

# Thurston County Commute Trip Reduction Four-Year Plan Update: 2025–2029

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## Benefits of CTR

### 1. Describe the local land use and transportation context and objectives.

- a. Describe the setting in the jurisdiction as it is today or will be in the near future.

Thurston County is the sixth most populated county in Washington State, despite being one of the smallest by land area, and is among the fastest growing counties in the Pacific Northwest. The County is home to more than 300,000 residents, around two-thirds of whom (64%) live in the more urban north county areas in and around the cities of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater. The rest live in and around the smaller towns of Bucoda, Tenino, Rainier, and Yelm; the unincorporated urban area of Grand Mound; and in the more rural areas of Thurston County. Rural Thurston County includes large open areas of forests, prairie and farmland, with some small concentrated residential development along lake and marine shorelines. The county's population is projected to grow by more than 80,000 people by 2045. Many state agencies are based in Thurston County, which is home to the state capitol in Olympia, and government is the largest employment sector, accounting for more than a quarter of all jobs.

Thurston County's Comprehensive Plan emphasizes the goal of providing for rural areas in a way that provides a balance between preserving rural character and lifestyles and protecting the natural environment. Thurston County also has joint planning responsibility for urban growth areas (UGAs), which fall under county jurisdiction for land use and transportation projects until they are annexed by cities. The four CTR-affected worksites in Thurston County reflect this breadth – two sites are located in UGAs, while two are based in rural Thurston County.

While Thurston County historically had significant timber, mining, and agricultural industries, today most rural residents commute by car into urban areas for work and to access services. These connections rely on rural roadways that typically lack bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and funnel drivers to state routes (US 12, US 507) and major highways (I-5, US 101). Tribal enterprise is a growing employer and recreational draw in the county, with facilities managed by the Nisqually and Chehalis tribes. Thurston County has a robust multi-use trail network that connects its communities via former railroad routes, as well as transit service provided by ruralTransit. Looking ahead, Thurston County will continue to plan to provide transportation facilities that seamlessly connect its different regions, while minimizing impacts on the natural environment and the people who live and work in the county.

- b. Describe features of land use and transportation facilities and services that affect commuters.

Thurston County's primary infrastructure is roadways, so prioritizing safety on those roadways is paramount. Current national and statewide highway safety planning focuses

on reducing or eliminating serious and fatal collisions. Thurston County Public Works plans and implements measures that improve safety performance and align with national and state priorities. Highway safety improvement projects are selected from the traffic safety/intersection priority analysis system. It serves as a guide for staff to identify safety projects and projects for capital planning consideration.

Pedestrians and bicycles: Safe pedestrian and bicycle travel is imperative for reducing single occupancy vehicle trips. Federal requirements detail that non-motorized projects support pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. Thurston County primarily uses outside sources of funding for non-motorized projects. Several sub-programs for non-motorized projects are:

- Pedestrian and Bicycle Program
  - County Road Safety Improvement Program
  - Capital improvement Program
  - Pavement Preservation Program 2024 – 2025
  - 2024 County Road Safety (HSIP)
  - Safe Routes to School projects
  - Trails improvement/extension projects
- c. Describe whether and how commuting patterns have changed in the past few years. COVID-19 has shifted many of the local commutes to telecommuting, most people are not driving as much as they used to before COVID-19. It is also possible that teleworkers from the Central Puget Sound region may choose to move here, where the cost of housing is lower. Either way, demand on our streets seems likely to decrease during morning and evening peak commute times, and it may increase during off-peak times.
- d. List the most important land use and transportation objectives from your city or county's plans that commute trip reduction most directly affects. According to the Thurston County Transportation Plan, there are multiple transportation projects that will affect commute trip reduction. These projects will provide more multimodal and transit-oriented development in the area, so CTR can flourish.
- Marvin Rd Upgrade Phase 1 (22nd Ave to Union Mills Rd)
  - Marvin Rd Upgrade Phase 2 (Mullen Rd Intersection)
  - Marvin RD Upgrade Phase 3 (Union Mills RD to Pacific AVE)
  - Littlerock Road & 113th Ave SW Bridge and Intersection Improvements
  - Johnson Point Rd & Hawks Prairie Rd Intersection Improvements
  - 2024 County Road Safety (HSIP)
  - Carpenter Road Pedestrian Improvements - Affordable Housing
  - Complete Streets ADA Program 1-Pedestrian Crossing Improvements
  - Pleasant Glade Elementary Pedestrian Improvements (SRTS)
  - Rochester Main Street Improvements (US 12)
  - Steilacoom Rd Improvements Phase 1 (Pacific Ave NE to SR 510)
  - Evergreen Pkwy & Mud Bay Rd Interchange Improvements
  - Sargent Rd SW - US 12 to Old Hwy 99 SW (South Grand Mound UGA Improvements)
  - Trail Enhancement Study

- Old Pacific Hwy/Kuhlman Rd Intersection Improvements
  - Rochester-Grand Mound Trail Feasibility Study
  - State Route 507 and Vail Rd SE Roundabout
  - 183rd Ave Phase 1 - (US 12 to Sargent Rd)
  - Johnson Point Rd & Hawks Prairie Rd Intersection Improvements
  - Pacific Ave SE Pavement Preservation - (Lacey City Limits to Union Mills Rd SE)
  - Old Hwy 99 at Intersections of Sargent Rd and 201st Ave
  - Martin Way Corridor Study
  - Tilley Rd S - Old Hwy 99 SW to Goddard Road SW
  - Kingham St SE - 3rd Ave SE to Martin Way E Pedestrian Improvements
- e. Describe critical aspects of land use and transportation that should be sustained and key changes that should be considered to improve commute trip reduction's contribution to the land use and transportation objectives you reference.

Increases in density of new housing, while preserving rural character and farmland where possible are leading the county's efforts to grow in a sustainable, CTR supported way. The county's 6-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) will expand the multimodal networks in the area, increasing opportunities to use modes besides vehicles. The TIP details prioritized projects that are reasonably expected to be funded, designed, and constructed over the next six years. Projects are re-prioritized each year due to changes in funding acquisition, infrastructure maintenance and repair needs, as well as environmental concerns, and public input. All projects that are included in the Annual Road Program are derived from this 6-year list.

Additionally, the county produces a 20-Year Capacity Projects List: also known as the 2024-2043 Capacity Projects List. Capacity projects are transportation investments needed to support continued growth in Thurston County. This 20-year list is required by county code to collect Transportation Impact Fees and to qualify for certain state-issued grant funding opportunities. Capacity projects included in the 6-year plan are derived from this 20-year outlook.

**2. Describe how the CTR program will help achieve the jurisdiction's land use and transportation objectives.**

- a. Describe how and to what extent your CTR program will help your city or county achieve the land use and transportation objectives referenced in question 1.
- Thurston County currently has minimum parking requirements and is designing requirements of each specific jurisdiction that are aligned with the city, so that all the requirements match if the county annexes UGAs into the city. There is little information about CTR in the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan, and the county would like to work with TRPC to develop maps and resource materials to better promote and implement CTR in the county. The projects referenced in the previous question will help provide more bicycle and pedestrian connectivity in the county, to align with UGAs who will be annexed into cities also.

**3. Describe how the CTR program will help achieve the jurisdiction's environmental objectives.**

- a. Describe how the CTR program will support jurisdiction greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts.

In Thurston County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 5 Transportation, it states Thurston County will:

- Develop a transportation system supporting compact, mixed-use development policies and non-motorized travel that curbs growth in miles of motor vehicle travel to increase energy efficiency, reduce environmental impacts, and encourage physical activity and community health.
- Promote use of alternative fuels and technologies that reduce pollution and other environmental impacts from motorized vehicles.
- Comply with federal Clean Air Act transportation requirements.
- Support policies and actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In Thurston County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 9 Environment, Recreation & Open Space, it states Thurston County should:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions using the science-based, regionally-adopted targets.
- Promote more efficient, healthier transportation and land use to reduce motorized vehicle miles traveled and thus fuel consumed as well as greenhouse gas emissions per mile.
- establish a standard for approving transportation, zoning, land use and industrial or residential developments based on the impacts these changes or projects will have on the greenhouse gas emissions of the region.

The CTR program will help the jurisdiction achieve these myriad environmental goals by reducing VMT and emissions.

- b. Describe how the CTR program will support jurisdiction environmental objectives in addition to greenhouse gas emission reductions.

In Thurston County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 9 Environment, Recreation & Open Space, it states Thurston County should:

- Continue to coordinate with local and regional government agencies to reduce air pollution by adopting land use and transportation plans that help reduce the amount of vehicle emissions. Specifically, Thurston County accepted the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan and will use the strategies outlined in the [Transportation and Land Use Section](#) to work towards reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in County.
  - Provide education and information to the public to promote reduction of air pollutants and particulate matter.
- The CTR program will help the jurisdiction achieve these myriad environmental goals by reducing VMT and emissions.

**4. Describe how your CTR program will help achieve regional and state objectives.**

- a. Summarize the local, regional, and state benefits that would be gained if you achieve your CTR targets.

If Thurston County achieves its CTR targets, it will meet state TDM requirements, achieve emissions-reduction targets set in the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan, reduce congestion on county roads, and help the region meet sustainability goals.

- b. List adjacent CTR-affected cities and counties.

Pierce County, City of Olympia, City of Tumwater, City of Lacey

- c. Describe the top few cross-border and regional transportation issues that affect your jurisdiction.
  - Travel to and from JBLM
  - Lack of HOV system in Thurston County
  - Few choices of high-capacity transit into Thurston County
- d. Describe the strategies you, adjacent cities and counties, and your region have agreed to use to address the top issues described in the previous bullet.
  - High level of collaboration with Pierce County
  - Robust vanpool program in Thurston and Pierce County to serve our region's commuters
  - Discussed the benefit of HOV lane with regional transportation officials
  - Collaborated with TRPC and IT to encourage more high-capacity options in our city and region

## Performance targets

### 5. List your jurisdiction's CTR performance target(s).

- a. List performance targets that reflect only CTR-affected worksites.  
Drive Alone Rate Goal: 42%
- b. List any additional performance targets.  
N/A

### 6. List the base value you'll use for each performance target.

- a. For each performance target, provide the number you'll use as the baseline (or starting number). You'll measure the difference between this number and your results to report performance. Baseline: 45.10 % DAR. For Thurston County, we recommend a 3.1 percentage point reduction (equivalent to 6.9% reduction) to 42.0% DAR. Baseline results from 2023 CTR Survey for County affected worksites: 45%

### 7. Describe the method you used to determine the base value for each target.

- a. Provide the source for each base value listed.  
The source is the CTR Survey.

### 8. Describe how you'll measure progress toward each target.

- a. List the method you'll use to measure progress for each target.  
CTR Survey

### 9. List your jurisdiction's CTR-affected worksites.

- a. List all your CTR-affected sites.
  - Washington State Department of Transportation - Lacey PEO
  - The Evergreen State College
  - Washington State Department of Transportation - Tumwater PEO
  - Thurston County - Tilley Campus

### 10. List a performance target for each CTR-affected worksite.

- a. For any performance targets tied to the CTR survey, indicate that you'll establish performance targets during the 2023-2025 survey cycle.

We will use jurisdictional targets for all the worksites.

**11. List the base value you'll use for each site.**

- a. For any performance targets tied to the CTR survey, indicate that you'll establish a base value during the 2023-2025 survey cycle.

Base value established by 2023 CTR survey: 45.14% DAR for the four Thurston County worksites.

## **Services and strategies**

**12. Describe the services and strategies your jurisdiction will use to achieve CTR targets.**

- Enhance the safety and security of those who use, operate, and maintain the transportation system.
- Ensure the design, function, and capacity of transportation facilities are consistent with and support sustainable, economically vibrant, healthy urban, suburban, and rural communities.
- Provide mobility for all residents, regardless of age, ability, or income.
- Protect investments that have been made in the transportation system.
- Create and preserve a transportation system that supports and promotes economic vitality.
- Support a rail network that provides viable options for passenger, freight, and shared-use rail.
- Ensure transportation facilities and programs function seamlessly across community borders and between regions.
- Minimize transportation impacts on the natural environment and the people who live and work in the Thurston County region.

**13. Describe how jurisdiction services and strategies will support CTR-affected employers.**

- Coordinate planning and implementation of policies regarding urban land use, parks, open space corridors, transportation, and infrastructure within growth areas. Develop compatible development standards and road/street level of service standards among adjoining jurisdictions.
- Provide within comprehensive plans for an adequate amount of appropriately located land, utilities, and transportation systems to support desirable economic development. Create and maintain regulatory certainty, consistency, and efficiency.
- Schools should be sited to consider transportation and health needs as follows:
  - Where practical, schools should be located along non-arterial roads in order to minimize potential conflicts between pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Where the school district finds that siting on arterials is the most practical, school development should include frontage and off-site improvements needed to mitigate the impacts of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

**14. Describe barriers your jurisdiction must address to achieve CTR targets.**

- a. Describe how you'll address these barriers.
- Level of service requirements for developments requirements for certain developments is a barrier. The county is looking to collaborate with TRPC to develop a county wide future transportation map that shows a true grid, tells which road will be a collector, so that they won't have to make offshoot improvements based on level of service demands.

**15. Describe the transportation demand management technologies your jurisdiction plans to use**

**to deliver CTR services and strategies.**

- TRPC provides information and uses the Rideshareonline.com platform for county CTR worksites.
- TRPC uses the State CTR survey tool for surveying and program reports.

**16. Transcribe or link to your local CTR ordinance.**

Please see attachment.

**17. Describe your financial plan.**

a. Describe the estimated average annual costs of your plan.

Thurston Regional Planning Council administers the CTR Program on behalf of Thurston County. Funding is provided by WSDOT by worksite and for large and small state agencies. Total funding for the Thurston Region is: \$750,000/biennium.

b. Describe likely funding sources, public and private, to implement your plan.

- TRPC receives funding from WSDOT for CTR programming implementation.

For the aforementioned projects, funding sources could be:

- Property taxes
- Motor vehicle fuel taxes
- Transportation impact fees
- Federal programs
  - Local Bridge Program
  - Emergency Relief Program
  - Federal Lands Access Program
  - Highway Safety Improvement Program
  - Surface Transportation Block Grant
  - Safe Routes to School Program
  - Pedestrian and Bicycle Program
- State programs
  - Urban Arterial Program
  - Sidewalk program
  - Rural Arterial Program
  - County Arterial Pavement Preservation Program (CAPP)
- County transportation related budget funds
  - Fund 1190 (Road Budget Fund)
  - Fund 3010 (Capital Budget Fund)

**18. Describe your implementation structure.**

a. Describe who will conduct the activities listed in your plan.

Thurston Regional Planning Council administers the CTR Program on behalf of Thurston County.

b. Indicate who will monitor progress on your plan. List job title, department, and name.

Veronica Jarvis, Senior TDM planner at TRPC, implements the CTR program for the region and will monitor progress.

**19. List your implementation schedule.**

a. Provide the timeline for anticipated projects.

The projects of Six Year Capital Improvement Program will be constructed between 2024 and 2029.

- b. For implementation of CTR related activities, TRPC, who implements the program on behalf of the jurisdiction, carries out these activities on behalf of Thurston County:
  - i. Tasks listed in the WSDOT CTR Administrative Workplan.
  - ii. Biennial Commute Trip Reduction Survey.
  - iii. Biennial Program reporting.
  - iv. Quarterly networking sessions.
  - v. Promotions such as the Bicycle Community Challenge, Switch Your Trips WA, Ride Transit Month, etc.

c.

**20. Describe the CTR plan for jurisdiction employees.**

- a. Describe the services, programs, information, and other actions your city or county put in place to help its employees reduce their drive alone commute trips.  
The county's worksites have limited carpool spots and covered bike racks, but currently has no internal policy regarding CTR and they are working on establishing a policy.

**21. Describe how the CTR plan for jurisdiction employees contributes to the success of the overall plan.**

- a. Describe how the plan for jurisdiction employees reinforces the success of the jurisdiction plan?  
Thurston County currently does not have an updated internal CTR policy, but they have begun drafting one. Current activities the county undertakes to support CTR are:

- Meeting with new employees about their commutes.
- Promoting vanpool via staff meetings and flyers.
- Providing covered bicycle parking.
- Providing information on bus transportation from county buildings.
- Assigning an ETC for the County
- Promoting local CTR campaigns (Bicycle Community Challenge, Switch your Trips WA, Ride Transit Month, etc.)

Taking part in these activities shows the county's commitment to CTR by leading by example with their actions.

## **Alignment with plans**

**22. List the transit agencies that provide service in your jurisdiction.**

Intercity Transit, Lewis County Transit, Rural Transit, Mason Transit, Grays Harbor Transit

**23. List the transit plans you reviewed while developing this plan.**

Intercity Transit 2024-2029 Strategic Plan

**24. Describe how this CTR plan supports the transit plans.**

In the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan, it notes the future of transit services in Thurston County will maximize the use of the existing transit system and encourage development in a manner that supports easy access to transit. These elements help meet the goals of growth management planning, the State Commute Trip Reduction Law (CTR), and the Regional Transportation Plan. In coming years, Thurston County will continue to see increasing commuter demand for services. Major employers are operating programs to meet the requirements of CTR, and they need to be able to direct employees to transportation options.



**25. Describe any comprehensive plan updates that are needed and when they will be made.**

Thurston County is currently updating its comprehensive plan. In the Transportation chapter, the county will have goals aligning with CTR plans for the state. The County will also be developing a Climate Change element which will include goals, policies and an implementation plan to align with the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan.

## Engagement

**26. Describe stakeholder engagement.**

- a. Who did you talk to? Thurston County's two large worksites are a college and a county building in rural Thurston County, so we talked to state agency BRGs and the broader community who live and commute in these areas.

Stakeholder organization:

Intercity Transit

- Thurston EDC (presentation)
- Thurston Chamber of Commerce (presentation)
- Rural Transit
- OPOP Olympians for pedestrian oriented places
- Thurston Thrives (Public health)
- Local Tribes
- State DEI council
- State Employee Black community
- State Employee Veteran Community
- State Employee LGBTQ
- State Employee Latinos
- State Employee Disability inclusion network
- State Employee immigrants
- State Employee Hawaiians, Asians, Pacific Islanders

- b. When did you talk to them? Spring and Summer 2024.

May 2024 via a Transportation Options Survey, more focused outreach was done in August of 2024 in neighborhoods with CTR worksites and environmental health disparities. Outreach was done via NextDoor, TRPC Social Media, and targeted flyers with QR codes to a survey to community based organizations and businesses.

- c. What did they have to say?

- i. People want safer, more reliable transportation options that are not cars. See attachment for rollup of feedback.

- d. How did what they said influence the plan?

The feedback from stakeholders is in alignment with the Thurston County's upcoming transportation investments.

**27. Describe vulnerable populations considered.**

- State Employee Black community
- State Employee veteran community
- State Employee LGBTQ
- State Employee Latinos
- State Employee Disability inclusion network

- State Employee immigrants
- State Employee Hawaiians, Asians, Pacific Islanders
- Additional targeted outreach was done using the Environmental Health Disparities map provided by WSDOT. See attached summary of outreach from that work.

**28. Describe engagement focused on vulnerable populations.**

- a. Who did you talk to?
  - See attached appendices for engagement with vulnerable populations.

**29. List employers' suggestions to make CTR more effective.**

- a. See attached rollups of stakeholder feedback and suggestions.

**30. Describe results of engagement focused on vulnerable populations that will be provided for use in comprehensive plan and transit plan updates.**

- a. See attached rollups of stakeholder feedback and suggestions.

**Regional transportation planning organization CTR plan review**

**RTPO comments**

TRPC certifies that this CTR Plan is consistent with the regional CTR plan and the Regional Transportation Plan's Goals and Policies.

**Attachment**

(Please double click below image to open the full document)

## COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION ORDINANCE

**PREPARED BY:**

**INTERCITY TRANSIT  
FOR  
THURSTON COUNTY**

**DATE: 9-10-99**

~~Sent for Certification~~

Date: ~~10/13/99~~