

Creating Places Preserving Spaces

A Sustainable Development Plan
for the Thurston Region

December 2013



A sustainable community will enhance quality of life, foster economic vitality, and protect the environment while balancing our needs today with those of future residents.

Definition of Sustainability for the Thurston Region

Why a Regional Plan?

Challenge

The direction we are currently heading is not sustainable for cities, towns, and the county

To achieve the definition of sustainability, we need:

- More compact form of land use
- Emphasis on place making and job creation
- Efficient use of resources such as water and energy

Necessary, no matter what the population growth rate.



Existing Plans: Land Use Forecast (2035) predicts:

- Losing 32% of farmlands to urbanization– some 15,600 acres
- Losing 10% of forest lands to urbanization – around 19,300 acres
- Sending 13% of growth going into the rural areas, contributing to the loss of forest, farmlands, and prairies
- Low-density growth patterns (urban and rural) that are difficult to serve with infrastructure and services, putting strain on already limited resources
- Difficulty attracting enough growth to our city centers to create vibrant places that attract innovators and foster a strong economy
- Concerns over water availability
- Water quality concerns
- Concerns over increased energy use, and ability to meet the state’s vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas reduction targets

Highlighted a Disconnect between the
Visions and **Reality** likely to occur



Land Use & Transportation patterns form
the backbones of our communities.

If we get them right, **everything else**
relating to **sustainability** becomes easier.

Process

Phase One

Connect – Create - Communicate

- 180** People participated on topic panels to develop
- 12** Whitepapers
- 110,000** Postcards mailed
- 342** Participants at workshops
- 37** Table discussions
- 39** Online participants
- 1,200** Survey responses
- 1,300+** People on email list

OUTCOME:

Definition of Sustainability for the Thurston Region



Phase One

Connect – Create - Communicate

TOPICS EXPLORED

Land Use, Transportation,
Climate Change

Economy

Energy

Local Food Systems

Public Safety

Health and Human Services

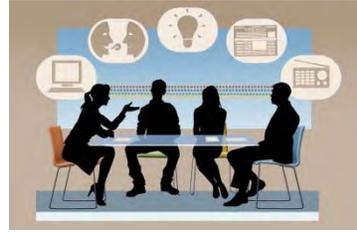
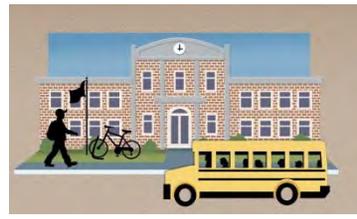
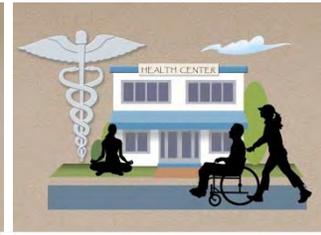
Water Infrastructure

Solid Waste

Water Quality

Housing

Schools and Transportation



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Phase Two

Creating Places – Preserving Spaces

- Panels & Task Force identified goals & actions
- Explored future land use outcomes
 - Under existing plans
 - Three alternative scenarios
- Added new tools to traditional public outreach to reach a broader and more diverse public



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Phase Three

Preferred Future

- Bold Vision**
- Bold Goals and Targets**
- Preferred Land Use Scenario**
- 300 Actions with Leads, Timelines, and Partners**



The Path Forward

Preferred Land Use Scenario

Major Elements

1. Focus on creating or enhancing walkable city and town centers in Bucoda, Grand Mound, Lacey, Olympia, Rainier, Rochester, Tenino, Tumwater, and Yelm.
2. Transition auto-oriented major transit corridors into a more walkable urban form and seek opportunities for housing and a mix of services and amenities.



Preferred Land Use Scenario

Major Elements

3. Increase sustainable economic development activities – i.e. focus on jobs “innovative” and “creative” sector jobs, and jobs in locations that support strong centers.
4. Increase the range and choice of housing, especially in areas with access to goods and services such as transit.



Preferred Land Use Scenario

Major Elements

5. Rethink low density residential-only zoning districts in the urban areas.
6. Use remaining urban land supply more efficiently.
7. Increase opportunities for urban agriculture.



Preferred Land Use Scenario

Major Elements

8. Take into account property rights, vesting, and reasonable use of property.
9. Take steps such as supporting farm and rural economies, providing economic incentives, re-examining rural zoning, and purchasing or transferring development rights to protect the rural character of Thurston County.



What we will Achieve

Preferred Land Use Scenario

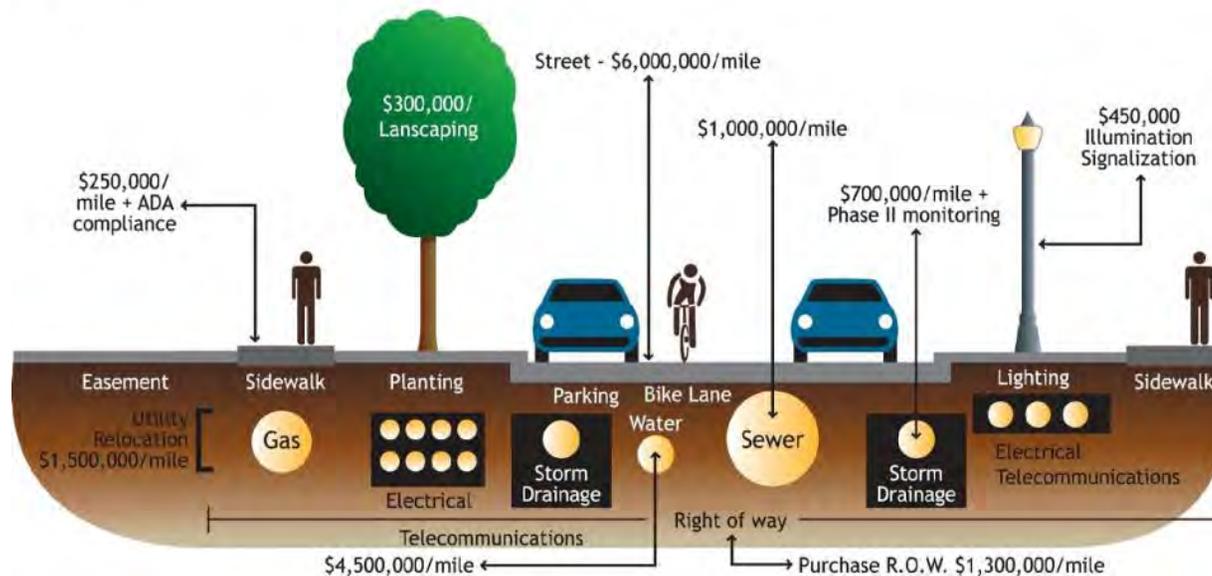
Will result in (by 2035):

- **\$1.6** billion savings in road, water, sewer, and other related infrastructure to support residential development

Typical City Infrastructure Costs

City streets are more than pavement.

Est. \$16 Million per mile based on 2008 Bid Specs.



Preferred Land Use Scenario

Will result in (by 2035):

- **16** percent reduction of 1990 levels of vehicle miles traveled based on land use changes alone
- **33** percent reduction in land consumption
- **21** percent decrease in total residential water consumption
- **11** percent decrease in total residential energy consumption
- **No** net loss of forest lands
- **No** net loss of rural farmlands
- **34** percent reduction in new impervious area in protected stream basins; **31** percent reduction in new impervious area in sensitive stream basins



Priority Goals

Priority Goals



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



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



Create a robust economy through sustainable practices.



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



Plan and act toward zero waste in the region.



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

Priority Goals



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



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



Move toward a carbon-neutral community.



Maintain air quality standards.



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



Make strategic decisions and investments to advance sustainability regionally.



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