CHAPTER 8

TRANSPORTATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Thurston County's transportation system connects communities, supports businesses, and offers recreational opportunities. It's the county's greatest asset but needs substantial funding to maintain. As the county grows, road congestion increases, creating noise that impacts commuters and residents. Planning must align with land use and consider the needs of current and future users. The Transportation Chapter outlines goals and policies for road design and reducing congestion. It also focuses on bike and pedestrian facilities. Other sections address the county's rail, air, and bus networks. Our living and working habits shape how Thurston County's transportation system serves a changing population. In the coming decades, some may drive alone. Others might use buses, bikes, or other options to reach jobs, schools, or other places. The system must work for everyone, no matter how they travel, and be effective, fair, and secure.

2045 Update: Critical Issues

The county's population is projected to increase by nearly 30% by 2045.[1] Over the same period, commuting into and out of Thurston County is projected to rise by 40 percent.[2] From 2013 to 2023, construction costs rose almost 53 percent.[3] A $1 million project in 2013 now costs over $1.5 million. With inflation and no rise in the federal gas tax, there will be less money for transportation. The gas tax is a key grant source for Thurston County. In the next planning period, decision-makers will face critical decisions, including:

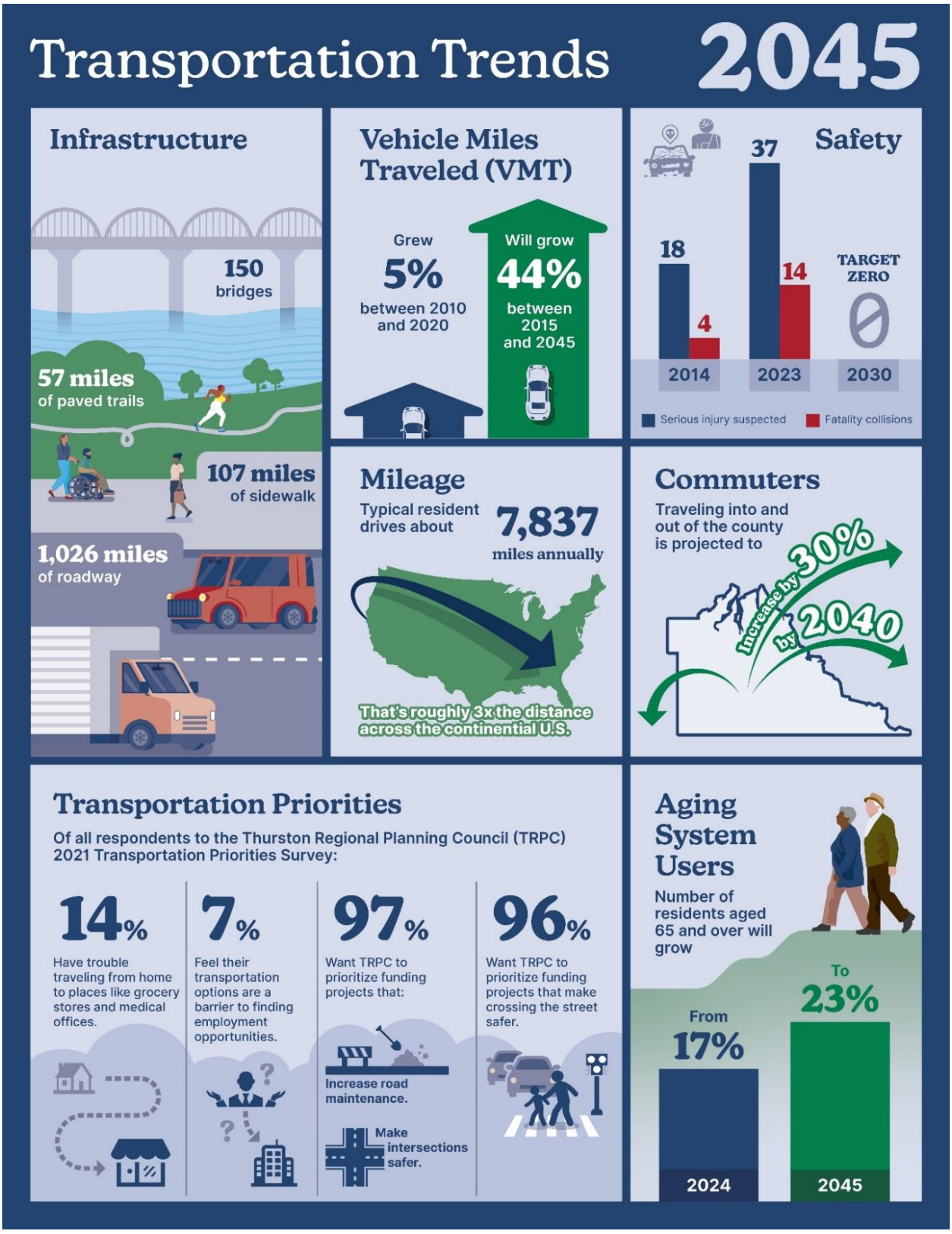
- Financing the maintenance, preservation, and expansion of the transportation network as the traffic volume grows.
- Funding the network's maintenance and expansion to handle growing traffic.
- Maintaining acceptable service levels and a safe transportation network.
- Reducing reliance on cars and serving the needs of public transportation for people.
- Minimizing the environmental impact of transportation systems.
- Adapting to new transportation technologies, such as electric and driverless vehicles, is essential.
- Preserving and promoting passenger rail options in the Puget Sound Corridor.

1 Thurston County Regional Planning Council - Population, Housing, and Employment Data, accessed July 2024

2 Thurston County Regional Planning Council – County-wide Employment and Commute Forecast, January 2018

3 Engineering News-Record Construction Cost Index for Seattle

- Reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled.


Transportation Trends 2045
Infrastructure
150 bridges
57 miles of paved trails
107 miles of sidewalk
1,026 miles of roadway
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
Grew 5% between 2010 and 2020
Will grow 44% between 2015 and 2045
Safety
18
4
37
14
TARGET ZERO
0
2014
2023
2030
Serious injury suspected
Fatality collisions
Mileage
Typical resident drives about 7,837 miles annually
That's roughly 3x the distance across the continential U.S.
Commuters
Traveling into and out of the county is projected to increase by 30% by 2040
Transportation Priorities
Of all respondents to the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) 2021 Transportation Priorities Survey:
14% Have trouble traveling from home to places like grocery stores and medical offices.
7% Feel their transportation options are a barrier to finding employment opportunities.
97% Want TRPC to prioritize funding projects that:
Increase road maintenance.
Make intersections safer.
96% Want TRPC to prioritize funding projects that make crossing the street safer.
Aging System Users
Number of residents aged 65 and over will grow
From 17%
To 23%
2024
2045

2. PLANNING CONTEXT FOR TRANSPORTATION

GROWTH MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires a transportation plan that supports efficient multimodal systems based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city plans. The plan should include:

- A forecast of multimodal transportation for at least 10 years.
- An inventory of existing air, water, and ground transportation facilities and services.
- Identification of the transportation facilities and public services needed for Urban Growth Areas.
- Regionally coordinated levels of service (LOS) standards for state highways, locally owned arterials, and transit routes.
- Actions to bring facilities and services up to established LOS standards.
- A projection of state and system demand.
- An analysis of future funding capability.
- A description of intergovernmental coordination efforts.
- A description of existing and planned Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies.
- An active transportation component.
- A transition plan for transportation as required under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- A climate change resiliency element that reduces overall greenhouse gas emissions.
- The GMA requires a transportation element that encourages efficient multimodal systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
- Include a forecast of multimodal transportation for a minimum of 10 years.
- Inventory existing air, water, and ground transportation facilities and services.
- Identify the transportation facilities and public facilities and services needed to serve Urban Growth Areas.
- Include regionally coordinated multimodal LOS standards for state highways, locally owned arterials, and transit routes.
- Identify actions to bring facilities and services to established LOS standards.
- Include a projection of state and system demand.
- Include an analysis of future funding capability.
- Include a description of intergovernmental coordination efforts.
- Include a description of existing and planned TDM strategies.
- Include an active transportation component.
- Include a transition plan for transportation as required under Title II of the ADA.
- Include a climate change resiliency element that reduces overall greenhouse gas emissions.

A. Comprehensive Plan Overview

This plan reflects the County Wide Planning Policies. They stress an efficient, multimodal transport system.

This chapter's intergovernmental policies (Goal 2, Objective D) focus on:

- Coordinating regional transportation plans
- Coordinating local transportation plans
- Working with the Thurston Regional Planning Council
- Updating the Regional Transportation Plan Regularly

These commitments ensure a connected and efficient transportation network for our community.

B. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) guides local agency decisions on transportation and land use through 2045. It supports a transportation system that offers:

- Safe travel
- Efficient travel
- Affordable travel choices for people and goods

The Comprehensive Plan includes important elements for carrying out the regional plan:

- Transportation Element (Chapter 8)
- Capital Facilities Element (Chapter 9)

This chapter's goals, objectives, and policies are adapted from policy language from the Regional Transportation Plan.

C. Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) lists Thurston County's top transport project priorities for the next six years. The TIP is created to comply with RCW 36.81 and WAC 136.15 and 136.16, and is part of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

3. HIGHWAYS AND ROADS

Roadways serve three basic roles in meeting our transportation needs in Thurston County:

- Safety: To provide for safe travel.
- Mobility: To provide for the movement of people and goods.
- Access: To provide access to land.

These three concepts—safety, mobility, and access—are key to designing and locating various classes of roadways.

Types of Roadways

- Arterial Highways and Roads: These are the primary providers of mobility within the county.
- Local Urban and Rural Roadways: These provide land access.
- Collector Roadways: These perform a collector/distribution function, connecting arterial roads and local streets.

Each of these roadways allows safe travel from one destination to another, usually by several different modes.

Complete Streets

Complete streets combine all three roles into one functional classification. They enable safe access and travel for all ages, abilities, and users, including:

- Pedestrians
- Cyclists
- Motorists
- Transit users

A. Design and Locational Standards

Roadways in Thurston County should consider their surroundings. This means examining transport needs and considering land use, development, economic activities, and the environment.

In urban growth areas, roads must support higher-density development. They should balance the needs of drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and locals. Rural roads, serving less dense but often faster traffic, are built to different standards. Urban road standards apply within urban growth area boundaries. They follow joint plans and agreements.

Roadway classifications must focus on access or mobility. A major traffic road should limit access to maintain flow efficiency. Arterial or collector roads have access only at intersections or widely spaced driveways. If maximizing access is the goal, local access roads should be designated.

The Thurston County Code has design guidelines for the Grand Mound Urban Growth Area. These include regulations for signs, parking, landscaping, site design, and access. Such guidelines aim to create a 'sense of place' for Grand Mound.

B. Transportation System Capacity & Level of Service

Thurston County used the regional transportation model[7] to conduct the analysis in this chapter. This model helps identify broad issues related to transportation.

The model allows for the analysis of several important factors:

7 The regional transportation model is a mathematical representation of supply and demand for travel in the region and represents the choices that people here make to travel. The regional transportation model is maintained by the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC).

- How system efficiency changes over time: This includes comparing network usage with investments in capacity projects.
- Travel volumes: This measures how much we travel, expressed as the number of trips predicted to utilize each part of the model network, including:
    - Vehicle lanes.
    - Trails.
    - Transit routes.
- Travel modes: This looks at how we travel, such as:
    - Walking.
    - Cycling.
    - Single occupancy vehicles.
    - Shared rides.
    - School buses.
    - Transit.
- Vehicle miles traveled: This indicates how far we travel.

- Average speed: This measures how long it takes to travel.

Current and Future Conditions

Maps A-1, A-2, and A-3 show the current conditions (2021) and future conditions (2045) for the two land use alternatives.

The regional transportation model is a mathematical representation of the supply and demand for travel in the region. It reflects the choices people make when traveling. The Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) maintains this model.

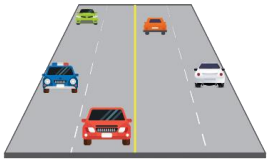
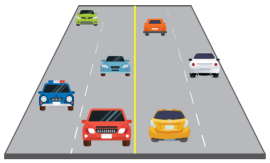
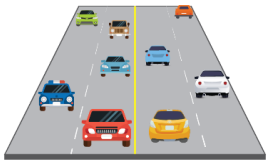
Thurston County uses Level of Service[9] (LOS) to measure traffic congestion. This measure describes how well a transportation facility operates from a traveler's perspective. It considers:

- Travel times.
- Freedom to maneuver.
- Traffic interruptions.
- Comfort.
- Convenience.

There are six LOS measurements, like an academic grading system (A-F). They represent conditions from "free flowing" (A) to "gridlock" (F) (See Table 8-1).

County LOS standards were updated in 2023 to reflect the County's projected population

Table 8-1. Vehicle Level of Service

Level of Service	Description	Flow Conditions
A	Highest driver comfort; free-flowing traffic	
B	High degree of driver comfort; little delay	
C	Acceptable level of driver comfort; some delay	
D	Some driver frustration; moderate delay	
E	High level of driver frustration; high delay	
F	Highest level of driver frustration; excessive delay	

9 LOS is derived from a Volume-to-Capacity (V/C) ratio analysis, a numeric calculation of how much traffic a facility was designed to carry compared to how much traffic it actually carries. The closer a facility comes to carrying 100 percent of the traffic it was designed to carry, the lower the LOS measurement.

growth and its commitment to improving:

- Safety.
- Accessibility.
- Efficient movement of people and goods.

These updates are part of the County's goals and policies.

- Updated Level of Service Standard for Rural Areas

The County has updated the LOS standard to LOS D in the rural areas. This change moves away from the LOS C standard, which many communities find unrealistic and unreasonable.

Key Changes

- Evaluate intersections based on peak-hour delay.
- A single peak hour delay threshold is better than the County's 2-hour standard. It removes confusion.
- Use average vehicle delay for side-street stop-controlled intersections.
- The usual metric from the Highway Capacity Manual for these intersections is approach delay. This metric defines intersection operations based on side-street traffic, even when few drivers turn from these roadways.
- It is not sensible to base major capital improvements on delays experienced by just a few vehicles. This could result in an unaffordable capital list for the County.
- Build safeguards to ensure the County's system is safe.
- The County cannot eliminate delays for low-volume side street approaches. It aims to address extreme cases to prevent risky behavior.
- The County has set an upper limit of 60 seconds for acceptable delay at any given approach.
- If delays exceed 60 seconds, the intersection fails, even if the total delay is below the threshold.

Study of Intersections in Thurston County

We conducted a study of 78 intersections located across unincorporated Thurston County. This analysis helped us understand their service level performance.

Current and Future Conditions

We examined both current conditions and future land use options. The results for all intersections are in Appendix A.

Existing Conditions

Under existing conditions, none of the intersections failed (see Map A-1).

Future Projections

Maps A-2 and A-3 show the future level of service projections.

Action Alternative Scenarios

The Action Alternative, or 'Buildable Lands Growth' Scenario, resulted in:

- 14 out of 78 study intersections failing to meet LOS standards.
- Eight failures in the '5% Rural Growth' Scenario.

The Action Alternative aims to:

- Increase density in urban areas with transport services.
- Limit rural growth where services are scarce.
- Reduce carpool and ride-share options due to longer distances and limited active transport.

Multimodal Level of Service Standards

Thurston County must also adopt multimodal level of service (MMLOS) standards in addition to the vehicular LOS standards.

These standards recognize the need for adequate facilities for different transport modes. They are based on a layered network approach used during planning.

Key Focus Areas

- The approach examines:
- Driving.
- Active transport.
- Transit.

It looks for their interrelations and identifies key corridors and connections that require investment to ensure network mobility. MMLOS standards are discussed in Section 5.

Urban and Rural Operating Conditions

The difference between urban and rural operating conditions is a crucial policy issue. What works on urban streets may not work on rural roads. Urban streets have slow speed limits, frequent turns, and signals. Rural roads have fewer turns, higher speeds, and no signals. Thurston County designs roads and mobility solutions with context in mind. It also considers the Level of Service. In crowded cities, people will rely on alternative transportation. This includes transit, car and vanpool programs, and bike or pedestrian paths. These options will maximize investments. In low-density urban sprawl and rural areas, alternative transport can't serve people well. This leads to a reliance on cars, raising costs and lowering quality of life. The next sections explain the Level of Service standards and exceptions for rural and urban areas.

Strategy Corridors

LOS E is the standard for the T-shaped urban corridor. This corridor connects downtown Olympia with busy areas in:

- West Olympia (Capitol Mall/Harrison Avenue).
- Tumwater (Capitol Boulevard/Trosper Road).
- Lacey (Woodland District and Hawks Prairie).

These roadways offer various services, including hospitals, shopping centers, and industrial warehouses. As a result, traffic volumes are heavy, and congestion is common.

We usually think a transportation system's capacity is the space for cars. But Thurston County looks at capacity differently. They consider it the ability to move:

- People.
- Goods.
- Services.

The street system can move more people when more trips are made by:

- Walking.
- Biking.
- Riding the bus.

On streets with unacceptable congestion levels, where widening is not an option, Thurston County will explore:

- Transportation technology.
- Facilities to support walking, biking, or transit.

These improvements aim to enhance the efficiency of the roadway system.

Many areas in the county need these improvements because some roads cannot be widened any further. These roads are known as “Strategy Corridors.” They are at maximum width, face environmental constraints, or are next to fully built-out areas.

Thurston County and the region have designated main urban arterials and collectors as “Urban Strategy Corridors.” These include heavily traveled roads like:

- Pacific Avenue.
- Capitol Way.
- Martin Way.

These corridors may exceed adopted service levels (See Map T-9). Approaches to managing these corridors include:

- Increased transit service.
- Improved pedestrian and cycle facilities.
- A complete and connected grid.

Thurston County also defines “Rural Strategy Corridors” (See Map A-1) where the adopted LOS C standard may be exceeded. These roads include:

- Old Highway 99.
- South Bay Road.
- Rainier Road.

These roads are mostly built out today with two travel lanes and paved shoulders. Instead of widening these roads, alternatives such as:

- Intersection improvements.
- Connections to regional trails.
- Extending or increasing transit service will be applied to help reduce congestion.

Urban Areas

LOS D is the standard for roads in city limits and urban growth areas (UGAs) that Thurston County's cities plan to incorporate. This standard also applies to roads in the Rural/Urban Transition Area. This area surrounds the urbanized census zones of Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater UGAs (See Map A-1).

Urbanizing areas typically have:

- Higher population densities.
- More commercial services.
- Moderate delays for drivers during peak hours.

LOS D also applies to county roads within the Grand Mound Urban Growth Area. For more details, please refer to the joint plans for LOS standards for roads in each city's or town's incorporated urban growth area.

Rural Areas

LOS D is the standard for roads in rural, unincorporated Thurston County. This is outside the current census urbanized area and identified strategy corridors.

Understanding the Growth Management Act

The Growth Management Act states that development cannot occur unless there are enough transportation facilities in place. If not, a financial plan must be created to ensure the needed facilities are built within six years.

What is Concurrency?

Concurrency ensures that traffic on certain streets remains acceptable as our community grows. To achieve this, we need to add capacity to the streets.

Concurrency is measured under typical conditions, not extreme ones like holiday shopping.

Jurisdictions must adopt and enforce ordinances that:

- Do not approve development if it lowers a transport facility's service level below accepted standards.
- Follow the standards outlined in the transportation chapter of the comprehensive plan.

Concurrency requirements do not apply to statewide significant transportation facilities and services, per RCW 36.70A.070(6).

Thurston County's Approach

The County has adopted a Concurrency Ordinance (Thurston County Code, Chapter 17.10) and will monitor the impact of approving development on the capacity of transportation facilities. In 2024, the County adopted a new concurrency tracking system to better track pipeline

development so that cumulative impacts of multiple developments in the same area will be considered for concurrency purposes.

Consistency

The Growth Management Act requires consistency among transportation plans. This includes city and county plans and the Regional Transportation Plan. Consistency means that no plan feature can be incompatible with any other feature.

This need acknowledges that transportation and land-use decisions impact each other. These choices affect the region's ability to offer good transportation services. They also influence efforts to lower reliance on cars.

The requirements for consistency also recognize that transportation systems cross-jurisdiction boundaries. This highlights the need for:

- Compatible road and bikeway standards
- Coordinated transit service goals
- Shared responsibility for preserving rail corridors

We can make a better transport network by ensuring these elements work together.

Vehicle Miles Traveled

We must reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). It's key to meeting community and state climate, health, and safety goals. Reducing VMT eases congestion and meets the mobility needs of a growing population.

Thurston County has made some progress. From 2008 to 2022, per capita VMT decreased from 9,635 miles to 7,837 miles. But the county fell short of its goal, an 18% reduction to 7,065 miles per capita.

Strategies and policies to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled are addressed across the Plan, including in Chapter 3 - Land Use and Chapter 2 - Climate.

The Sustainable Thurston Report Card aims to reduce per capita VMT by 30% from 1990 levels by 2035. This target is 7,542 miles per capita. Further reductions are needed to help meet TRPC's 2050 targets of 5,387 miles per capita, 50% of 1990 levels.

Based on guidance from the Washington State Department of Commerce and the Washington State Department of Transportation, vehicle miles traveled targets (VMT) should focus on per capita reductions. These targets must align with long-term planning horizons. Progress must be monitored every five years, tracking both per capita VMT and the implementation of reduction strategies and policies. The targets should also align with regional plans.

The Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan sets regional goals for VMT reduction versus 2015 values as follows:

- Reduce vehicle miles traveled in passenger vehicles by five percent by 2030 and 20 percent by 2050.
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled in light-duty trucks by ten percent by 2030 and 15 percent by 2050.

- Reduce vehicle miles traveled in heavy-duty trucks by 20 percent by 2050.

Thurston County is setting the same goals as the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan, on a per capita basis.

The Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan sets the following greenhouse gas emissions targets:

- Achieve 45% reduction of 2015 levels by 2030
- Achieve 85% reduction of 2015 levels by 2050

The region is currently not on track to reach greenhouse gas emissions or vehicle miles traveled reduction targets. Both have increased since 2021.

The Washington Department of Commerce has a Climate Menu of Measures. It includes transportation policies that aim to reduce per capita VMT. These policies include:

- Implementing transportation demand management (TDM) programs and strategies.
- Build a safe, attractive, and well-connected bike and pedestrian network. It should encourage active transport.
- Integrating "Complete Streets" principles into the roadway designs of residential developments.
- Facilitating the siting of complementary destinations such as:
- Commercial-employment centers
- Schools or education centers
- Residential developments
- Addressing active and multimodal transportation in concurrency programs, both in assessment and mitigation.
- Increasing multimodal capacity in coordination with the locations of higher-density housing and commercial centers.

By following these strategies, we can work towards a more sustainable future.

Electric Vehicles

A key aspect of reaching the County's GHG reduction targets is the electrification of the transportation system. Thurston County supports EV charging infrastructure throughout the community to support the decarbonization of the transportation sector.

C. Existing County Roadway System

Thurston County has a good road network overall. However, many roads in and around urban growth areas are congested. The worst congestion occurs mainly in the incorporated cities and towns. In contrast, rural roads usually have minimal congestion. Map T-1 shows the arterial roadways in rural unincorporated Thurston County.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Transportation demand management (TDM) focuses on reducing the demand for the County's transportation facilities. TDM has evolved from a focus on commuters and reducing single occupancy vehicle demand at peak times to a focus on all travelers and trip types. The County will continue to promote and implement the following TDM strategies:

- Active transportation. The County plans to build and maintain safe and continuous bike and pedestrian networks.
- Public transit. The County coordinates with local transit agencies (such as ruralTRANSIT and Intercity Transit) to ensure safe and easy access for residents. The County also supports exploring new transit options, including alternatives to fixed-route service, new transit service providers, and long-distance routes to and from Thurston County.
- Vanpool and other rideshare programs through Intercity Transit. These programs allow people with similar commutes to travel together and reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles.
- Work schedule flexibility programs. The County supports programs that offer employees flexibility for remote work and alternative work schedules. Expanding these programs will change commuting patterns.
- Encourage remote work or off peak travel when possible.

Infrastructure and Maintenance

Of immediate concern is the state of existing roads in Thurston County. The county's pavement management program keeps most rural roads in good shape. However, many other assets are aging and competing for limited maintenance funds. These assets include:

- Guardrails
- Signs
- Pavement markings
- Sidewalks

County roads are often old, with narrow lanes and no shoulders. They serve more residents and higher traffic volumes. Thurston County is also responsible for 150 bridges. Many are nearing the end of their design life. Many bridges also need updates to help fish and wildlife pass through. As the rural population grows, there's pressure to modernize old facilities. But this is a costly need with a significant funding shortfall.

Thurston County has seen rising traffic volumes on rural roads, especially near urban areas. In 2024, the county and the Thurston Regional Planning Council completed the Thurston County Rural Mobility Strategy. This report identified key intersections and corridors, evaluated strategies, and recommended actions to:

- Reduce congestion
- Improve safety

Thurston County can improve roads and make travel safer by fixing these issues.

D. Roadway Classifications

The hierarchy of roadway classes determines access and mobility. Exhibits A through D show the county's rural roadways. These images match the current county road standards.

The County aims to adopt nearby jurisdictions' street standards in urban growth areas. Refer to the County Road Standards for the Grand Mound Urban Growth Area. Elsewhere, rural standards apply due to low residential densities. They do not require urban roads.

Complete Streets are vital. They support multimodal transport and cut greenhouse gas emissions. They provide safe access for all, including:

- Pedestrians
- Cyclists
- Transit users
- Drivers

Complete Streets aligns with WSDOT's Safe Systems Approach. This focus on multiple transportation modes enhances equity and accessibility. WSDOT offers resources for implementing Complete Streets.

Counties must utilize data and research to identify road segments. This should incorporate Complete Streets elements. The greatest challenge lies in lower-density communities situated

along car-centric corridors. A framework for multimodal connectivity must align with county growth and MMLOS standards.

Exhibit A: Private Road

A Rural Private Road has low traffic and speed. It is usually less than a mile long. Such roadways are generally designed to accommodate emergency vehicles.

A.1: Paved Private Road

A.2: Gravel Private Road

Exhibit B: Local Road

A Local Road has low traffic volume. Speeds range from 25 to 50 mph. Such roadways generally connect communities with the arterial-collector roadway system.

B.1: Rural Local Road

Pictured: 100th Avenue SW

B.2: Rural Residential Local Road

Summerwood Drive SE.

B.3: Suburban Local Road

Lady Fern Loop NW

Exhibit C: Collector Road

A Collector Road has medium to high traffic volume and speeds of 35-50 miles per hour. These roads connect communities to the arterial roadway system. They usually feature paved shoulders, higher truck volumes, and fewer driveways.

C.1: Major Collector

Pictured: Dutterow Road SE

C.2: Minor Collector

McKenzie Road SW

Exhibit D: Arterial Road

An Arterial Road has high traffic volume and speed. These roads connect communities. They help move goods, services, and people to jobs. They usually feature paved shoulders, accommodate many trucks, and have fewer driveways.

D.1: Urban Arterial Road

Pictured: Yelm Highway

D.2: Rural Arterial Road

Pictured: Bald Hill Road SE

E. Future Roadways

An adequate network of roadways is essential for both existing and future development. The roadway system must serve the community to meet future needs. Future roadways should also ensure:

- Appropriate vehicle capacity
- Safety for all users
- Efficient use of county funds

See the joint plans and the Capital Improvement Program (Appendix G). They list transportation improvements planned for the next six years. These improvements align with the Regional Transportation Plan.

Map T-1 shows the existing and future rural roadway system in Thurston County. The arterials and collectors are based on land use designations in the Land Use chapter. These designations predict population and job distribution. They provide a basis for planning a future road system for Thurston County.

Several projects of regional significance are underway or under consideration for implementation:

- I-5 Corridor Study: WSDOT looked at the I-5 corridor from Exit 111 at Marvin Road to Exit 116 at Mounts Road during summer 2024. The study recommended several improvements, including:
    - Widening to add a high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane in each direction
    - A shared-use path adjacent to I-5 for nonmotorized access between Lacey and DuPont
    - Replace and build new bridges across the Nisqually Delta. This will improve I-5's resiliency and reduce flood-related closures. The final assessment is expected to be completed in 2026.
- Marvin Road Corridor Improvement Project: It will improve safety and reduce congestion for all users. Phases 1 and 2 are currently under construction and expected to be completed in 2025. Improvements include:
- A roundabout at the intersection of Marvin Road and 19th Avenue
- Access control between Union Mills Road and 19th Avenue
- A roundabout at the intersection of Marvin Road and Mullen Rd.
- SR 510 Development: By 2027, Yelm will build three miles of SR 510, between Cullens Road and 170th Street SE. It will include pedestrian and cycle facilities.
- Roundabouts Construction: WSDOT, along with the City of Yelm and Thurston County, is building roundabouts on SR 507. These will be at the Vail Rd and Bald Hills Rd intersections.
- I-5/SR 510 Interchange: The I-5/SR 510 (Marvin Road) interchange was rebuilt. It now has a diverging diamond design to ease congestion and reduce crashes.

These projects will support a thriving transportation network in Thurston County.

F. Access Management

The Transportation Research Board's Access Management Manual states that access management seeks to ensure safe and efficient vehicle access to land development. Proper access management is crucial for the corridor's success.

Access management provides several key benefits:

- Ensures smooth traffic flow
- Allows access to residential areas
- Allows access to commercial areas
- Enhances safety and efficiency for nearby communities

This approach is essential for both the corridor and the communities it serves.

G. Safety (Target Zero)

The ability to travel safely is the most basic need for transportation. To address this need, Washington State has adopted Target Zero. The goal is to reduce traffic deaths and serious injuries on Washington's roads to zero by 2030.

Thurston County supports this goal because every life counts. A key part of this goal is that it is data driven. It finds the key factors that cause fatal and serious crashes on Thurston County roads. Then, it uses this information to find strategies that reduce traffic deaths and serious injuries in common areas.

Key Strategies

The implementation of these strategies relies on:

- Coordination
- Collaboration
- Communication among traffic safety partners (e.g., Sheriff's Department, Health & Human Services, and the Prosecuting Attorney's office)

To reach Target Zero by 2030, Thurston County needs a strong, ongoing effort. This will only happen through federal, state, and local partnerships. Together, we can use innovation and research. We can also use changes in our state's traffic safety culture.

Recent Data

From 2019 to 2023, there were:

- 198 serious injuries and fatal collisions on unincorporated roads in Thurston County.

This is about a 40% increase from the previous five-year period.

Predominant Crash Types

The main crash type leading to fatalities and serious injuries on Thurston County roads is lane departures. Other contributing factors include:

- Intersection conflicts

- Behavioral issues, such as:
- Impairment
- Speeding
- Distraction
- Lack of driving experience

Additionally, conflicts between vehicles and vulnerable travelers are significant concerns. Vulnerable travelers include:

- Pedestrians
- Cyclists
- Motorcyclists

There are also conflicts between cars and heavy trucks.

Crash Data Visualization

Map T-8 shows a heatmap of all crashes. Map T-9 shows a heatmap of killed or severely injured (KSI) crashes from 2019 to 2023. The locations with the highest volume of KSI crashes are:

- SR 12
- SR 510

Crash density is highest in these areas. The northeast hotspot is at Martin Way E and SR 510. The southeast hotspot is near SR 12 and the Grand Mound Urban Growth Area.

H. Roadway Maintenance and Preservation Needs

Roadway maintenance fixes assets to keep them functional during their useful life. This includes repairing potholes, cleaning streets and culverts, and fixing knocked-down signs.

Preservation means fixing or replacing an asset after it can no longer be used so it can still serve its original purpose. Examples of preservation are replacing a bridge, repaving a road, or replacing a worn-out, invisible sign.

Knowing how maintenance affects the cost of preserving or replacing an asset is crucial. Proper maintenance extends an asset's life and lowers its upkeep cost when it's time to replace it. This is like how regular oil changes and good maintenance can prolong a car's life and cut transport costs. As the saying goes, "Pay me now or pay me more later."

The County checks its roads often. This helps find future maintenance needs. The goal is to assess factors like condition, maintenance history, and regulations. County road funds and motor fuel taxes fund roadway maintenance and preservation. The County Road Administration Board distributes them.

I. Roadway Improvements

Chapter 9, "Capital Facilities," covers funding for road improvements. The County prioritizes projects to make the most of its limited resources. It uses techniques to rank potential projects for the Capital Improvement Program.

In urban areas, developers are required to either build improvements or contribute funds. These contributions improve street function and safety. For example, they might add bike and pedestrian paths, create turn pockets, install bus lanes, build roundabouts, or modify traffic signals.

J. State Facilities

Segment Capacity Analysis

To assess the performance of Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) facilities within Thurston County—specifically I-5, US 101, US 12, SR 8, SR 121, SR 507, and SR 510—the volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio serves as a key metric for evaluating both current and projected 2045 traffic conditions. This ratio compares the number of vehicles using a roadway to its designed capacity, with values approaching or exceeding 1.0 indicating potential congestion. Table 8-2 shows the forecast volume to capacity ratios for each Alternative studied under this EIS.

Based on the PM peak hour analysis, most locations have a V/C ratio of less than 1.0. Notable exceptions are on I-5 at the northeastern county line and on SR 510 between Lacey and Yelm. In most cases, the Action Alternative shows lower V/C ratios than the No Action Alternative, due to growth being concentrated in areas with higher density and therefore fewer and shorter trips.

Table 8-2: Future Modeled V/C Ratios for State Facilities (2050)

Location	Existing:		No Action:		Action:	
	SB/EB	NB/WB	SB/EB	NB/WB	SB/EB	NB/WB
I-5 North of Exit 114	0.77	0.53	1.19	0.93	1.06	0.82
I-5 North of Marvin Rd	0.68	0.50	1.00	0.81	0.89	0.72
I-5 South of 93rd Ave	0.53	0.39	0.69	0.53	0.69	0.53
I-5 North of Maytown Rd Interchange	0.53	0.28	0.69	0.39	0.69	0.39
I-5 South of Maytown Rd Interchange	0.35	0.37	0.46	0.52	0.46	0.52
I-5 North of 183rd St SW	0.48	0.37	0.63	0.52	0.63	0.52
I-5 North of US 12 (Grand Mound)	0.48	0.37	0.63	0.52	0.63	0.52
I-5 South of US 12 (Grand Mound)	0.44	0.37	0.61	0.54	0.61	0.54
US 101 Steamboat Island Rd	0.27	0.35	0.35	0.45	0.35	0.45

US 101 West of SR 8	0.33	0.45	0.43	0.57	0.43	0.57
US 101 East of SR 8	0.46	0.64	0.58	0.8	0.58	0.8
US 101 East of 2nd Ave Interchange	0.39	0.55	0.49	0.68	0.49	0.69
US 101 West of Olympia City limits	0.39	0.55	0.49	0.68	0.49	0.69
SR 8 West of US 101	0.19	0.28	0.22	0.33	0.22	0.33
SR 8 West of Summit Lake Rd	0.17	0.25	0.19	0.28	0.19	0.28
SR 121 West of Kimmie St	0.56	0.39	0.61	0.43	0.61	0.43
SR 121 South of 93rd Ave	0.30	0.21	0.52	0.29	0.52	0.29
SR 121 East of I-5	0.17	0.11	0.19	0.12	0.19	0.12
US 12 West of Albany St	0.45	0.55	0.54	0.63	0.54	0.63
US 12 West of Old Highway 9	0.51	0.61	0.56	0.59	0.56	0.59
US 12 West of Elderberry St	0.50	0.51	0.55	0.51	0.55	0.51
US 12 West of I-5	0.58	0.65	0.78	0.81	0.78	0.81
SR 507 North of Yelm	0.62	0.55	0.83	0.66	0.83	0.66
SR 507 East of Yelm	0.63	0.64	0.94	0.98	0.94	0.98
SR 507 South of Yelm	0.38	0.43	0.99	0.72	0.99	0.72
SR 507 South of Rainier	0.23	0.30	0.50	0.81	0.50	0.81
SR 507 South of Tenino	0.33	0.33	0.58	0.57	0.58	0.57
SR 507 South of Bucoda	0.28	0.20	0.49	0.37	0.49	0.37
SR 510 South of Lacey	0.41	0.24	0.79	0.49	0.79	0.49
SR 510 East of Marvin Rd	0.79	0.69	1.04	0.88	1.05	0.88
SR 510 South of Pacific Ave	0.84	0.65	1.19	0.93	1.18	0.93
SR 510 South of Old Pacific Highway	0.96	0.75	1.31	1.09	1.31	1.09
SR 510 North of SR 510 Junction	1.07	0.81	1.54	1.17	1.54	1.17

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2025, analysis based on Thurston County Regional Planning Council Travel Demand Models. Bold results indicate a V/C ratio of 1.0 or greater

Intersections

The analysis also included a detailed review of intersection-level performance at key state facility intersections.

According to WSDOT standards, these intersections are expected to maintain a peak–hour Level of Service (LOS) of D or better in most locations and LOS C in some locations. That threshold ensures operations are within acceptable delays and performance limits for anticipated traffic volumes. (WSDOT, 2024)

As summarized in Table 8-3, most study intersections that provide connections to State Facilities within the Unincorporated County perform with the LOS standard, but some do not. US 101 WB Ramps / 2nd Avenue SW fails under all three scenarios due to the delay associated with the Northbound movements and the side street stop control. Under the Action scenario, growth is concentrated in the urban areas, as opposed to the No Action scenario, where growth is distributed. The I-5 SB Ramps / SR 121 intersection fails under the No Action scenario only. In the Action scenario, US 101 EB Ramps / 2nd Avenue SW fails (in addition to the WB ramps) due to the growth in volume associated with the off-ramp movement.

Table 8-3: Intersection LOS for State Facilities (2050)

Intersection	Control Type	LOS Standard	Existing: LOS (Delay)	No Action: LOS (Delay)	Action: LOS (Delay)
I-5 NB Ramps / SR 121	TWSC	C	B (12)	C (16)	B (14)
I-5 SB Ramps / SR 121	TWSC	C	B (14)	D (29)	C (18)
I-5 NB Ramps / Tenino Grand Mound Road	Signal	D	C (21)	D (36)	C (34)
I-5 SB Ramps / Tenino Grand Mound Road	Signal	D	A (9)	B (18)	B (12)
US 101 WB Ramps / 2nd Avenue SW	TWSC	D	F (>150)	F (>150)	F (>150)
US 101 EB Ramps / 2nd Avenue SW	TWSC	D	C (17)	D (33)	E (41)

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2025, analysis based on Thurston County Counts. Bold results indicate an intersection that exceeds the LOS standard

4. TRANSIT SERVICE

Public transportation efficiently moves people in urban areas, says the regional transportation plan. It also encourages compact urban development. Besides improving mobility, public transportation is vital for the social safety net. It helps many in the community, especially those without cars. It gives them access to services and helps them stay independent.

A. Transit Services

Transit is an essential mode for connecting commuters with worksites, but this is only one of the major uses for transit. Many community members, including youth and seniors, use transit to travel to public services like libraries, medical facilities, and shopping areas.

Intercity Transit (IT) is the primary public transit system in Thurston County. It was established in 1980 as a municipal corporation known as the Thurston County Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA). The agency is overseen by a nine-member board called the Intercity Transit Authority.

IT serves an area of about 94 square miles, including the urban growth areas of:

- Olympia.
- Lacey.
- Tumwater.
- Yelm.

The agency operates 24 bus routes and offers several services, including:

- Door-to-door service for people with disabilities.
- Vanpool program.
- Specialized van services.

IT also assists local employers with Commute Trip Reduction efforts.

IT is free to all transit riders. All buses are equipped with accessibility features such as ramps, lifts, automated announcement system, and storage for mobility devices.[12] IT also offers bike racks on most buses, allowing for multimodal connectivity. Connecting IT to regional trails, rail hubs, regional bus lines, and urban pedestrian corridors will further enhance multimodal transportation. While IT operates independently from Thurston County, the County is responsible for maintaining bus route right of way, bus shelters, and other facilities near bus stops and routes. Enhanced crossings should be provided at rural and urban bus stop locations to improve pedestrian access to transit.

In addition to local services, IT connects with other transit providers, such as:

- Mason Transit.
- Grays Harbor Transit.
- Pierce Transit.
- Sound Transit (which goes to King County).

For regional and interstate travel, the following options are available:

- Greyhound buses in Olympia.
- Amtrak passenger rail in Lacey.
- Sounder commuter service in Pierce County.

Rural Transit (RT), managed by the Thurston Regional Planning Council, serves rural communities, including:

- Rochester.

12 https://www.intercitytransit.com/bus/accessible-services

- Tenino.
- Bucoda.
- Rainier.
- Yelm.
- The Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation.

RT connects to IT in the urban core and Twin Transit in Lewis County. Like IT, RT is fare free. RT buses are also accessible for people using wheelchairs and mobility devices and are equipped with bike racks.

B. The Future of Transit Services in Thurston County

A successful transportation system needs to increase transit use. It also needs to develop areas that support easy access to transit. These elements align with:

- Growth management planning.
- The State Commute Trip Reduction Law (CTR).
- The Regional Transportation Plan.

The policies in this chapter's Goal 3, Objective D, support the Regional Transportation Plan. The plan seeks to offer reliable and effective public transit options. This will help boost the number of trips taken on public transportation.

In the coming years, Thurston County will see a rise in demand for transit services. Major employers are implementing programs to meet CTR requirements. They need to guide employees to transportation alternatives.

Regional Connectedness

Public transport is vital for economic growth. It also reduces environmental harm. A High-Capacity Transit study is currently underway to explore the feasibility of connecting:

- Downtown Olympia.
- Downtown Tacoma.

This connection will help integrate areas with high employment and population densities. It will improve accessibility, making it easier for people to reach jobs, education, and healthcare. This, in turn, helps reduce inequality. Additionally, efficient transit systems can:

- Decrease traffic congestion.
- Lower environmental impact.
- Promote sustainable transportation options.

Additional transit connections will continue to be explored. For example, transit options could connect suburbs to downtown areas and Grand Mound to other destinations in Thurston County and rail connections to Tacoma and Seattle could be explored.

Ultimately, well-connected regions thrive, benefiting both individuals and communities.

Intercity Transit considers new services in its Transit Development Plan (TDP). The TDP is a six-year, comprehensive capital improvement program for the transit system. It lists the programs and facilities that Intercity Transit is involved in or will pursue.

The 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program details specific improvements for the near future. The Comprehensive Plan and Regional Transportation Plan share several policies, including:

- Support Intercity Transit's plan. It focuses on trunk and primary routes serving core areas along strategic corridors.
- Support various public transit programs. They should meet changing needs.

The 2018 Short- and Long-Range Plan from Intercity Transit lays out strategies and a budget. Its goal is to create a long-term vision for public transit in Thurston County. It also aims to improve regional links to the north and with Sound Transit.

For transit Level of Service (LOS) standards, the County will work with transit providers to advocate for:

- Additional service in unincorporated areas.
- Improvement of safe access routes to transit stops.

5. CYCLES & PEDESTRIANS

This section and related elements of the Comprehensive Plan serve as a cycle and pedestrian component in compliance with RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(vii)(F).

Thurston County's cycle and pedestrian network consists of 57 miles of paved trails and 107 miles of sidewalks. The network serves people who bike, walk, and roll for transportation and recreation. The County is committed to expanding and improving the safety of the network while ensuring it is accessible to all users of the transportation system.

Chapter 9 and Appendix G identify projects to boost bike and pedestrian activity. They are in the Capital Facilities chapter and the CIP. These projects include:

- Road improvements
- Parks development
- Open space enhancements

These plans align with the Regional Trails and Transportation Plans. They aim to boost access and promote healthy living.

MMLOS (Multimodal Level of Service) standards are most effective when using a layered network approach. This approach considers all modes of transport together. It helps understand how they interrelate and what key corridors need investment to ensure mobility.

Many jurisdictions in Washington have started to follow a multimodal LOS program. LOS for cars is based on congestion at intersections. For walking and biking, LOS is based on the availability and comfort of facilities.

The LOS definitions need to be context-specific and can differ based on location.

- Rural areas: lower demand due to lower density and longer trip distances.
- Urban areas
- Major corridors that intersect with urban areas.

Improvements for bike and pedestrian paths will most impact major corridors. They connect important local centers. To guide investment, it is recommended that the County adopt the level of traffic stress (LTS) metric. This metric assesses pedestrian and cycle facility performance.

The proposed LTS metric is summarized in Appendix B and adapts thresholds developed by Pierce County. Based on the proposed LTS metric, Maps T-6 & T-7 show the LTS for pedestrians and cycles on major roadways within the county.

LTS is used to assess the conditions of pedestrian and cycle facilities. It helps determine the level of comfort for different users and is divided into four levels (Figure 8-1):

- Level 1: Very low stress
- Level 2: Low stress
- Level 3: Moderate stress
- Level 4: High stress

Figure 8-1. Level of Traffic Stress

Both the Pedestrian and cycle Level of Traffic Stress in the County are largely at levels 4 and 3. This is due to high-speed limits on county roads away from urban centers. Near cities, the LTS improves with added sidewalk infrastructure and lower speed limits.

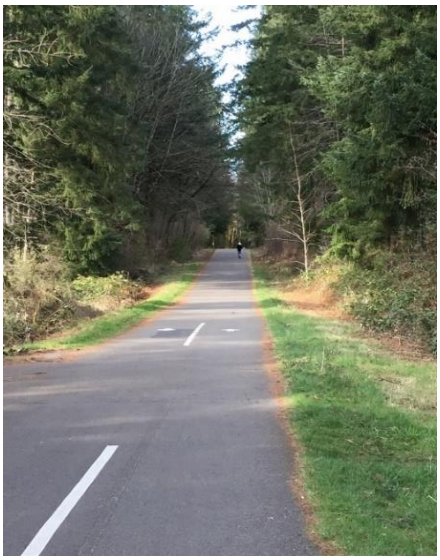
For cycle and pedestrian LOS standards, the County will work with developers to provide LTS 2 or better facilities when feasible.

A. Bikeway Classification

The Washington State DOT has set standards for funded bikeways. Exhibits E through H show four classes of bikeways from the Thurston Regional Planning Council. These classes align with the established standards.

Exhibit E: Multiuse Trail

A multi-use trail is a 10- to 14-foot-wide paved or compacted gravel path. It is for pedestrians and cycles, not on a roadway. These facilities are well-separated from traffic. They always have an LTS of 1 along their length.



Pictured: Chehalis Western Trail

Pictured: Yelm Highway SE

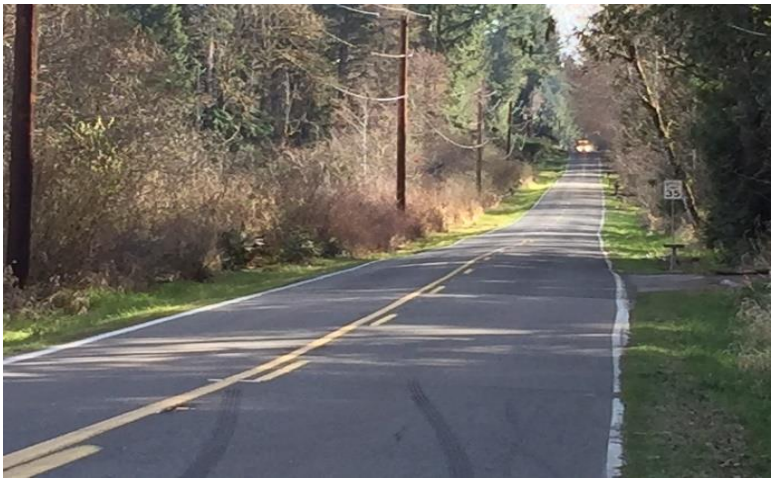
Exhibit F: Bike Lane

A bike lane is a paved or striped road lane at least 5 feet wide. It is meant for cycles and is usually found in cities. The level of traffic stress (LTS) of these lanes can change based on the speed limit and daily traffic volume. The bike lane shown has an LTS of 3 because the speed limit is 35 mph.

Exhibit G: Bike Route

A bike route is usually a paved shoulder, 4 to 8 feet wide. These routes are often found in rural areas. They serve pedestrians and cyclists and provide emergency pull-offs. Additionally, they fulfill other roadway design functions. Typically, these facilities have an LTS of 4. This is because speed limits in rural areas often exceed 40 mph.

Pictured: Rich Road SE



Pictured: Overhulse Road NW

Exhibit H: Shared Travel Lane

A Shared Travel Lane, often on less-busy rural roads, allows vehicles and bicycles. Yet, it can be a stressful route for cyclists because of the fast-moving traffic.

B. Pedestrian Facility Classification

Exhibits I through K show examples of pedestrian facilities in Thurston County.

Exhibit I: Urban Pedestrian Facilities

Urban pedestrian facilities often have:

- A 5- to 10-foot sidewalk
- A vegetated strip
- Street lighting
- Transit stops

The Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) for these facilities depends on the speed limit and daily traffic volume of the roadway.

Pictured: Yelm Highway SE

Pictured: Cooper Point Road NW

Exhibit J: Rural Pedestrian Facilities

Rural pedestrian facilities generally constitute a wide shoulder along a rural road. Due to the roadway's 35 mph speed limit, the facility's LTS is likely a 4.

Exhibit K: Enhanced pedestrian crossings

Enhanced pedestrian crossings are for higher-volume, higher-speed, multi-lane roads. They can include signage, markings, lane narrowing, medians, strobing beacons, and lighting.

Pictured: Crosswalk at Marvin Rd NE

C. Current Network

Thurston County's urban core has a dense bike and pedestrian network. This includes on-street and off-street facilities, like:

- Cycling lanes
- Sidewalks
- Trails

These facilities connect homes, jobs, and regional destinations, including schools and public transit.

Major shared-use trails provide important links for active transportation. Some key trails include:

- Chehalis Western Trail

- Yelm-to-Tenino Trail

Trails are key transportation and commuting corridors. These trails connect the urban core with South County jurisdictions. See Map T-4 for a visual. It displays bike and pedestrian paths. This includes bike lanes and both current and future shared-use trails.

Upgraded rural arterial and collector roads will have paved shoulders. They must meet current county standards. Paved shoulders offer several benefits:

- Safety
- Cycle and pedestrian usage
- Improved drainage
- Emergency pull-off
- Better support for the pavement in the driving lane

Due to the high traffic, some roads may need paved shoulders. They have multiple uses. This applies even if they are not on a future bikeway.

D. Future Network

The Comprehensive, Regional Transportation, and Regional Trails Plans support a connected network of bike and pedestrian paths. This network aims to:

- Increase the share of trips made safely and conveniently by active transportation.
- Reduce conflicts between cyclists, pedestrians, and fast-moving automobiles.

The Comprehensive Plan aims to improve bike and pedestrian paths along and across roads. Additionally, Thurston County and its regional partners are focused on:

- Expanding off-road trails.
- Improving trails along out-of-use rail corridors.

Bicycle improvements will be integrated into roadway enhancements whenever possible. This strategy is the most cost-effective. The Regional Transportation Plan highlights the importance of:

- Multiuse trails as the backbone of the region's non-motorized system.
- Identifying urban bike lanes and rural bike routes at the local level.

Coordination between agencies is essential to ensure seamless connections at:

- Jurisdictional boundaries.
- Critical junctions with the multiuse trail network.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan adds policies from the Regional Transportation Plan. They aim to:

- Encourage active-transportation connections to shorten trips.
- Support neighborhood planning efforts to identify and refine pedestrian corridors that promote walking.

- Community feedback from this Comprehensive Plan update included the following responses for active transportation:
- Create and maintain pedestrian spaces
- Provide active transportation infrastructure for people with disabilities and an aging population
- Install streetlights near sidewalks and crosswalks
- Provide safer crossing opportunities
- Install more sidewalks, especially near schools
- Trail and sidewalk maintenance
- Encourage people to walk and bike

6. RAIL AND AIR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

A. Rail Transportation

Rail transportation in Thurston County serves both freight and passengers. Goods move to, from, and through the area, including downtown Olympia's Port of Olympia. Key rail lines include:

- Burlington Northern Santa Fe (shared by Amtrak and Union Pacific)
- Tacoma Rail Mountain Division
- Puget Sound and Pacific (from Centralia through Thurston County to Grays Harbor)
- Yelm Prairie Line
- Union Pacific

For regional and state travel, passengers can use the Amtrak coaches available at the Yelm Highway rail station. A high-speed regional rail system serves Thurston County. It connects Western Washington from Eugene to Vancouver, B.C. The county's railroads and freight corridors are on Map T-8.

- The community called for more rail service during updates to the Thurston County and Regional Transportation Plans. They pointed out several key concerns and opportunities:
- Freight shipping in the area was declining, leading to abandoned rail lines.
- There was a need for better passenger rail facilities and major upgrades.
- Identifying and preserving critical rail corridors for regional passenger rail was essential.
- The community needed to find the right land uses to support rail services.
- Preserving and acquiring rail corridors was crucial once rail services stopped.
- They had to choose good uses for the acquired railroad corridors. Options included nature trails, bikeways, cultural activities, new roads, and future rail.
- The community saw that better rail services in Washington State required government coordination.

Significant work has been done to improve rail services in Thurston County. This plan includes policies to preserve and enhance rail services (Goal 6, Obj. B). The Regional Transportation Plan recommends:

- Updating and expanding the Regional Rail Strategy
- Keeping rail corridors intact if faced with abandonment
- Exploring options to expand passenger and freight rail services
- Addressing safety issues

This coordinated effort aims to enhance rail transportation for the entire community.

B. Air Transportation

Air transportation in Thurston County includes a small public airport and private airstrips. The public airport is owned and operated by the Port of Olympia. The Port of Olympia's Airport Master Plan says the Olympia Regional Airport can handle air traffic growth through 2030.

Thurston County should keep working with other areas and the Port of Olympia. They need to plan for the Olympia Regional Airport and its impact on nearby land and habitats. Goal 7, Objective B of this chapter has policies to keep all airfields and landing strips in Thurston County in line with nearby land uses. One policy (7B.1) focuses on teamwork. The County, Port of Olympia, and the cities of Olympia and Tumwater must align their land use plans with long-term airport development. They should also promote compatible land use in areas next to the airport

7. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goal 1: Make the Transportation System Safer and More Secure for Everyone.

Goal 1 | Objective A Achieve zero traffic deaths and serious injuries on Thurston County roads by 2030.

POLICIES:

T-1.A.1	Adopt Washington state's "Target Zero" safety goal and the County's first Comprehensive Safety Action Plan.
T-1.A.2	Use education, enforcement, engineering, and evaluation to keep the transportation system safe.
T-1.A.3	Support projects that boost safety and security for public transport users and at related sites like park-and-ride lots.
T-1.A.4	Provide and support safe routes to schools programs and projects.

T-1.A.5 Create and update a data-driven county road safety plan to find priorities and solutions for the Target Zero safety goal.

T-1.A.6 Design transportation facilities with all users' safety in mind, encouraging safe behavior.

T-1.A.7 Favor roundabouts over traffic signals to keep traffic flowing and improve safety at intersections.

Goal 1 | Objective B Enhance community emergency management by providing a safe and secure transportation system.

POLICIES:

T-1.B.1 As transportation facilities are upgraded, consider retrofitting them to improve their ability to withstand a major earthquake or other natural disaster.

T-1.B.2 Build resilience into transportation improvements. This supports emergency response and reduces community disruption during disasters.

T-1.B.3 Encourage coordination between transportation system providers and emergency response providers who rely on that system.

T-1.B.4 Develop policies to respond to hazardous material spills and accidents on County transportation facilities. Support these policies to ensure safety.

T-1.B.5 Develop and maintain a rapid-reaction strategy to assess safety of transportation facilities during an emergency.

T-1.B.6 Support Interstate 5 detour strategy with regional partners.

T-1.B.7 Map transportation infrastructure vulnerable to floods and landslides. Designate alternative routes for critical corridors when natural hazards close roads.

T-1.B.8 Prioritize transportation projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Focus on sustainable modes and less reliance on fossil fuels.

T-1.B.9 Consider long-term environmental impacts of transportation infrastructure. Incorporate climate adaptation measures to mitigate risks from extreme weather events.

Goal 2: Make Transportation Facilities Sustainable and Support Thriving Urban, Suburban, and Rural Communities.

Goal 2 | Objective A Align long-range transportation plans with county growth forecasts.

POLICIES:

T-2.A.1 Use urban design standards to encourage walking, cycling, transit use, and other alternatives to driving alone.

T-2.A.2 Prioritize transport projects that support growth and sustainability in the County.

T-2.A.3 Improve mobility and access in Strategy Corridors. Use smart investments, policies, and land use measures to support economic goals.

T-2.A.4 Support policies and programs that promote urban infill. Invest in transit to support higher urban densities.

T-2.A.5 Provide transport to help maintain the rural character outside urban growth areas.

Goal 2 | Objective B Ensure compatibility between transportation and land use.

POLICIES:

T-2.B.1 Continue implementation of city road design standards for urban growth areas.

T-2.B.2 Plan, design and construct multimodal, context-sensitive, complete streets and roads.

T-2.B.3 Once fully built-out, designate arterial and collector roads as Strategy Corridors. Continue exploring alternatives to road widening. The goal is to improve mobility for people, goods, and services.

T-2.B.4 Continue and support the development of a connected grid of local streets and roads. This will increase travel options and neighborhood connectivity. It will also improve the use of the regional network.

T-2.B.5 Support and apply access management principles in urban and rural areas. They will preserve the transportation system's safety and efficiency.

T-2.B.6 Continue to implement the concurrency management ordinance to support adopted levels of service as required by state law.

T-2.B.7 Coordinate with all cities, towns, and communities. Implement appropriate, context-sensitive urban improvements.

Goal 2 | Objective C Design and fund transport projects that have a lasting, positive impact. They should reflect the goals of local residents and workers. They must also foster a sense of place and community.

POLICIES:

T-2.C.1 Use signs and other methods to raise awareness of our historic, cultural, and natural heritage.

T-2.C.2 Support vibrant city centers and activity nodes along transit corridors.

T-2.C.3 Support safe, vibrant rural communities and centers. They should foster entrepreneurship, active transport, civic pride, and a sense of place. Develop a 'Main Street' or community action plan to do this.

T-2.C.4 Support the protection of farms, forests, prairies, and open spaces in the region. Also, provide suitable transportation services.

T-2.C.5 Engage and inform the community about transport planning and investments.

Goal 2 | Objective D Coordinate among local, regional, tribal, state, and federal governments in the planning and operation of the transportation system.

POLICIES:

T-2.D.1 Coordinate with jurisdictions on new regional connections. They should provide more direct routes and reduce vehicle miles traveled.

T-2.D.2 Work with government agencies to update and implement county-wide transportation policies. They should support existing land use plans.

T-2.D.3 Coordinate street and road projects with our local jurisdictions and transit agencies when needed.

T-2.D.4 Exchange information among local jurisdictions, tribes, states, and feds. Include transportation and economic development authorities. This will aid informed, reasoned decision-making.

T-2.D.5 Maintain government-to-government relations with tribal governments within the region to encourage coordination of land use and transportation plans.

Goal 2 | Objective E Support tourism in the region.

POLICIES:

T-2.E.1 Install and maintain signs for identified historic, cultural, and scenic routes, like the Bountiful Byway.

T-2.E.2 Consider economic vitality in the prioritization of transportation investments.

Goal 3: Install and Maintain Signs for Identified Historic, Cultural, and Scenic Routes, like the Bountiful Byway.

Goal 3 | Objective A Ensure transportation investments meet the unique travel needs of diverse groups. These include youth, elders, people with disabilities, and those with low literacy and incomes.

POLICIES:

T-3.A.1 Ensure transportation facilities comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

T-3.A.2 Support public transport stops and walkway approaches. They must be accessible for people with differing abilities.

T-3.A.3 Make information available to everyone. Allow people to participate, including those with physical disabilities, those who struggle with reading and writing, and those who don't speak English.

Goal 3 | Objective B Provide quality travel options for existing and future land uses. They include walking, biking, public transport, rail, motor vehicles, and freight.

POLICIES:

T-3.B.1 Support the development of projects that enable multiple travel modes. These include transit transfer centers, activity centers, employment centers, schools, and rail stations. They should provide safe, efficient connections among them.

T-3.B.2 Promote public education on the rights and duties of drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. Teach safe, efficient ways to travel together.

Goal 3 | Objective C Enhance the transportation system's efficiency by minimizing driving. This approach supports the Regional Transportation Plan's vehicle miles traveled targets. It also supports the State's goals for reducing commute trips in the area.

POLICIES:

T-3.C.1 Improve access, convenience, and reliability. This will encourage public transit, ridesharing, biking, and walking.

T-3.C.2 Support and expand programs that encourage employees to use other ways to commute to work instead of driving alone. These include private and public-sector services. They should also promote remote work, flex-time, and compressed work weeks. This will change commuting patterns.

T-3.C.3 Develop incentives such as reduction of parking requirements for employers that develop commute trip reduction plans for their staff.

T-3.C.4 Use demand management techniques to offer alternatives when roads are congested temporarily, such as during major construction projects.

T-3.C.5 Use new technologies or designs, like roundabouts, to manage traffic. They are better than traffic signals or stop signs.

T-3.C.6 Use access management techniques to boost roadway capacity, improve efficiency, and enhance safety.

T-3.C.7 Use other methods to ease congestion where road widening and traffic devices won't work, especially along Strategy Corridors.

Goal 3 | Objective D Provide reliable, effective public transit to boost its usage.

POLICIES:

T-3.D.1 Support Intercity Transit's Short- and Long-Range Plan. It emphasizes trunk and primary routes serving core areas along designated Strategy Corridors. Local jurisdictions must develop supportive land use and design standards.

T-3.D.2 Partner with Intercity Transit and other community partners to promote a walking/cycling education and incentive program.

T-3.D.3 Support vanpool programs. They provide a low-cost, flexible alternative to single-occupancy vehicles.

T-3.D.4 Support partnerships to improve long-distance travel to and from Thurston County. Find ways to coordinate with and support other transportation providers in Thurston County.

T-3.D.5 Ensure safe, easy, and affordable transport for youth, seniors, and those with disabilities or special needs

T-3.D.6 Increase awareness of public transport options and their use. Expand education and public info for various groups and interests.

T-3.D.7 Support a wide range of public transport programs. They should provide a mix of options to meet evolving transportation needs.

T-3.D.8 Support exploration of public transport options for new urban centers. This includes new partnerships and programs. These are for areas where fixed-route service doesn't work well or isn't sustainable.

Goal 3 | Objective E Increase the share of all trips made by cyclists.

POLICIES:

T-3.E.1 Develop a safe, convenient, and continuous regional bike network. It must be part of the overall transportation system.

T-3.E.2 Provide safe, convenient bike routes to all regional schools. Encourage their use.

T-3.E.3 Develop a regional network of connected trails, running north-south and east-west, for shared use, as outlined in the Regional Trails Plan. This network will serve as the backbone of our non-motorized system.

T-3.E.4 Support bike parking at transit centers, park-and-rides, train stations, and other multimodal facilities.

T-3.E.5 Support education programs for motorists and cyclists. They should increase their understanding of cycling laws and encourage safe, lawful road sharing.

Goal 3 | Objective F Increase the share of all trips made by walking.

POLICIES:

T-3.F.1 Create a safe, convenient, and continuous regional pedestrian network. It must be part of the overall transportation system.

T-3.F.2 Create links between walking and biking paths to shorten trips to transit routes, schools, parks, trails, activity centers, and other popular destinations.

T-3.F.3 Add street lighting, buffers, trees, benches, and other elements to make walking safe and pleasant.

T-3.F.4 Encourage community planning to identify pedestrian paths and promote walkability.

T-3.F.5 Integrate street, road, and bridge projects with neighborhood pedestrian amenities.

T-3.F.6 Build high-priority, multiuse path trailheads. They should be visible to both trail users and drivers.

Goal 4: Protect Investments in the Transportation System and Support the Economy.

Goal 4 | Objective A Maintain and preserve the existing transportation system.

POLICIES:

T-4.A.1 Prioritize the maintenance, preservation, and repair of the existing transportation system.

T-4.A.2 Develop a strategic asset management plan. It must prioritize asset performance, minimize risks, and optimize resource use.

T-4.A.3 Use preventive maintenance programs to ensure the lowest life-cycle costs.

T-4.A.4 Coordinate with local utility providers and governments about road work each year.

T-4.A.5 Use street restoration standards to guide projects. Coordinate utility and street work to minimize the impact of utility projects on streets. By combining investments, we can build public facilities more cost-effectively.

Goal 4 | Objective B Use technology-based approaches to address transportation congestion, safety, efficiency, and operations.

POLICIES:

T-4.B.1 Consider programs that cut infrastructure costs, boost safety, or improve service efficiency. These programs often use new materials, technologies, or partner with other resources.

T-4.B.2 Use transportation technology to use the existing system better.

T-4.B.3 Use or support transportation technologies to better integrate transportation modes.

T-4.B.4 Invest in short-range tech to support future tech plans.

T-4.B.5 In all projects, integrate transportation technology where possible.

T-4.B.6 A transport system must send electronic information, which is vital. Therefore, it should include this in its evaluation, policies, and strategies.

Goal 4 | Objective C Create performance measures that are realistic and efficient. They must also be effective and meaningful to the public.

POLICIES:

T-4.C.1 Use vehicle Level of Service (LOS) thresholds of LOS E or better for strategy corridors. Use LOS D or better for everywhere else in unincorporated Thurston County. On Strategy Corridors, where widening is not an option, level of services may fall below adopted levels.

T-4.C.2 For bike and pedestrian LOS standards, the County will work with developers on each project. The goal is to provide LTS 2 or better facilities when possible. For transit LOS standards, the County will team up with transit providers. They want to increase transit in unincorporated areas. They also want to improve safe routes to transit stops.

T-4.C.3 Use transport performance measures to evaluate and respond to County policies and investments.

T-4.C.4 Use transportation performance measures that align with key regional goals. These include:

- Consistency in transportation and land use decisions.
- Improved mobility and access.
- Proper maintenance and repair of the existing system.
- Environmental protection.
- Safety.

T-4.C.5 Explore performance measures that reflect the contribution of all modes of travel.

T-4.C.6 Where possible, use performance measures that are similar to those used by nearby areas, making it easier to compare results.

Goal 4 | Objective D: Secure adequate funding to implement the goals and policies in this plan.

POLICIES:

T-4.D.1 Provide timely, comprehensive public info on transport funding. This will help the community engage in complex funding decisions.

T-4.D.2 Prioritize transportation system maintenance and preservation over expansion.

T-4.D.3 Consider benefits and costs when allocating transportation funds. This will ensure the best long-term investment decisions.

T-4.D.4 To support the plan's land use and transport goals, invest in transport.

T-4.D.5 Ensure that transportation investments are fair to all parts of the community. Consider both the costs and benefits. The costs include relocations, adverse health effects, and disruptions to land use. The benefits include the service level and travel options the system provides.

T-4.D.6 Support efforts to improve transportation revenue for all modes. It should be more available, predictable, and flexible.

T-4.D.7 Use transportation funding to make development choices clear, fair, and affordable.

T-4.D.8 Continue local policies that require new development to pay for its impacts on the transportation system.

T-4.D.9 Establish a revenue source for the Transportation Benefit District in Thurston County.

Goal 5: Build Infrastructure that Meets Freight, Rail, Aviation, and Marine Needs for Residents and Businesses. This will Promote Economic Vitality.

Goal 5 | Objective A Ensure freight mobility and access within the region.

POLICIES:

T-5.A.1 Support freight access to highways, major corridors, and intermodal facilities.

T-5.A.2 Support efforts to increase rail freight. This will improve efficiency, productivity, safety, and mobility on the region's roads.

T-5.A.3 Find ways to reduce conflict and ensure safety for all transport users in urban areas with industrial and commercial uses.

T-5.A.4 Promote policies and design standards that allow delivery trucks to access businesses easily, minimizing impacts on the transportation system.

T-5.A.5 When creating or upgrading roads, design them to reduce weather-related weight limits on key freight routes.

Goal 5 | Objective B Increase safety and efficient use of the existing rail system.

POLICIES:

T-5.B.1 Use design techniques, ITS, and operations coordination. This will minimize conflicts between trains and other transport modes.

Goal 5 | Objective C Use the existing rail system more to improve passenger and freight travel.

POLICIES:

T-5.C.1 Support chances to share freight rail lines for passenger use.

T-5.C.2 Consider acquiring railroad rights-of-way threatened with abandonment. This will preserve the corridors for future transportation use.

T-5.C.3 Support future rail opportunities by planning. Identify sites for future rail lines and reserve areas for rights-of-way as needed.

T-5.C.4 Support efforts to prepare Thurston County for a future rail link to central Puget Sound.

T-5.C.5 Support high-capacity transport, like upgraded interstate passenger rail.

Goal 5 | Objective D Encourage sufficient airfield capacity to accommodate existing and future demand.

POLICIES:

T-5.D.1 Support regional passenger air service at the Olympia Regional Airport.

Goal 5 | Objective E Keep airfields compatible with nearby land and transport.

POLICIES:

T-5.E.1 Coordinate with the Port of Olympia and the cities of Olympia and Tumwater. This is to align land use plans with long-range airport development. Also, encourage compatible land use near the airport.

T-5.E.2 Support multiple ways to access Olympia and Sea-Tac airports.

Goal 5 | Objective F Encourage sufficient marine capacity to accommodate existing and future demand.

POLICIES:

T-5.F.1 Support a marine terminal for water-borne freight movement.

T-5.F.2 Coordinate among the Port of Olympia, the City of Olympia, and other stakeholders. Align land use plans with marine terminal development, including truck and rail access.

T-5.F.3 When opportunities arise, form partnerships. Plan ahead to include maritime passenger service as an option in the regional transport system for the long term.

Goal 6: Minimize the Environmental Impact of Transportation Work on Nature. This Applies to Construction, Retrofitting, and Maintenance.

Goal 6 | Objective A Reduce the impacts of transportation infrastructure on the natural environment during construction, retrofit, and maintenance.

POLICIES:

T-6.A.1 Protect water quality from stormwater runoff. Minimize impervious surfaces by using low-impact development methods, where feasible. Treat and manage any unavoidable runoff.

T-6.A.2 In transportation planning, design, and construction, remove fish barriers. Consider the habitat of fish-bearing streams and sensitive areas.

T-6.A.3 Develop a transport system for compact, mixed-use development. It should support non-motorized travel. It must cut vehicle miles to improve efficiency, reduce harm, and boost health.

T-6.A.4 Promote alternative fuels and technologies to reduce vehicle pollution and environmental harm.

T-6.A.5 Ensure federal Title VI requirements for environmental justice are met. Title VI protects minorities and low-income people from harm. It prevents unfair, severe health and environmental harm from transport programs and policies.

T-6.A.6 Comply with federal Clean Air Act transportation requirements.

T-6.A.7 Support policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions by moving people and goods more efficiently and expanding active and public transport.

T-6.A.8 Align with current and future VMT per capita reduction targets. These include the Sustainable Thurston Report Card and WSDOT's VMT Targets Final Report.