

Priority Goals, Targets & Action Steps

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



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

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

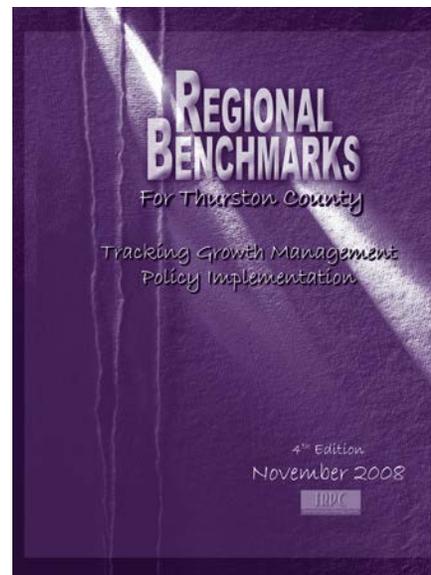
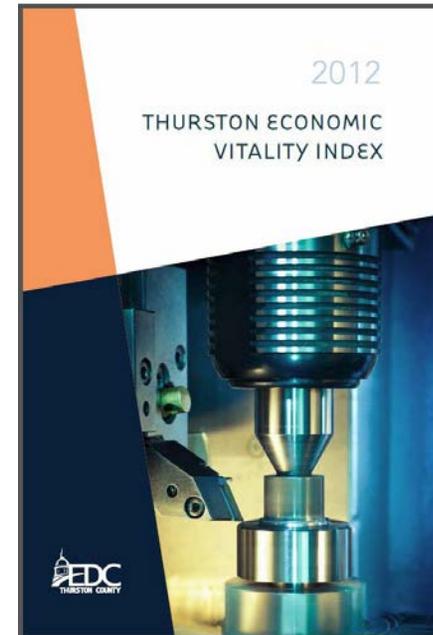
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Over time, local jurisdictions and their partners will develop and monitor more specific objectives and measures. For instance, the Thurston County Board of Health's Thurston Thrives initiative is already developing an action agenda and measures around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

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

The Thurston Regional Planning Council — which will monitor regional progress in achieving the broad slate of sustainability goals — will update its Regional Benchmarks for Thurston County report to include the Priority Goals & Targets to ensure regular and consistent monitoring.

TRPC will also continue to monitor a range of land-use, housing, transportation, and environmental indicators.





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

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

TARGET

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

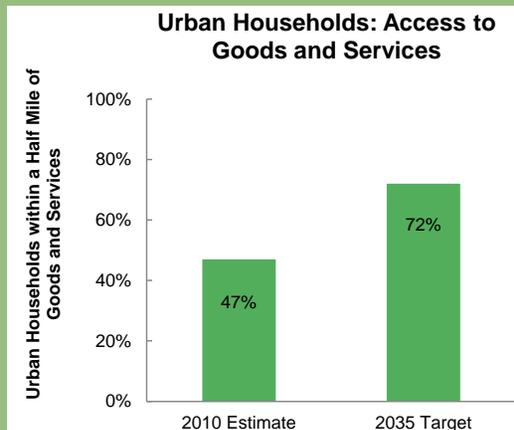
How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

TARGET

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

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

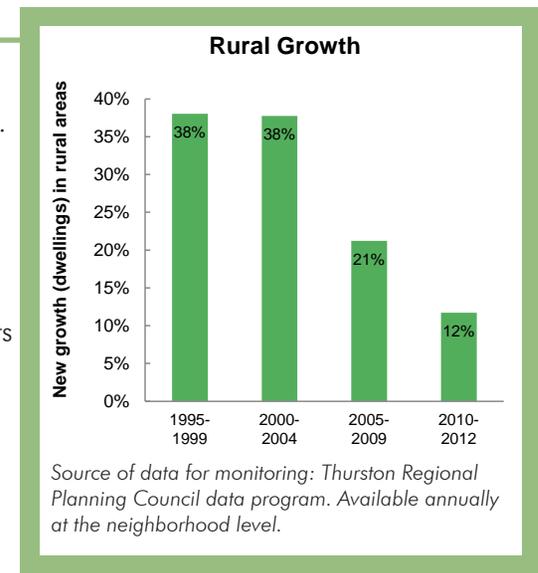
How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

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

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

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

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





Create a robust economy through sustainable practices.

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

TARGET

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

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

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

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

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

First Action Steps: Implement the Sustainable Economy actions.

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



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

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

TARGET

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

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

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

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

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

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

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

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



Plan and act toward zero waste in the region.

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

TARGET

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

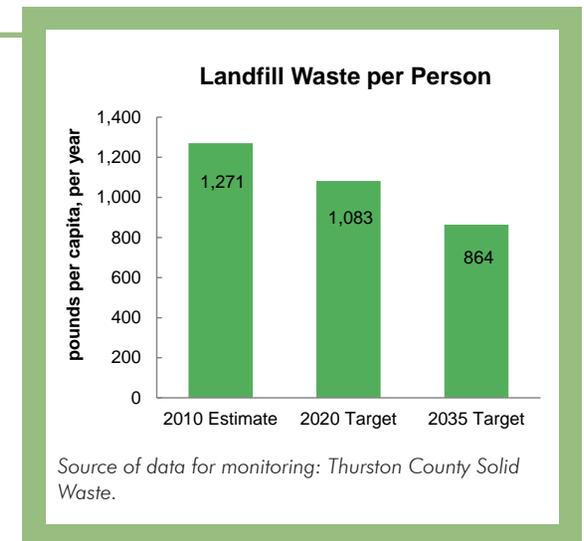
Interim Target: Reduce per capita landfill waste by 15 percent by 2020.

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

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

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

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





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

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

TARGET

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

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

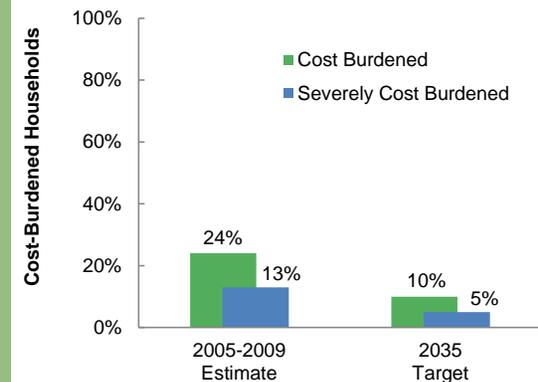
Monitoring cost-burden will give an indication of whether residents have access to the resources necessary to meet their daily needs, including access to:

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

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

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

Cost-Burdened Households



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



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

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

TARGET

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

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

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

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

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



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

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

TARGET

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

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

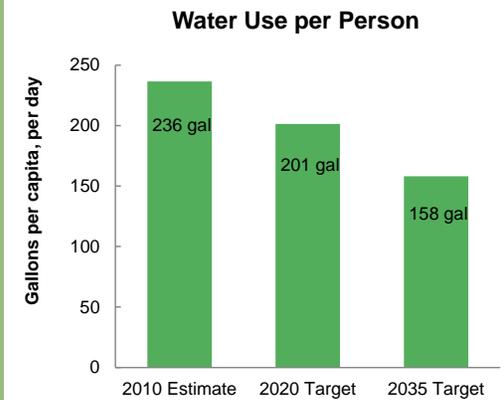
How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

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

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

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

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



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



Move toward a carbon-neutral community.

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

TARGET

Become a carbon-neutral community by 2050.

Supporting targets:

Greenhouse gas emissions targets:

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

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

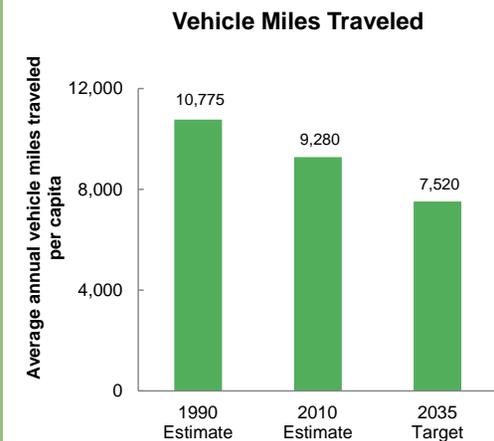
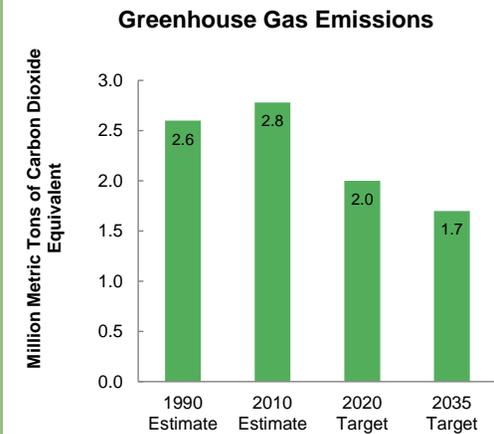
- 1990 levels by 2020
- 30 percent below 1990 by 2035
- 50 percent below 1990 by 2050

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

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

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

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



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



Maintain air quality standards.

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

TARGET

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

- PM₁₀: 150 micrograms per cubic meter of air (µg/m³), 24-hour average [state and federal primary/secondary standards];
- PM_{2.5}: 12 µg/m³, annual average [federal primary/secondary standards];
- Ozone: 0.075 parts per million (ppm), 8-hour average [federal primary/secondary standards].

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

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

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

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

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

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

Air Quality Standards

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

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



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

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

TARGET

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

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

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

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



Make strategic decisions and investments to advance sustainability regionally.

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

TARGET

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

How meeting the target will achieve the goal:

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

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

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

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

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

