county-level bans or mandatory recycling requirements when waste reduction goals are not met through education and voluntary efforts.	Short; Medium; Long	County; Olympia (Solid Waste)	County; Cities/towns
Action SW-1.9	Develop a Disaster Debris Management plan with action initiatives that will address debris disposal transportation issues including any garbage train disruptions for major disaster debris disposal.	Medium	County; Olympia (Solid Waste)	County; Cities/towns

INVESTMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL SW-2	Continue to plan for, educate, assist and offer access to safely and efficiently manage disposal and reduce hazardous waste.			
Action SW-2.1	Continue hazardous collections efforts at HazoHouse and at WasteMobile events. Determine what portion of hazardous waste is disposed of in trash, drains, on the ground or is in storage, and establish an action plan. Track and evaluate new chemicals of concern.	Short; Medium; Long	County	Cities/towns
Action SW-2.2	Continue to follow the updated Hazardous Waste Management Plan and support identified needs and programs, such as technical assistance to small business.	Short; Medium; Long	County	Cities/towns
Action SW-2.3	Continue education and outreach programs. Evaluate education and outreach methods. Fund methodical, targeted methods that are promising or have been shown to be effective increasing awareness of the need to reduce use of hazardous materials and the importance of safe disposal.	Short; Medium; Long	County; Olympia (Solid Waste)	Cities/towns
Action SW-2.4	Evaluate new collection facilities in collaboration with the County Environmental Health Division. Analyze the need for new hazardous waste collection facilities to serve south county areas as they grow.	Underway; Short	County (Public Works)	Cities/towns
Action SW-2.5	Continue enforcement of illegal solid and hazardous waste dumping/disposal.	Underway; Short; Medium; Long	County	Cities/towns

Environment

Residents of the Thurston Region want a healthy environment with clean air for breathing and clean water for drinking, recreating, and harvesting food. In coming decades, sustaining the natural environment will require protecting water quality and quantity and reducing emissions that contribute to air pollution and climate change.

Our region has a strong commitment to environmental protection. In a 2011 Sustainable Thurston survey, the top three issues identified by people as important to build a community that is sustainable for everyone were:

1. Maintain drinking water;
2. Maintain stream and Puget Sound water quality; and,
3. Maintain air quality.

Our region recognizes that protecting environmental quality is good for economic health and our quality of life. This ethic is reflected in the vision: "In one generation — through innovation and leadership — the Thurston Region will become a model for sustainability and livability. We will consume less energy, water, and land, produce less waste, and achieve carbon neutrality …"

To achieve this bold vision, we set priority goals and targets related to air, waste, land, water, and greenhouse gas emissions. Goals and actions to protect the environment are embedded in all chapters of this document. This chapter's goals and actions relate most directly to air quality, water quality, and climate change.

I-5 traffic as seen from Boulevard Road in Olympia.

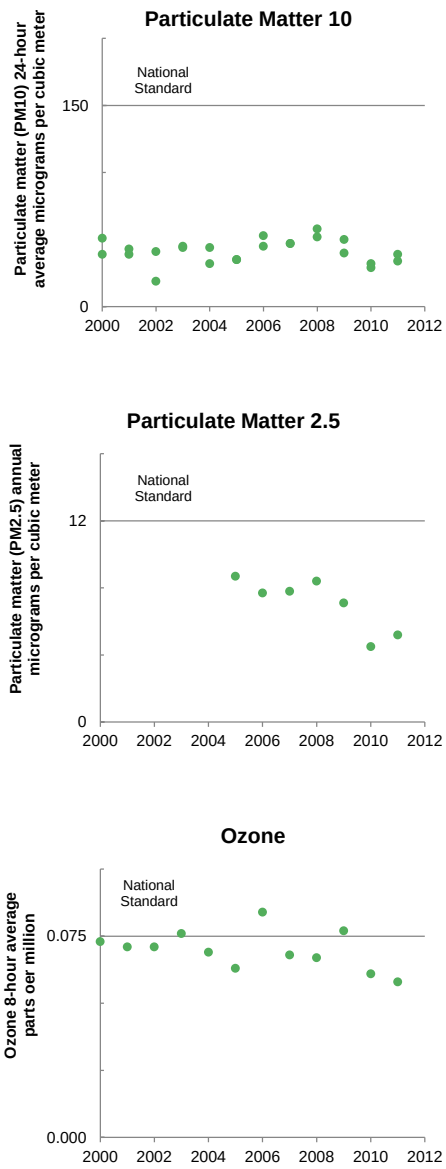
Sustainable Thurston Foundational Principles & Policies related to the environment:

- 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; retrofit existing infrastructure to reduce impacts; and reduce 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.

Air Quality

The Clean Air Act requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards for six criteria pollutants: carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), ozone (O3), sulfur dioxide (SO2), and particulate matter (PM). The federal law identifies two types of national ambient air quality standards: "Primary" standards protect the health of children, elderly and other sensitive populations; "secondary" standards protect against decreased visibility, damage to animals, vegetation, and buildings. The Thurston Region must also comply with Washington Ambient Air Quality Standards (WAAQS), which will be commensurate with federal standards for criteria pollutants, effective in 2014.

- PM10: 150 micrograms per cubic meter of air (μg/m3), 24-hour average [federal primary/secondary standards]
- PM2.5: 12 μg/m3, annual average [federal primary/secondary standards]; 35 μg/m3, 24-hour average [federal primary/secondary standards]
- Ozone: 0.075 parts per million (ppm), 8-hour average [federal primary/secondary standards]
- Carbon Monoxide: 9 ppm, 8-hour average [federal primary standard]; 35 ppm, 1-hour average [federal primary standard]
- Nitrogen Dioxide: 0.053 ppm, annual average [federal primary/secondary standards]; 0.100 ppm, 1-hour average [federal primary standard]
- Sulfur Dioxide: 0.03 ppm, annual average [federal primary standard]; 0.14 ppm, 24-hour average [federal primary standard]; 75 parts per billion (ppb), 1-hour average [federal primary standard]; 0.3 ppm, 3-hour average [federal secondary standard]
- Lead: 0.15 μg/m3, rolling 3-month average [federal primary/secondary standards]; 1.5 μg/m3, quarterly average [federal primary/secondary standards]



Thurston County air quality particulate matter (PM_{10}) 24-hour average, 1st and 2nd Maximum readings. Source: Olympic Region Clean Air Agency.

The social, environmental and economic impacts of air pollution are significant. Sulfur dioxide (SO2), which is released into the air by fossil fuel combustion at power plants, factories and other sources, can cause acid rain that damages trees, crops, wildlife, and bodies of water.

Carbon monoxide can reduce oxygen delivery to the body's organs and ultimately cause death. For people with heart disease, short-term exposure to CO further affects their body's compromised ability to respond to the increased oxygen demands of walking and other exercise.

Lead is a naturally occurring element that can be harmful to humans who inhale or ingest it, particularly for children under the age of six. Lead particles released into the air by mining, smelting and refining activities can be attached to dust, carried by the air, deposited on surface soil, and absorbed by the water we drink and the food we eat.

Nitrogen dioxide develops quickly from emissions from cars, trucks and buses, power plants, and off-road equipment and contributes to the formation of ground-level ozone and fine airborne particles. Breathing in such pollutants can trigger respiratory problems, especially for people with asthma, and lead to lost days at work and school.

TRPC's 2025 Regional Transportation Plan complies with all state and federal air quality requirements, including those pertaining to PM10 — coarse particulate matter between 2.5 and 10 micrometers in diameter (less than one-seventh the width of a human hair) that is generated primarily by wood-burning stoves and vehicles. Thurston County's metropolitan area violated PM10 standards a quarter-century ago but subsequently addressed that problem and will be designated as a limited-maintenance area soon due to its ongoing efforts to reduce wood smoke and per capita miles of driving.

The Olympic Region Clean Air Agency tracks ozone and particulate matter levels at its air-monitoring station in Lacey, giving the Thurston Region data from which to compare the past and present.

Goal E-1: Reduce air pollution that endangers human health.

Sustainability Activities Already Underway

Clearing the Air with Smart Corridors

Smart Corridors — a collaborative regional project — aims to improve the operational efficiency of the transportation network. The hallmark of this multijurisdictional effort, facilitated by TRPC, is a pilot technology demonstration project for signal timing, signal coordination, and transit signal priority.

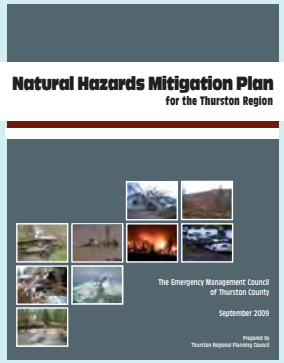
In the 1980s, the region had a wood smoke problem caused by the widespread use of low-efficiency wood stoves with incomplete combustion. The Olympic Region Clean Air Agency (ORCAA) — which has regulatory and enforcement authority for air quality issues in Clallam, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston counties — ran an incentive program that encouraged homeowners to replace low-efficiency wood stoves with ones that burned much more completely. The program worked, and now the Thurston Region enjoys excellent air quality. However, the region became a maintenance area for PM10 (particulate matter up to 10 micrometers in size) under federal air-quality rules. With this maintenance designation came unexpected regional transportation requirements and new federal funds — Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) dollars that must target transportation sources of PM10.

Research showed signal timing, signal coordination, and transit signal priority as the best tools to meet this air quality priority. TRPC tasked a Regional Traffic Operations Group (RTOG) to define the needs, scope and cost of an implementation plan for a coordinated "smart corridors" approach along two key thoroughfares — the Martin/State/4th corridor and Capitol Boulevard/Capitol Way corridor — which connect Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater. Interstate 5, operated by the Washington State Department of Transportation, connects to the arterials at several interchanges. Intercity Transit provides frequent bus service along the corridors. In 2013, Thurston Smart Corridors partner agencies finalized interlocal operating agreements and designed their components of the regional system.

To learn more, visit: www.trpc.org/regionalplanning/transportation/projects/Pages/SmartCorridors.aspx

Mitigating Natural Hazards

The question is not *if*, but *when*. When the next earthquake rattles the region, what are the risks and how can we mitigate them? Luckily, we are prepared.



The *Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region* is a multijurisdictional plan that addresses the most destructive natural hazards that threaten the Thurston Region. The plan explains the risks posed by natural hazards and identifies actions to create more disaster-resilient communities in the region.

Since 1962, 24 federal disaster declarations have cited the Thurston Region. Like other Pacific Northwest communities, the Thurston Region is vulnerable to geological and weather-related hazards. In 2003, the region was among the first in Washington State to adopt a Federal Emergency Management Agency-approved regional hazard-mitigation plan, following passage of the U.S. Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. Hazard Mitigation planning identifies and prioritizes sustained measures that will reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards. Federal law (44 CFR Part 201) requires local governments to review, revise, and resubmit their plans for approval to remain eligible for federal mitigation funding every five years. In 2009, 17 local government partners adopted the second edition of the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region, underscoring their efforts to make their community a safer place. Several of the region's partners have successfully implemented federally funded mitigation projects because of developing and maintaining a hazard mitigation plan.

The Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) led the collaborative plan-development process, saving jurisdictions resources. TRPC continues to play a leadership role by seeking funding to update the plan, and the agency is working with Thurston County Emergency Management and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to update portions of the region's risk assessment. All of the plan's partners have signed statements of intent to update the plan by the end of 2014. To learn more, visit: www.trpc.org/regionalplanning/environment/Pages/NaturalHazardsMitigationPlan2ndEdition.aspx

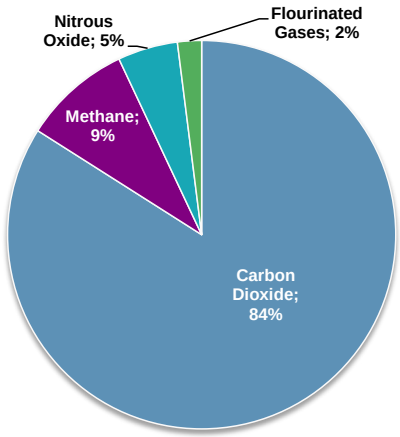
Climate Change

The Earth's atmosphere acts as a greenhouse. Energy from the sun is radiated back into the Earth's atmosphere, where much of it is absorbed by "greenhouse" gases. The atmosphere then radiates most of this energy back to the Earth's surface, making the planet warmer than it would be if the atmosphere did not contain these gases. Without this natural "greenhouse effect," temperatures would be about 60 degrees Fahrenheit lower than they are now, and the Earth would be uninhabitable for humans.

During the past century, the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere increased substantially due to the burning of oil, coal, and other fossil fuels. The added gases are enhancing the natural greenhouse effect, according to scientific research, as well as contributing to an increase in global average temperature and related climate changes.

Carbon dioxide (CO_2) is the main heat-trapping gas that contributes to global climate change — hence, the term "carbon footprint." Other anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions include methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O) and fluorinated gases (e.g., hydrofluorocarbons). All of these gases remain in the atmosphere long enough to become mixed — meaning that the atmospheric concentration measured is roughly the same all over the world — regardless of the emissions source.

U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions in 2011



Total Emission in 2011 = 6.702 Million Metric Tons of CO2 equivalent
Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency

Washington — part of the North America 2050 coalition, along with 15 U.S. states and four Canadian provinces — aims to return to its 1990 greenhouse gas emissions levels by 2020, reduce its emissions 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2035, and 50 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Success depends upon Washington's cities and counties measuring and managing their emissions.

Washington's water quality and quantity could be threatened by rising temperatures and shrinking snowpack. The state's transportation and energy infrastructure also faces the specter of increased damage costs and disruptions from more frequent and severe flooding/sea level rise, wildfires, and changes in energy supply and demand. Planning and developing in a more sustainable manner today can help the Thurston Region deal more effectively with such threats, as well as potential climate-induced migration from other areas, in coming decades.

A priority goal of this Plan is for the Thurston Region to become a "carbon-neutral" community, which means having no net greenhouse gas emissions. This may require minimizing the region's direct emissions through energy conservation and renewable energy consumption, as well as offsetting remaining emissions (direct and indirect) through the purchase and retirement of carbon credits.

Toward that end, the Plan's regional greenhouse gas emissions targets — which are more aggressive than the state targets — are as follows:

- Achieve a 25 percent reduction of1990 levels by 2020;
- Achieve a 45 percent reduction of1990 levels by 2035;
- Achieve an 80 percent reduction of1990 levels by 2050.

The following goal and associated actions at the end of the chapter are designed to address these challenges:

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions: On-road vehicles account for 44 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions in Thurston County. Carbon dioxide and other emissions are a major contributing factor to global climate change.
- Climate Strategy: Climate change could have impacts on infrastructure, water supplies, emergency management, food systems, and the economy. The region does not have a comprehensive climate action plan to serve as a framework for how this region can reduce its climate impacts and best respond to impacts.

Goal E-2: Reduce the region's carbon footprint.

Please note: Additional goals related to energy are in the Opportunities & Choices (Transportation) and Investment (Energy) chapters.

Sustainability Outcomes

Reducing the region's carbon footprint protects the public health and welfare of future generations. It reduces threats to water quality and quantity, and it shows leadership and partnership with other communities to reduce threats from severe storm events, sea-level rise, and wildfires, as well as related service disruption and infrastructure repair costs. Achieving this goal also provides an opportunity for new "green" jobs and products in energy and environmental fields.

Water Quality & Quantity

Water — an elemental part of life. Protecting the region's ground and surface water resources — from streams and rivers to lakes and Puget Sound — is one of our biggest, toughest tasks. Success means clean and sufficient water for drinking, recreating, fishing, and harvesting shellfish today and tomorrow.

Guiding new development into urban growth areas will preserve rural areas for the next generation. However, more people and more development mean more pressure on the water resources that sustain us. Local research shows that we impact streams when we cover as little as 2 percent of a stream basin with roofs, streets, and sidewalks, and remove the forest cover.

Goals and associated actions at the end of the chapter are designed to address the following challenges:

- Water Rights: The amount of water available to cities and water districts for municipal use now and in the future is limited by the availability of water rights, use and infiltration of reclaimed water, as well as the success of conservation and water use efficiency efforts. Acquisition or transfer of new water rights can be a long and difficult process. Conservation also takes substantial effort. **(Goal E-3)**
- Exempt Wells: Exempt well owners have little or no incentive to conserve water, and additional groundwater withdrawals may affect water levels for existing wells. **(Goal E-3)**
- Limited Funding: Limited funding exists to preserve lands and/or construct treatment facilities that improve water quality. **(Goal E-3)**

- Water Pollution: Untreated stormwater runoff, improper use of herbicides and pesticides, failing or improperly located septic systems, septic systems in general, and incorrect disposal of hazardous material continue to threaten our water quality. (Goal E-3)
- Aquatic Habitats: Intact aquatic habitats (stream corridors, wetlands, shorelines, estuaries) protect water quality. Protecting these intact habitats will help preserve water quality. However, many have been degraded, requiring expensive restoration. (Goal E-4)
- Forest Cover: Maintaining forest cover in healthy stream basins or watersheds is essential to protecting water quality. (Goal E-4)
- Land Use: We are a fast-growing region, and balancing water quality with growth has been difficult. The region developed its land-use plans around political boundaries, but protecting water quality requires looking at future land use based on natural boundaries such as river basins or watersheds to address the cumulative effects of growth on water quality. (Goal E-4)
- Salmon: At current funding levels, it will take 50 years to address the backlog of culverts on public roads that create fish passage barriers, which are a principle cause for the Chinook salmon's listing as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. (Goal E-4)
- Health: Water quality plays a significant role in health and, in various parts of the region, is at risk due to land-use activities. (Goal E-4)

Goal E-3: Conserve and protect drinking water to meet the region's daily and long-term needs.

Sustainability Outcomes

Ensuring access to basic water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure would support regional economic growth as well as human health. Conservation efforts continue to demonstrate the large amount of water that can be saved, ensuring adequate supply to meet the needs today, and tomorrow. Long-range planning and funding are essential so that major facilities are online when projected growth occurs.

Goal E-4: Protect, preserve and restore streams, wetlands, and shorelines to protect water quality.

Sustainability Outcomes

Maintaining high water quality in Puget Sound helps sustain the region's aquaculture industries. Aquaculture is a major industry for many tribal and private-sector enterprises. Clean water and a healthy environment are positive attractors for new business.

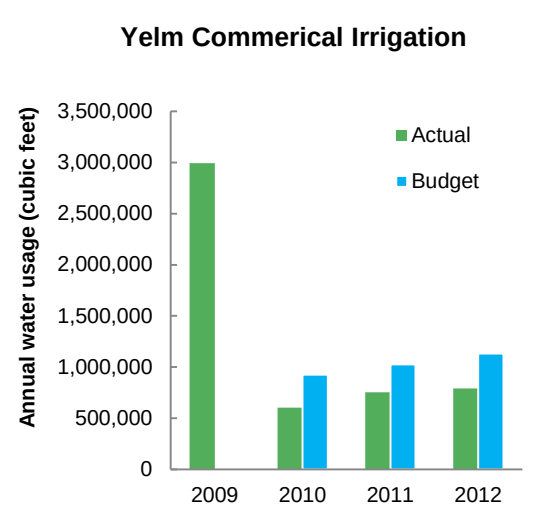
Restoration of impacted Puget Sound and stream shorelines is critical to salmon recovery.

Sustainability Activities Already Underway

Spotlight on Yelm: Water Efficiency

In April 2010, the Yelm City Council adopted a conservation program that established a water budget for businesses and homeowners' associations with an irrigation meter. The city based the 2010 irrigation budget on either the commercial customers' irrigation volume in 2009 or the Washington Irrigation Guide's recommendations for healthy and productive landscaping in Yelm. The goal was to cut in half the growing city's 2009 irrigation volume. They did it.

City officials read commercial customers' meters weekly during the irrigation season (mid-April thru mid-October) and provide notice of usage. A customer's irrigation meter is locked when the annual water budget is reached. Planting strips in the public right-of-way are irrigated with reclaimed water. The water budgets have made businesses and homeowner's associations more mindful that every drop counts — especially in Thurston County's fastest-growing city.



** 1 cubic foot equals 7.5 gallons*
Source: City of Yelm Community Development Department.

Citywide, Yelm's water use for commercial irrigation dropped by 80 percent between 2009 and 2010 — and it has been consistently 25-35 percent below the budget since the program started. The commercial landscape figures above do not include storm ponds and planter strips in the public right-of-way. Find more information on this and other water conservation efforts in the Case Studies of Water Efficiency in Thurston County, December, 2012: www.trpc.org/regionalplanning/sustainability/Documents/Scenarios_indicators/WaterConservationCaseStudies_v2.pdf

Sustainability Activities Already Underway

Guiding Growth – Healthy Watersheds: Translating Science into Local Policy

Protecting the Puget Sound, local streams, lakes, and groundwater will require new approaches and new partnerships. One example is a partnership between Thurston County, Thurston Regional Planning Council, the cities, Tribes, restoration partners, and state scientists. The project aims to identify management strategies that will:

1. Protect any "Intact" or "Sensitive" stream basins from going to "Impacted" in the future.
2. Protect any "Impacted" stream basins from going to "Degraded" in the future. Improve and restore some basins from "Impacted" to "Sensitive" in the future.

Basins in the Totten/Eld and Budd/Deschutes watersheds were characterized based on current conditions, and assessed for future risk. The partners selected three basins for future study, including future scenario modeling. The results will inform a range of management strategies, including land-use and stormwater regulations, stormwater infrastructure investments, and restoration activities. What is learned from these basins will help inform comprehensive plan and stormwater manual updates.

There are no easy answers or quick solutions. By taking a thoughtful, collaborative, and science-based approach with supportive technical tools, we will increase our chances of protecting and eventually restoring the health of the Thurston Region's watersheds and the Puget Sound Basin.

Intact and sensitive stream basins support a diversity of aquatic species and have good or excellent water quality. Upland basin-wide impervious cover is generally less than 10 percent, and forest cover is generally higher than 65 percent.

Impacted stream basins generally have fair water quality and support less diversity of aquatic species than intact and sensitive basins. Upland basin-wide impervious cover is generally between 10 and 25 percent, and forest cover is generally between 45 and 65 percent.

Degraded and highly degraded stream basins generally have poor water quality and support a low diversity of aquatic species. Upland basin-wide impervious cover is generally between over 25 percent and forest cover is generally less than 45 percent.

The following table includes Environment goals and actions, as well as the timeline, lead, and partners for each action. Timeline definitions are as follows: Underway, Short (1-3 yrs); Medium (3-10 yrs); Long (10-20 yrs). See Appendix for lead and partner acronyms and explanations.

ENVIRONMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL E-1	Reduce air pollution that endangers human health.			
Action E-1.1	Consider effect of land use decisions on air quality. Reduce the region's vehicle miles traveled by focusing more job and housing density where there is access to services as well as safe and viable choices for travel.	Short; Medium; Long	Cities/towns; TRPC; County	ORCAA; IT
Action E-1.2	Focus on education about the opportunities and choices to be made regionally, locally and by households to reduce air pollution.	Short; Medium; Long	Cities/towns; TRPC; County	TCHHS; Nonprofits; IT
Action E-1.3	Continue to monitor air quality and take actions to reduce air pollution.	Underway	TRPC	All
GOAL E-2	Reduce the region's carbon footprint and protect critical infrastructure in case of extreme weather or sea level rise.			
Action E-2.1	Develop a climate action plan (greenhouse gas emission reduction and mitigation). This will serve as a framework for how this region can reduce its climate impacts, while accommodating projected growth, and how it might best respond to the impacts of climate change on infrastructure, water supplies, risk reduction and emergency management, food systems, energy, community cohesion, and the economy. [Also Action L-2.1]	Short; Medium	TRPC	TCAT; IT; TE; PSE; County; Cities/towns
Action E-2.2	Establish regionally-consistent methodologies for evaluating climate-induced environmental impacts, assessing and prioritizing vulnerabilities, and understanding the sources of regional greenhouse gas emissions.	Short; Medium	TRPC	TCAT; TE; PSE; County; Cities/towns
Action E-2.3	Develop a greenhouse gas emissions framework for integrating emissions of heat-trapping gases analysis into transportation decision-making for those factors under the control of local government.	Short; Medium	TRPC	TCAT; TE; PSE; County; Cities/towns

ENVIRONMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action E-2.4	Look for ways to incorporate greenhouse gas emissions calculations into traffic impact analyses to identify those land use proposals that will have a higher-than-average per capita impact on the region.	Short; Medium	County; Cities/towns; TRPC	TCAT; TE; PSE
Action E-2.5	Use social marketing and other tools to educate and encourage behavior changes that reduce energy use.	Short	County; Cities/towns; TRPC	TE; IT; PSE; Nonprofits
Action E-2.6	Develop public/private partnerships to evaluate and use alternative energy sources in order to offer opportunities for energy use reduction.	Short; Medium; Long	Cities/towns; County; State	TCAT; TE; PSE
Action E-2.7	Ensure urban forestry plans are in place to promote and accommodate trees in appropriate ways throughout urban and suburban areas. The canopy will help easing heat sinks caused by hot sun on pavement and absorb carbon dioxide — the main heat-trapping gas that contributes to global climate change. Consider off-site mitigation and fee in-lieu programs for tree preservation, especially in redevelopment and infill areas.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	State
Action E-2.8	Offer incentives to keep and grow native trees. One example could be to create a tree exchange program (volunteers would grow native seedlings and offer pick-up/delivery, as well as detailed planting instructions).	Short	Cities/towns; County	State; Nonprofits

ENVIRONMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL E-3	Conserve and protect drinking water to meet the region's daily and long-term needs.			
Action E-3.1	Update local land-use regulations for wellhead protection areas and standards for aquifer recharge protection areas, and coordinate with affected state departments and stakeholders. This entails adopting consistent critical area regulations for wellhead-protection areas and aquifer-recharge areas that are consistent and based in best available science across the region.	Short; Medium	Cities/towns; County	State
Action E-3.2	Institute or continue with aggressive water-conservation measures that stretch existing drinking water supplies. May include incentives such as rebates or free fixtures for the following: high-efficiency toilets for commercial as well as single and multifamily residential high-efficiency toilets; composting toilets; water-efficient washing machines; weather-based irrigation controllers; commercial/residential irrigation system assessments; and, commercial and institutional WaterSmart retrofits. Public outreach may include banners, events and water conservation displays, as well as school education programs. Education efforts may include showing customer use patterns and pricing information for the different levels of water use. Include conservation-based rate structures in all jurisdictions. Cost effectiveness thresholds for different measures and for different cities will need to be considered.	Underway	Cities/towns; County; PUD; Utilities; LOTT	State
Action E-3.3	Identify a local entity to provide technical assistance to private well owners regarding water conservation and leakage detection.	Short	County	State
Action 3.4	Amend codes to allow rainwater harvesting for non-potable and irrigation uses. Encourage the State Department of Ecology to allow greater water reuse without violating water rights issues. For example, allow subdivisions to collect rainwater to provide for landscape irrigation.	Medium	State; County; Cities/towns	

ENVIRONMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action E-3.5	Change state water law to limit groundwater withdrawals from new exempt wells. This could entail the following: working with local legislators, affected state departments, and partners to change state water law; crafting legislation that allows local governments to adopt development regulations that restrict or limit groundwater withdrawals by exempt wells within a specific basin; developing water-restriction areas, which could include total or partially closed basins, locations with an imminent closure (either total or partial), or basins where an aquifer recharge study shows that an area has insufficient water supply to support a greater level of withdrawals. Considering the unintended consequences to residential food production, agriculture, and stock watering.	Medium; Long	County; Cities/towns; TRPC	State
Action E-3.6	Change state water law or adopt common local land-use regulations that prohibit individual exempt wells within Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) when municipalities or private suppliers can provide drinking water.	Medium; Long	County; Cities/towns; TRPC	State
Action E-3.7	Implement ground water banking. Thurston County could take a leadership role in allowing farming communities to share and swap water rights by working with local Nonprofits to create systems that protect water access for both fishing and agriculture by acquiring and managing water rights. This could be funded through a water district levee authority and impact fees.	Medium; Long	County	Nonprofits
Action E-3.8	Continue to rely on Thurston County Public Health and Social Service's Hazardous Waste Division and Education and Outreach Programs to coordinate efforts to reduce the use of all household and garden chemicals.	Underway	County	
Action E-3.9	Support Thurston County's Integrated Pest and Vegetation Management program and website as a cost-effective means of providing pest- and vegetation-control alternatives for home owners and land managers.	Underway	County	

ENVIRONMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
GOAL E-4	Protect, preserve and restore streams, wetlands, and shorelines to protect water quality.			
Action E-4.1	Enforce existing environmental-protection regulations.	Underway	Cities/towns; County; State	Federal
Action E-4.2	Adopt new development regulations to require the use of low-impact development (LID) practices where feasible.	Short	Cities/towns; County	State
Action E-4.3	Continue to support local efforts to identify and restore degraded streams and shorelines of Puget Sound. Target properties identified in local and regional restoration plans, and fund these actions through a combination of local, state, and federal resources. Establish a target date for removal or remediation of all problem culverts.	Underway	Lead entity	Tribes; County; Cities/towns; Nonprofits
Action E-4.4	Conduct stormwater retrofit studies for all Thurston County basins and establish funding to retrofit existing development to improve stream flows and water quality.	Short; Medium; Long	County; Cities/towns	TRPC
Action E-4.5	Continue to support the property acquisitions by the Capitol Land Trust and the Nisqually Land Trust of high-quality habitat lands. This could entail purchasing the habitat lands or acquiring an easement on part of the property; fund these actions through a combination of local, state, and federal resources.	Underway	Land trusts	
Action E-4.6	Update the wetlands inventory for the Thurston Region. Focus the mapping effort on parts of the county where local government has land-use control (about 615 square miles); make steady progress on an annual basis, and establishing a target date for project completion.	Medium; Long	TRPC; County	Tribes; Cities/towns; Nonprofits

ENVIRONMENT

Goals and Actions		Timeline	Lead	Partners
Action E-4.7	Continue to support a comprehensive stream-mapping effort throughout Thurston County. Use the mapping protocol established by the Wild Fish Conservancy to create detailed stream maps countywide; focus the mapping effort on parts of the county where local government has land-use control (about 615 square miles); allow local jurisdictions to use best available science for site-by-site review, including LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) –technology based topography, as an alternative to the inaccurate WDNR stream layer until the stream remapping is complete; and, make steady progress on an annual basis, and establishing a target date for project completion.	Underway	Nonprofits	Tribes; Cities/towns; County
Action E-4.8	Purchase development rights for high-quality stream basins. Do this by: identifying stream basins in the rural area where development rights would be purchased to preserve a healthy stream. Sources to finance actions could include using local conservation futures funds or a local funding source for restoration.	Medium	County	Nonprofits; Land trusts
Action E-4.9	Identify high-quality stream basins and adopt special development regulations to protect water quality. Regulations could include mandatory clustering for new subdivisions with a mandatory tree tract, minimum canopy cover standards, or limit for impervious areas.	Underway	County	Cities/towns; TRPC
Action E-4.10	Establish a goal of restoring a certain percentage of the riparian zone for each stream. Consider and evaluate a habitat restoration surcharge to stormwater utility rates to rehabilitate impacted stream and shoreline habitats. Expand incentives and requirements to restore riparian and shoreline areas as part of obtaining additional permits or building on properties.	Short; Medium	County	Cities/towns
Action E-4.11	Identify interjurisdictional restoration projects based upon watershed restoration plans, project identification strategies, stormwater capital facilities plans, and other mitigation efforts. A local example is Olympia, Lacey, and Yelm's joint water rights mitigation project on the Deschutes River near State Route 507, which is being funded by their water utility rates.	Underway	Cities/towns; County; Tribes	
Action E-4.12	Identify and secure a consistent funding source to support long-term monitoring of ground and surface water quality in the region's basins.	Short	County; Cities/towns	State

Continuing Conversation

We live in a global economy. Much of what we consume is produced elsewhere and vice versa. But imagine a time in the not-so-distant future when more of the food we grow and products we make are consumed and recycled within the Thurston Region. Now imagine that more of our town centers, neighborhoods, and urban corridors support greater transportation and housing choices. Imagine that more of our entrepreneurs start companies and hire workers, and that more of our homegrown kids choose challenging and rewarding careers right where they started. Imagine that.

During the past three years, thousands of Thurston Region residents engaged in a frank conversation about how our tiny corner of the map should look, feel and function in 2035. Folks hoped, worried, discussed, disagreed, and found common ground. We all took time to imagine because we care deeply about this place we call home. The document you're reading is the result of that conversation — but it's also just the start of a new one.

Creating Places — Preserving Spaces articulates a clear vision for 2035, sets goals and targets, and recommends actions to achieve them. Success requires sustained commitment and collaboration on the part of everyone in the community. You, your friends, your neighbors — everyone. The conversation must continue around kitchen tables, council chambers, coffee shops — everywhere.

The Thurston Regional Planning Council will continue to convene community stakeholders, seek resources to implement sustainability actions, and share information about the region's progress. In the meantime, you can read *Creating Places — Preserving Spaces* and other Sustainable Thurston documents online at www.sustainablethurston.org. We have the imagination and power to create a more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable future. Let's get to work.

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Appendix

Panel Members and Contributors

Energy Work Group
Graeme Sackrison • *Thurston Climate Action Team, Work Group Lead*
Casey Cochrane • *Puget Sound Energy*
Amy Tousley • *Puget Sound Energy*
Ramsey Zimmerman • *Thurston Energy*

Health & Human Services Panel
Dennis Mahar • *Lewis, Mason, Thurston Area Agency on Aging, Panel Chairperson*
Steve Albrecht • *Primary Care Physician*
Jim Cooper • *TOGETHER!*
Jim Geist • *Capella Health*
Holly Greenwood • *CHOICE Regional Health Network*
Steve Harrington • *The Water Company*
Paul Knox • *Thurston County United Way*
Vickie Larkin • *Thurston County Commissioners'Office*
John Masterson • *Behavioral Health Resources*
Sandy Nelson • *ESD 113 Sound to Harbor Head Start*
Steve Petersen • *Thurston County*
Mark Petrie • *Thurston County Utilities*
Cynthia Pratt • *Lacey City Council*
Charles Shelan • *Community Youth Services*
Rob Watilo • *Providence St. Peter Hospital*
Kristen West • *CHOICE Regional Health Network*
Lesley Wigen • *Thurston County Public Health*
Mike Williams • *The Williams Group*
Cathy Wolfe • *Thurston County Commissioner/Board of Health*
Laura Worf • *Olympia Master Builders*
Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department Staff
Deborah Allen • *Personal Health Division*
Mark Freedman • *Social Services Division*
Chris Hawkins • *Chronic Disease Prevention*
Sherri McDonald • *Director* (2011)
Mary Ann O'Garro • *Epidemiologist*
Don Sloma • *Director (2012-2013)*
Art Starry • *Environmental Health Division*
TRPC Staff
Karen Parkhurst • *Senior Planner*

Housing Panel
Doug DeForest • *Transportation Policy Board, business representative, Panel Chairperson*
Gary Aden • *Thurston County PHSS — Housing*
Dave Burns • *City of Lacey*
Mark Freedman • *Thurston County Public Health & Social Services*
Mark Furman • *Heritage Bank*
Billie Heath • *Rural Communities Assistance Corporation & Homes First*
Tedd Kelleher • *WA State Department of Commerce*
John Ketola • *NW EcoBuilding Guild*

Mark Kitabayashi • *Windermere Real Estate*
Chris Lowell • *Housing Authority of Thurston County*
Julie McBride • *MC Construction, Olympia Master Builders*
Eileen McKenzie-Sullivan • *Senior Services for South Sound*
Maureen McLemore • *Community Youth Services*
Connie Rivera • *Thurston County PHSS-Housing*
Anna Schlecht • *City of Olympia*
Tim Seth • *Washington Landlord Association*
Charles Shelan • *Community Youth Services*
Theresa Slusher • *Housing Authority of Thurston County*
Trudy Soucoup • *Homes First*
Chris van Daalen • *NW EcoBuilding Guild*
John Walsh • *Community Action Council of Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties*
Angela White • *Olympia Master Builders*
Panel Support
Mike Burnham • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Kathy McCormick • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Regional Staff
Mary McBride • *HUD Regional Administrator*
Michael Clyburn • *HUD Community Planning and Development*
Jack Peters • *Director - HUD Community Planning and Development*

Land Use, Climate Change & Transportation
Grant Beck • *City of Yelm*
Dennis Bloom • *Intercity Transit*
Amy Buckler • *City of Olympia*
Dave Burns • *City of Lacey*
Jeremy Davis • *Thurston County*
David Ginther • *City of Tumwater*
Mike Harbour • *Intercity Transit*
Chris Hawkins • *Thurston County Public Health*
Cari Hornbein • *City of Olympia*
Jennifer Kenney • *City of Olympia*
George Kovich • *WSDOT*
Mike Matlock • *City of Tumwater*
Tami Merriman • *City of Yelm*
Stacey Ray • *City of Olympia*
Carole Richmond • *Thurston Climate Action Team*
Elizabeth Robbins • *WSDOT*
Graeme Sackrison • *Thurston Climate Action Team*
Tim Smith • *City of Tumwater*
Todd Stamm • *City of Olympia*
Art Starry • *Thurston County Public Health*
Sophie Stimson • *City of Olympia*
Veena Tabbuttt • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Rick Walk • *City of Lacey*
Randy Wesselman • *City of Olympia*
Work Group Support
Thera Black • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
John Druelinger • *Thurston County*

Local Food Systems Panel
Robert Coit • *Thurston County Food Bank, Panel Chair*
Jackie Barrett Sharar • *Transportation Policy Board*
Stephanie Blumhagen • *United Way of Thurston County*
Stephen Buxbaum • *City of Olympia*
Zena Edwards • *WSU Thurston County Extension*
Emy Ellings • *WA State Department of Health*
Jaclyn Ford • *WA State Department of Agriculture*
Kim Gaffi • *GRuB*
Debby Gaffney • *North Thurston Public Schools*
TJ Johnson • *Sustainable South Sound, The Evergreen State College*
Dawna Kelley-Donohue • *Tenino City Council, Tenino Farmers Market*
Heather Kowalewski • *The Evergreen State College MES Student*
Ron Lawson • *City of Lacey*
Sabine Meuse • *WA Dept. of Health*
Kellie McNelly • *ROOF Community Services*
Becca Pilcher • *Thurston County*
Tess Rios • *South Puget Scound Community College*
Sandra Romero • *Thurston County*
Barb Scavezze • *NW EcoBuilding Guild*
Lisa Smith • *Enterprise for Equity*
Karen Valenzuela • *Thurston County*
Lesley Wigen • *Thurston County Public Health*
Peter Witt • *The Hobbs Group, Kiwanis Food Bank Garden Project, American Farmland Trust*
Panel Support
Karen Parkhurst • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*

North County Schools Panel
Joan Cathey • *Tumwater City Council, Panel Chair*
Ryan Andrews • *Lacey Planning Department*
Dave Burns • *Lacey Planning Department*
John Clark • *Tumwater School District*
Virgil Clarkson • *Lacey City Council*
Chris Hawkins • *Thurston County Public Health and Social Services*
Doug Johnston • *Tumwater Public Works*
Tom Kuehn • *OSPI*
Mike Laverty • *North Thurston Public School Board*
Randy Millhollen • *PSESD*
Mel Murray • *Tumwater Public School*
Chuck Namit • *North Thurston Public Schools Board*
Dan Payne • *ESD 112*
Cynthia Pratt • *Lacey City Council, Alternate Panel Chair*

Peter Rex • *Olympia School District*
Erin Scheel • Intercity Transit Youth Services
Kerry Tarullo • Olympia Public Works
Eric Weight • North Thurston Public Schools
Panel Support
Paul Brewster • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Kathy McCormick • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*

Public Outreach & Education Panel
Jackie Barrett Sharar • *Transportation Policy Board, citizen representative, Panel Chair*
Mike Beehler • *Transportation Policy Board, citizen representative*
Doug DeForest • *Transportation Policy Board, business representative*
Jerry Farmer • *Transportation Policy Board, business representative*
Holly Gadbaw • *citizen representative, Western WA Growth Management Hearings Board, retired*
Michael Gaffney • *Washington State University, Government Studies and Services*
Meg Kester • Intercity Transit
Jeff Kleingartner • *Timberland Regional Library*
Jim Longley • *Transportation Policy Board, Nisqually Tribe representative*
Janet Rogerson • *WA State Department of Commerce*
Christina Sanders • *Washington State University, Government Studies and Services*
Carolyn St. Claire • *League of Women Voters of Washington Education Fund*
Cynthia Stewart • *Sustainability Roundtable of Thurston County, League of Women Voters of Thurston County, Alternate Panel Chair*
Karen Verrill • *League of Women Voters of Washington Education Fund*

Education Materials
Heather Ballash • *WA Dept. of Commerce*
Janet Rogerson • *WA Dept. of Commerce*
Jill Severn • *League of Woman Voters*
Carolyn St. Claire • *League of Woman Voters*
Karen Verrill • *League of Woman Voters*
Panel Support
Scott Hollis • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Kathy McCormick • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Karen Parkhurst • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Veena Tabbutt • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Erin Wheeler • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*

Public Safety Panel
Jim Quackenbush • *TCOMM 9-1-1, Panel Chair*
Tim Braniff • *Thurston County Sheriff's Office*
Jim Broman • *Lacey Fire District 3*
Alan Carr • *Town of Bucoda*
Larry Dibble • *City of Olympia*
Kathy Dickson • *Lacey Fire District 3*
Chris Edmark • *Thurston County*
Kathy Estes • *Thurston County Emergency Management*
Mark Gregory • *Bald Hills Fire Department*
Rita Hutcheson (Retired) • *SE Thurston Fire Authority*
Sandy Johnson • *Thurston County*
Joe Kautz • *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Mark King • *City of Yelm*
Mel Low • *East Olympia Fire District #6*
Jim McGarva • *Tumwater Fire Department*
Steve North • *McLane Black Lake Fire Department*
Christen Anton Peters • *Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney's Office*
Dusty Pierpoint • *City of Lacey*
Steve Romines • *Thurston County Medic One*
Kathleen Seeley • *TCOMM9-1-1*
Todd Stancil • *City of Yelm*
Brian Stewart • *SE Thurston Fire Authority*
John Stines • *City of Tumwater*
Pete Suver • *Thurston County Medic One*
Bill Terhune • *South Bay Fire Dept.*
Howard Thronson • *Saint Martins University*
Brian VanCamp • *South Bay Fire Department*
Terry Ware • *Olympic Ambulance Company*
Jon Weiks • *Tumwater Police Department*
John Wood • *Griffin Fire Dept.*
Greg Wright • *Olympia Fire Department*
Ralph Wyman • *Chehalis Tribe*
Panel Support
Paul Brewster • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Jailyn Brown • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*

Solid Waste Work Group
Peter Guttchen • *Thurston County Public Works*
Loni Fine Hanka • *Thurston County Public Works*
Ron Jones • *City of Olympia Public Works*
Colleen Minion • *Thurston County Public Works*
Emily Orme • *Thurston County Public Works*
Scott Schimelfenig • *Thurston County Public Works*
Brian Stafki • *Thurston County Public Works*
Terri Thomas • *Thurston County Public Works*
Gerald Tousley • *Thurston County Health and Social Services*
Work Group Support
Kathy McCormick • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Steven Morrison • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Jolene Staniskowski • Intern, *Thurston Regional Planning Council*

South County Schools Panel

Bret Brodersen • *Tenino City Council, Panel Chair*
Grant Beck • *Yelm Community Planning*
Steve Bennett • *WA Dept. of Transportation*
Fred Evander • *Thurston Regional Planning Council, representing Bucoda, Tenino, Rainier*
Kim Fry • *Rochester School District No. 401, Superintendent*
Tim Garchow • *Rainier School District No. 307, Superintendent*
Steve Kim • *WA Dept. of Transportation*
Kathy McCormick • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Dennis McVey • *Rainier City Council*
TJ Nedrow • *WA Dept. of Transportation*
Russell Pickett • *Tenino School District No. 402, Superintendent*
Connor Stakelin • *Tenino High School Student, Leadership Program*
Andy Wolf • *Yelm Community Schools, Superintendent*
Panel Support
Paul Brewster • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Fred Evander • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Kathy McCormick • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*

Blue Ribbon Economic Development Panel

Heber Kennedy • *GeoMetrics, LLC; Panel Chair*
Reid Bates • *Express Pros*
David Burnett • *Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation*
Jean Carr • *Shea Carr Jewell*
Jeanne Carras • *Bonaventure*
Jeff Davis • *Port of Olympia*
Doug DeForest • *Western States Contractors Alliance*
John Doan • *City of Tumwater*
Mike / Lisa Eisenmann • *Capitol City Press*
Justin Erickson • *Harbor Wholesale*
Brian Fluetsch • *Sunset Air*
Ed Galligan • *Port of Olympia*
Jim Geist • *Capital Medical Center*
Ron Harding • *City of Yelm*
Dr. Roy Heynderickx • *Saint Martin's University*
Ted / Tanya Jernigan • *Diamond Technologies, Inc.*
Mike Kennedy • *PacMtn Workforce Development Council*
Zach Kosturos • *Prime Locations*
Ron Lawson • *City of Lacey*
Tim Madely • *Big Toys*
Doug Mah • *City of Olympia*
Bill McGregor • *Port of Olympia*
Sandra Miller • *The Governor Hotel*
Dr. Riley Moore • *Saint Martin's University*
Jace Munson • *Berschauer Phillips*
Dr. Gerald Pumphrey • *South Puget Sound Community College*
Dr. Thomas L. "Les" Purce • *The Evergreen State College*
Renee Ries • *Fairchild Record Search*
Sandra Romero • *Thurston County*
Andy Ryder • *City of Lacey*
Graeme Sackrison • *Thurston Climate Action Team*
David Schaffert • *Thurston County Chamber of Commerce*
Brad Shell • *Fish Tale Ale*
Priscilla Terry • *Prime Locations*
John Teutsch • *Teutsch Partners, LLC*
Brian Vance • *Heritage Bank*
Donna Weaver • *Dream Weavers*
Gail Wootan • *The Evergreen State College*
Chris Wilcox • *Wilcox Farms*
Panel Support
Michael Cade • *Thurston County Economic Development Council*
Jason Robertson • *J Robertson and Company*
Renee Sunde • *Thurston County Economic Development Council*
Lon Wyrick • *Thurston Regional Planning Council Executive Director*

Water Infrastructure Panel

Grant Beck • *Yelm Community Planning and Development Director*
Jim Bachmeier • *Thurston County Resource Stewardship*
Peter C. Brooks, PE • *City of Lacey Public Works*
Dave Dafoe • *City of Tenino Public Works*
Lisa Dennis-Perez • *LOTT Clean Water Alliance*
Roger Giebelhaus • *Thurston County Public Works*
Jon Hinton, PE • *City of Rainier Public Works*
Liz Hoenig • *City of Olympia Public Works*
Stephanie Ray • *City of Yelm Executive Department*
Barb Scavezze • *NW EcoBuilding Guild - South Sound Chapter*
Dan Smith • *City of Tumwater Public Works*
Art Starry • *Thurston County Environmental Health*
Chris Stearns • *Thurston PUD, Commissioner, Panel Chair*

Alan Vanell • *Town of Bucoda, Councilmember*
John Weidenfeller • *Thurston PUD*
Panel Support
Fred Evander • *Thurston Regional Planning Council, representing Bucoda, Tenino, Rainier*
Steven Morrison • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*

Water Quality Work Group
Pat Allen • *Thurston County Resource Stewardship*
Grant Beck • *Yelm Community Planning and Development Director*
Dave Burns • *City of Lacey*
Scott Clark • *Thurston County Planning Dept.*
Amy Hatch-Winecka • *Thurston Conservation District*
Roger Giebelhaus • *Thurston County Public Works*
Jamie Glasgow • *Wild Fish Conservancy*
Allison Osterberg • *Thurston County Planning Dept.*
Art Starry • *Thurston County Environmental Health Division*
Cindy Wilson • *Thurston County Planning Dept.*
Work Group Support
Steven Morrison • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Veena Tabbutt • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*

Planner's Work Group
Ryan Andrews • *City of Lacey*
Grant Beck • *City of Yelm*
Leonard Bauer • *WA Dept. of Commerce*
Thera Black • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Dennis Bloom • *Intercity Transit*
Paul Brewster • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Jailyn Brown • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Amy Buckler • *City of Olympia*
Jared Burbidge • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Dave Burns • *City of Lacey*
Michael Burnham • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Michael Cade • *Thurston County Economic Development Council*
Scott Clark • *Thurston County*
Jeremy Davis • *Thurston County*
John Druelinger • *Thurston County*
Fred Evander • *Thurston Regional Planning Council, representing Bucoda, Tenino, Rainier*
Ann Freeman-Manzanares • *Intercity Transit*
Mike Gaffney • *Thurston County*
David Ginther • *City of Tumwater*
Chris Hawkins • *Thurston County*
Cari Hornbein • *City of Olympia*
Jennifer Kenny • *City of Olympia*
Molly Levitt • *Thurston County*
Jim Longley • *Nisqually Indian Tribe*
Amy Loudermilk • *Chehalis Tribe*
Mike Matlock • *City of Tumwater*
Amy McMahan • *WA Office of Financial Management*
Tami Merriman • *City of Yelm*
Steven Morrison • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Barath Paladugu • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Karen Parkhurst • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Janet Rogerson • *WA Dept. of Commerce*
Sarah Selstrom • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Tim Smith • *City of Tumwater*
Keith Stahley • *City of Olympia*
Todd Stamm • *City of Olympia*
Sophie Stimson • *City of Olympia*
Renee Sunde • *Thurston County Economic Development Council*
Ann Sweeney • *WA Dept. of Enterprise Services*
Michael Van Gelder • *WA Dept. of Enterprise Services*
Rick Walk • *City of Lacey*
Cindy Wilson • *Thurston County*
Lon Wyrick • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Work Group Support
Holly Gilbert • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Kathy McCormick • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*
Veena Tabbutt • *Thurston Regional Planning Council*

Thurston Regional Planning Council Staff

Thera Black, Senior Planner
Paul Brewster, Senior Planner
Jailyn Brown, Senior Planner
Holly Gilbert, Senior Planner
Kathy McCormick, Senior Planner
Steven Morrison, Senior Planner
Karen Parkhurst, Senior Planner
Veena Tabbutt, Senior Planner
Bharath Paladugu, Principal Transportation Modeler
Dave Read, Information Technology Manager
Scott Carte, GIS Coordinator
Michael Burnham, Associate Planner
Fred Evander, Associate Planner
Rosalie Bostwick, Office Manager

Sarah Selstrom, Administrative Assistant
Michael Ambrogi, GIS Analyst
Jeff Holcomb, GIS Analyst
Erin Cahill, Project Assistant
Scott Hollis, Project Assistant
Erin Wheeler, Project Assistant
Christopher Montero, Graphics Technician
Burlina Montgomery, Office Assistant III
Michelle Hernandez, Office Specialist I
Nathan Nadenicek, Intern
Jolene Stanislowski, Intern

Lon Wyrick, Executive Director
Jared Burbidge, Assistant Director

Action Table Definitions

Timeline: Action will likely begin ….

Underway	
Short	(1-3 yrs)
Medium	(3-10 yrs)
Long	(10-20 yrs)

Lead: Entity that will likely move the action forward

Partners: Partners actively participate in the project and bring resources (money or time) to the table. Key partners are included in action table.

Action Leads and Partners

Name	Description
Cities/towns	Bucoda, Lacey, Olympia, Rainier, Tenino, Tumwater, and Yelm
Chambers	Chambers of Commerce
County	Thurston County
Courts	Thurston County District and Superior Courts and Municipal Courts
Developers	Development community – includes builders, developers, and financial institutions for both residential and commercial buildings
DOH	Washington State Department of Health
EDC	Thurston Economic Development Council
Federal	Federal agencies
Finance	Financial community (banks, lending institutions)
Fire districts	15 fire districts and the three cities (Bucoda, Olympia, and Tumwater) with independent fire districts

HCA	Washington State Health Care Authority
HHS	Health and Human Services
Higher Ed	South Puget Sound Community College, St. Martins' University, The Evergreen State College
HOME Consortium	The HOME Consortium is an eight member advisory board responsible for the multi-jurisdictional administration of Thurston County's housing programs
Hospitals	Capital Medical Center; Providence St. Peter Hospital
Housing Authority	Housing Authority of Thurston County
IT	Intercity Transit
JBLM	Joint Base Lewis-McChord
Land trusts	Capitol Land Trust and Nisqually Land Trust
Lead entity	Lead entities are the community-based groups that develop strategies to restore salmon habitat
Local Health Care Providers	Organizations involved in providing health care in the Thurston Region
LOTT	LOTT Clean Water Alliance (serves Lacey-Olympia-Tumwater-Thurston County)
Nonprofits	A variety of nonprofit organizations
North County cities	Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Thurston County
ORCAA	Olympia Region Clean Air Agency
Port	Port of Olympia
PUD	Thurston Public Utility District
PSE	Puget Sound Energy
PT	Pierce Transit
R/T	Rural – Tribal Transportation
School districts	9 school districts within Thurston County (K-12)
South County cities/places	Bucoda, Grand Mound, Rainier, Rochester, Tenino, and Yelm (Grand Mound and Rochester are represented by Thurston County)
State	State agencies

STEDI	South Thurston Economic Development Initiative – a consortium of partners initiated by Bucoda, Rainier, Tenino, Yelm, Grand Mound, and Rochester, in collaboration with agencies including the Thurston Economic Development Council, Thurston Regional Planning Council, Washington State University Cooperative Extension, and the Olympia-Lacey-Tumwater Visitor & Convention Bureau.
TCAT	Thurston Climate Action Team
TCOMM	Thurston 9-1-1 Communications
TCPHSS	Thurston County Public Health and Social Services
TESC	The Evergreen State College
TE	Thurston Energy. A program of the Thurston Economic Development Council
Thurston County BOH	Thurston County Board of Health
Thurston Food System Council	A grassroots organization with members representing Cities/towns, County, Nonprofits (Slow Food, Sustainable South Sound), growers, processors and other food related businesses, TRPC, WSU Note: The Local Food System panel and other community members explored various models of council/advisory groups and elected to begin by forming the grassroots Thurston Food System Council. While elected officials participate in this group, it is not affiliated with any city/town, county or regional government and is not a policy council. Policymakers may want to explore different models, with a greater policy focus. This may be as a subcommittee of TRPC or other entity. While the matrix notes the Thurston Food System Council as lead for a number of action items, they do not – at this time – have the capacity or resources to act as lead without funding and community support.
TOGETHER!	Nonprofit organization dedicated to engaging and mobilizing families, schools and the community to advance the health, safety and success of youth in Thurston County.
Tribes	One or some of the three tribal governments in our region: Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, Nisqually Indian Tribe, and Squaxin Island Tribe

TRPC	Thurston Regional Planning Council
TT	Thurston Thrives
Utilities	Private and Public utility providers. Includes telecommunications and fiber network providers.
VCB	Visitor & Convention Bureau
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation
WSU	Washington State University Cooperative Extension
WUTC	Washington Utilities Trade Commission

Endnotes

[1]The Baseline Future is derived from TRPC's population and Employment Forecast. Full documentation can be found on www.trpc.org/data/pages/popfore.aspx

[2]Thurston Regiona Planning Council (2013). "Preferred Land Use Scenario and Key Indicators." www.sustainablethurston.org.

[3]Bettencourt, L.M.A., J. Lobo, D. Delbing, C. Kuhnert, G.G. West (2007). "Growth, innovation, scaling, and the pace of life in cities." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 104 (17); 7301-7306.

[4]Thurston Regional Planning Council (2013). "Current Affordable Housing Need and Fair Share Housing Distribution for Thurston County - Draft Methodology."

[5]Washington State University (2012). Sustainable Thurston Project Baseline Survey Results.

[6]Easton G., and Owen, J. (2009). "Creating Walkable Neighborhood Business Districts An Exploration of the demographic and physical characteristics needed to support local retail services."

[7]Fisher, J., and Mitchell, L. (2009). "Thurston County Farmland Inventory."

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