



THURSTON COMMUNITY ECONOMIC ALLIANCE STRATEGIC PLAN

Welcome

It is our great honor to present the first-ever comprehensive economic development plan for Thurston County. The Thurston Community Economic Alliance is a partnership structure established to foster collaboration, reduce confusion and ensure accountability. The Strategic Plan is the road map we'll follow to achieve our shared vision for a prosperous and resilient community that provides economic opportunity for all.

Our journey has been deliberate and inclusive; the final product reflective of the community we live in and the people and organizations that make it a place we all love to call home. More than 40 organizations have signed-on to lead or support implementation of proposed initiatives. The initiatives, in turn, are designed to advance community goals identified through a variety of recent planning and public engagement efforts.

Adopted performance indicators will allow us to track and report progress, and if necessary, make adjustments as we go. As a "living document" the plan will also be updated every five years to ensure we remain aligned with evolving demographics, priorities and opportunities.

We are grateful for the time and energy so many have contributed to this effort, and look forward to continued collaboration as we build an even stronger Thurston County.

Sincerely,

Reid Bates, Chair

Perry Shea, Chair-Elect

Thurston Economic Development Council

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Introduction and Context

Economic development plays a crucial role in overall community health, prosperity and sustainability. In Thurston County, many organizations are involved in efforts to strengthen our business environment, enhance our workforce and create economic opportunity for our residents. While many organizations collaborate on individual activities, there is broad agreement that greater clarity of purpose, coordination of actions and much broader impact can be achieved under the framework of an economic development strategic plan. The creation of the Thurston Community Economic Alliance and first-ever county-wide strategic plan for economic development is our shared effort to fulfill that goal.

The Strategic Plan was shaped through a collaborative process involving a variety of partners, with coordination and leadership provided by the Thurston Economic Development Council. More than 100 business and non-profit leaders, educators, elected officials and other stakeholders participated in strategy sessions, with broader public input gathered during review of proposed initiatives.

The Strategic Plan does not replace individual partner plans and goals, but rather serves as a unifying framework for identifying and accomplishing shared economic development priorities. In some respects, the Strategic Plan is essentially the fulfillment of prior planning efforts. Prior studies and plans include:

- **Sustainable Economy White Paper** – As part of the Sustainable Community Plan led by TRPC, the Thurston EDC developed a “Sustainable Economy” white paper demonstrating the need for integrated planning approaches in order to create prosperous local economies, protect environmental assets and foster and fund our social and educational infrastructure.
- **Industry Cluster Study** – Under the leadership of the Pacific Mountain (Pac Mtn) Workforce Development Council, regional partners recently completed a targeted industry cluster study to identify what core traded-sector industries drive our economic output, and where future opportunities may exist within the corresponding supply chains. Six industry clusters have been identified: www.pacmtn.org/documents/Pac_Mtn_ClusterStrategy.pdf
- **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Pac Mtn Strategic Plan** – New federal legislation calls for local workforce development councils to create employer-centered implementation strategies. This requires increased reliance on real-time economic data to identify in-demand jobs, and increased collaboration with economic development entities to engage employers in job development activities. It also provides an opportunity to better align the workforce and economic development systems in our community. The new Pac Mtn Strategic Plan call for stronger integration between workforce training and employer skill set needs.
- **Thurston Thrives** – Many of the Community Economic Alliance partners have been engaged in the Thurston Thrives research and planning effort. This work has reinforced the critical role a strong economy – and equitable opportunity – plays in creating a healthy

community. It also suggests there are greater opportunities for microenterprise, incubation and workforce training services.

The Plan is also a proactive step to prepare for evolving conditions and address potential risks such as:

- **Reductions in State Workforce** – The great recession had broad impacts for the entire economy. But, locally, the blow was most evident in reductions to our locally-dependent State workforce. While some of those jobs will return, long-term state employment is trending downward, suggesting a more pressing need to diversify our sector base.
- **Fluctuations in JBLM Force** – A recent White Paper revealed the extent Lacey's economy is supported by, and dependent upon, the payroll, spending and spinoff effects of JBLM. While not as pronounced in other local communities, future force reductions could have trickle down impacts for retail businesses, the real estate market and other areas of our economy. Conversely, many separating soldiers (estimated to be 40%) indicate a desire to remain in Thurston County, potentially supplying a whole new workforce segment from which to grow existing and new sectors.
- **Increased City Emphasis on Economic Development** – Over the past several years, recognizing that sales tax offers the one "elastic" source of revenue available to cities (property tax increases are capped at 1% annually, Washington has no income tax, and grant funding is variable at best), the Port of Olympia and the Cities of Lacey, Tumwater and Olympia have all created new senior-level economic development positions and hired staff to focus on local business recruitment and retention. This growing focus on economic development at the local level provides an opportunity to revisit regional priorities, roles and new collaborative ventures.
- **Center for Business and Innovation Launch** – In fall 2015, South Puget Sound Community College and the Thurston Economic Development Council launched the Center for Business and Innovation at SPSCC's new Lacey Campus. The Center provides an integrated one-stop economic development clearinghouse, combining traditional instruction and a new entrepreneurial certificate program with existing business development and veteran service programs. The goal is to help connect growing businesses with highly-qualified employees, and develop new businesses with an emphasis on advanced manufacturing and technology. The SPSCC Foundation Board is also in the process of developing a micro-lending program to help finance promising entrepreneurial ideas.
- **Economic Development District** – The US Economic Development Administration provides grant and loan funding as well as a variety of technical assistance to designated Economic Development Districts (EDD). Thurston County is not currently part of an existing EDD and therefore not eligible for these restricted funds. Fortunately, the Thurston EDC and its partners have already completed much of the work necessary to receive designation. The remaining steps can be achieved through formation of the Community Economic Alliance and subsequent identification of strategic initiatives.

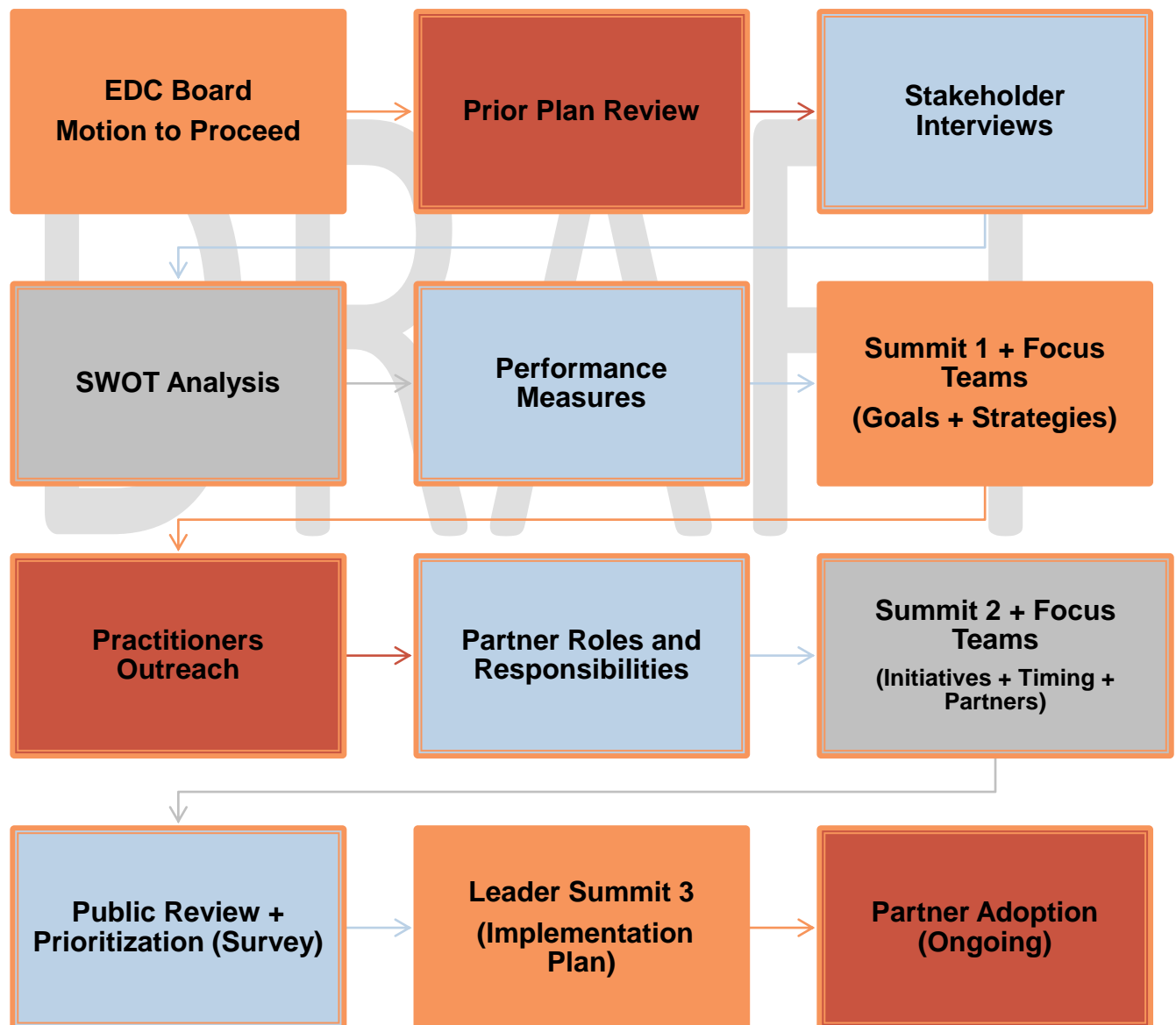
- **Funding** – There is currently no dedicated fund to support regional economic development activities. Most Thurston EDC funding is encumbered for specific local purposes. While targeted grants have been secured in the past to complete specific projects, grant funding is cyclical and often restricted in terms of use. A stable strategic initiatives fund would allow for more proactive economic development activities outlined in the strategic initiatives section below.

DRAFT

Strategic Plan Construct

The Strategic Plan was assembled through an iterative process as shown below. Focus area teams met on three separate occasions to develop and refine proposed initiatives, set proposed implementation timelines and identify potential lead and support partners. Three Community Leader Summits provided an opportunity to review and confirm preferences for performance measures, partner roles and responsibilities and the ensuing implementation and reporting framework.

Community Economic Alliance Planning Process – From Ideas to Action



Vision and Mission

TCEA Structure

The Thurston Community Economic Alliance is a voluntary partnership of local governments, businesses, non-profits, educational institutions and economic development practitioners that collaborate on the development, implementation and review of efforts to build and maintain a dynamic economy.

TCEA Vision

The Thurston Community Economic Alliance will help our local communities compete and prosper in an evolving and increasingly competitive global marketplace. It will strive to extend economic opportunity to all population segments, facilitate strategic initiatives that produce regional benefits and create a structure and mechanism for aligning individual member and practitioner roles and responsibilities.

TCEA Mission

Foster shared community prosperity through coordinated and leveraged community and economic development activity as manifested through an economic development plan and policy framework.

Strategic Plan Value Statement

The Strategic Plan establishes an inventory of partner roles and functions within the broader economic development landscape and a mechanism for increased collaboration and greater impact over time.

WHAT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

Economic Development is the intentional coordination of activities that lead to diverse employment opportunities, improved quality of life and community-wide wealth generation.

Partner Roles

Economic development involves diverse stakeholders operating in a variety of spheres. Successful economic development occurs when stakeholders bridge those spheres, identify clear roles and work collaboratively to achieve shared goals. The following provides an inventory of key partners within the Thurston Community Economic Alliance.

The inventory does not represent an exhaustive list of all organizations involved in local economic activities. Rather, it identifies the key roles some of the larger partners play within the economic development arena. Many other community groups play a role in economic development and it is anticipated the inventory will grow over time. Likewise, many of the inventoried partners serve other functions beyond these specific economic development-related roles.

****Important Note: Individual governmental jurisdictions will develop and implement their own retail development and retention strategies with support from the Thurston EDC where fair and appropriate.***

| ORGANIZATION | PRIMARY ROLES |
|---|---|
| Thurston EDC (including Center for Business + Innovation) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan convener, coordinator, tracker• ADO (State contact for Ec. Dev. activities)• Business Resource Center (entrepreneurial support)• Regional recruitment lead (production focus)• Retention and expansion support• Foreign direct investment coordination• IPZ management• Data, research, white papers• Forecast and Innovation Expo• Real estate forum, opportunity site marketing• Grants and microloan support• Policy recommendations |
| Thurston County, Cities and Towns (including multi-jurisdictional agencies such as LOTT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jurisdiction-specific recruitment/retention• Local tax and land use policy• Infrastructure readiness and “place-making”• Development, permitting “ombudsmen”• Strategic investment support• Targeted initiatives (Woodland Sq., Vet Service Center, Brewery District, Downtown Oly, etc.) |

| | |
|---|--|
| Tribes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-governance; land use policy coordination • Specialized business ventures and attractions • Natural resource based industry leadership |
| Thurston Chamber of Commerce/Foundation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business promotion and networking • Policy coordination (Shared Leg. Priorities) • Targeted workforce development support (B2B) • Small business incubator • Education, schools support (via Foundation) |
| Peer Chambers of Commerce (and Associations, e.g. ODA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local business promotion and networking • Business retention support |
| Pac Mtn Workforce Development Council (including Washington State ESD and contractors) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce readiness analysis and programs • Job seeker support (WorkSource) • Labor force, target industry data • Strategic response (JBLM, job loss events) • DOL, other grants |
| Port of Olympia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Import-export lead • Commercial/industrial/tourism support • Enterprise Zone management, promotion • Rural development support and funding |
| Higher Education (SMU, TESC, SPSCC, WSU, et al) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customized training and education • Knowledge transfer • Internships, apprenticeships • Special projects (microloan, policy research) |
| School Districts/New Market Skills Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General education • Vocational education |
| Visitor and Convention Bureau | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor brand and marketing • Place-making support and promotion • Targeted ecdev activity support (e.g. Byway) |
| Thurston Regional Planning Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-jurisdiction policy convener • Transportation system planning/funding • County land use and workforce housing analysis |
| Intercity Transit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass (workforce) transit • Congestion relief • Specialized/responsive transp. solutions |
| Timberland Regional Library System (TRLS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and community data source • Workforce training and education support |

| | |
|---|--|
| Thurston Thrives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community wellness tracking and initiatives • Health policy and advocacy |
| Washington Department of Commerce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance • Strategic investment support • Workforce support programs |
| US Economic Development Administration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional infrastructure funding • Technical assistance |
| United Way (and other non-profit partners) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene and align non-profit partners • Workforce pathways for clients |
| S. Thurston Economic Development Initiative (STEDI) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South County ecdev coordination |
| City of Lacey Veteran Assistance Center (and other veteran support agencies) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive service access node • Financial and skills training support |
| Morningside (and affiliated job coaches/developers) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for populations with entry barriers • Support for re-entry workers |
| Private Sector Generally | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job creation • Taxable sales generator • Service organization sponsorship • Community ambassadors |
| Financial Institutions Specifically | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community reinvestment • Micro-loan support for emerging business |
| Organized Labor Unions and Trade Associations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worker training and advocacy support |
| BIA/AWB, Other Business Associations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business needs and policy analysis/advocacy • Workforce housing |

Focus Area Overview

This section provides a summary of Strategic Plan focus areas, the Alliance's vision for each, and the various initiatives proposed to bring those visions to life. Focus areas include:

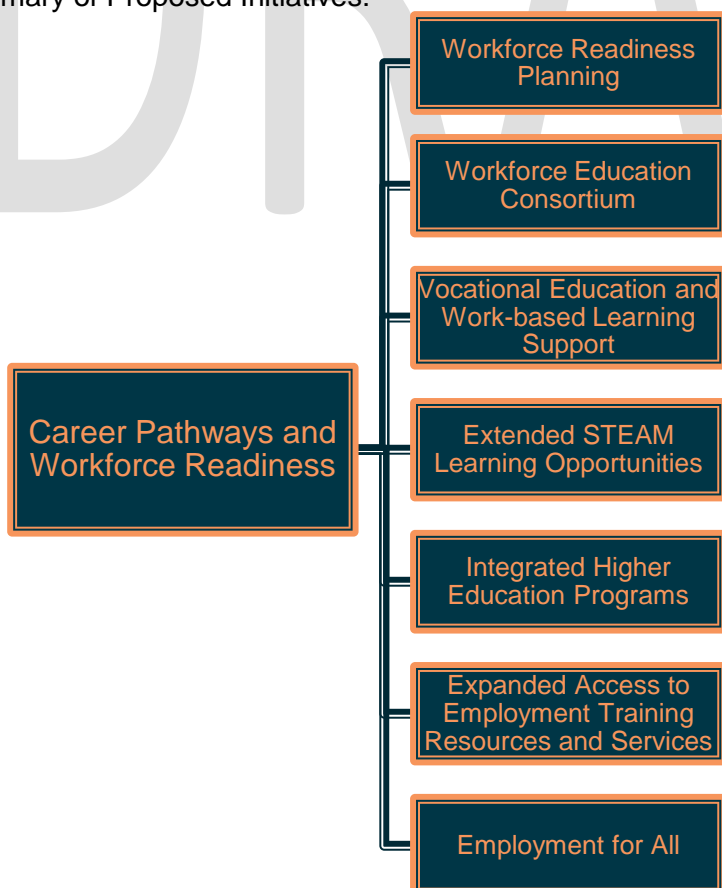
- Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness
- Traded-Sector Industry Growth and Innovation
- Small Business and Entrepreneurial Resources
- Infrastructure, Policy and Funding Coordination
- Brand Development, Partnerships and Communication

A detailed action plan is included at the end of this document, including proposed partners, additional partner notes and recommended implementation start date.

Focus Area: Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness

Our Vision: Maintain a progressive education, training and workforce development system that creates career pathway opportunities for all residents and streamlines employer access to a highly-qualified talent pool.

Summary of Proposed Initiatives:



Focus Area: Traded-Sector Industry Growth and Innovation

Our Vision: Support and stimulate growth in empirically-defined “clean and green” traded-sector industries that provide critical jobs, generate significant taxable revenue and attract new investment.

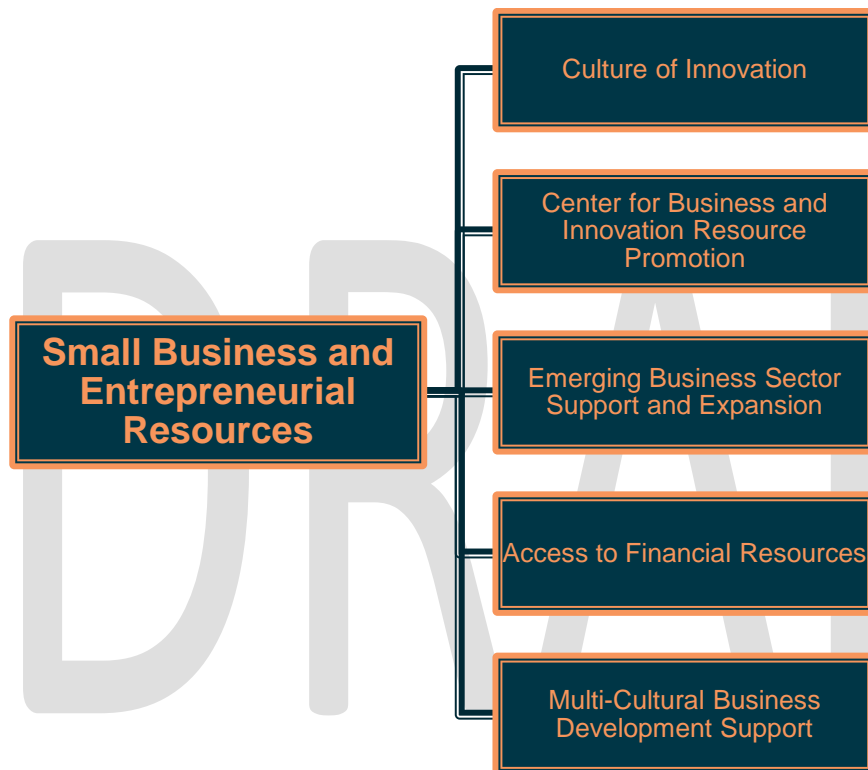
Summary of Proposed Initiatives:



Focus Area: Small Business and Entrepreneurial Resource

Our Vision: Promote and support a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship by connecting small and emerging business with the resources they need to launch and grow.

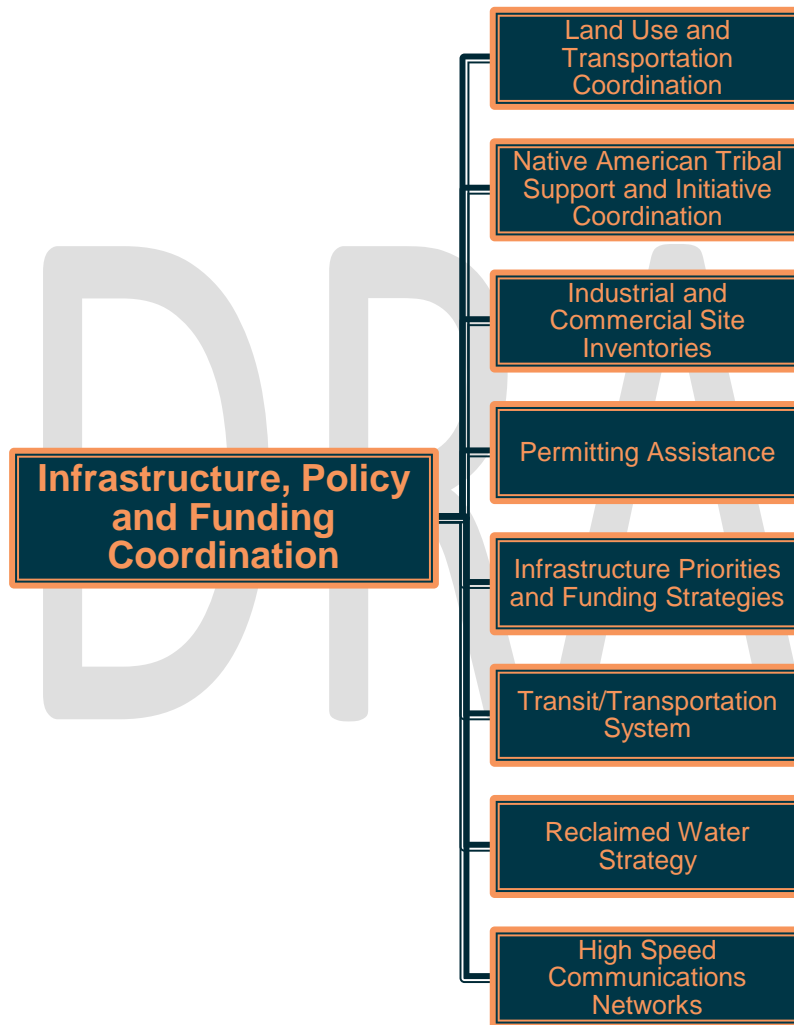
Summary of Proposed Initiatives:



Focus Area: Infrastructure, Policy and Funding Coordination

Our Vision: Strengthen collaboration to ensure policy alignment, adequate infrastructure funding and effective implementation of strategic community initiatives.

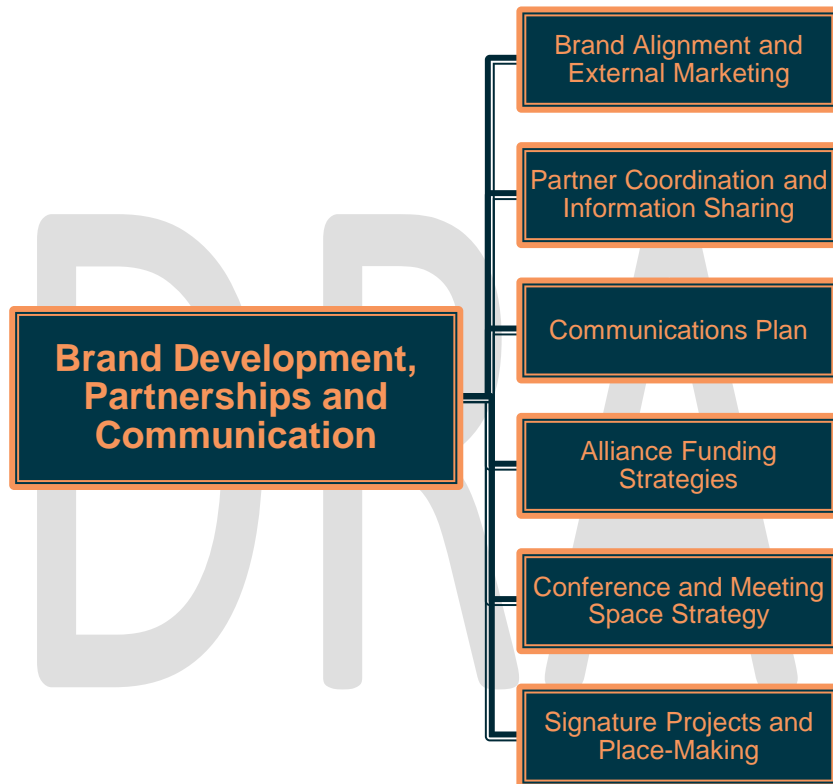
Summary of Proposed Initiatives:



Focus Area: Brand Development, Partnerships and Communication

Our Vision: Develop a Thurston brand and promote our community as a preferred destination for investors, employers and employees based on our geographic location, cultural assets, affordability and integrated workforce and educational systems.

Summary of Proposed Initiatives:



Performance Indicators

This section describes data TCEA will track to measure economic conditions and performance. Just as the status of the Spotted Owl species is used as an indicator to interpret the relative well-being of its extended habitat, TCEA indicators are designed to provide key insights into the health and functioning of a complex economic landscape.

While it may not be possible to coherently measure every factor affecting economic conditions, indicator *snapshots* can help local leaders track measures that matter to their constituents, and accordingly, make policy and investment decisions to achieve defined goals. The diverse range of our indicator set reflects TCEA's vision that successful plan implementation can and should positively impact multiple facets of community well-being.

For contextual purposes, each indicator includes a value description and a graph depicting present conditions and/or prior years' performance trends the Strategic Plan. Indicator progress will be tracked and reported annually to Alliance members and the broader community.

In all, TCEA has identified 22 core indicators. In addition to tracking the performance of each individual variable, overall progress will be measured using a composite scoring index. Improving indicators will be assigned a score of +1, declining indicators a score of -1 and unchanged indicators a score of zero. The resulting figure will provide a year-over-year snapshot of our general direction.

THURSTON PERFORMANCE INDICATOR SETS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Components of Population Change | 17. Class of Worker |
| 2. Real Property Value | 18. Median Wages |
| 3. Gross Regional Product | 19. Median Household Income |
| 4. Number of Enterprises by Sector | 20. Poverty Level (by cohort) |
| 5. Wages Paid by Sector | 21. % Students on Free/Reduced Lunch |
| 6. Annual Average Employment by Sector | 22. Educational Attainment |
| 7. Annual Average Wage by Sector | 23. Graduation Rates |
| 8. Target Industry Employment | 24. Commuter Outflow |
| 9. Industry Sales Leakage | 25. Mode of Commute Outside County |
| 10. Visitor Spending and Revenue | 26. Mode of Commute Inside County |
| 11. Visitor Spending by Lodging Type | 27. Housing Affordability: All Buyers |
| 12. Job vs. Employment Growth | 28. Housing Affordability: First Time Buyers |
| 13. Labor Force Participation | 29. K-12 Performance: English Arts |
| 14. Unemployment Rate | 30. K-12 Performance: Math |
| 15. Taxable Sales | 31. K-12 Performance: Science and Biology |
| 16. Taxable Sales vs. Population Growth | 32. Consumer Confidence |

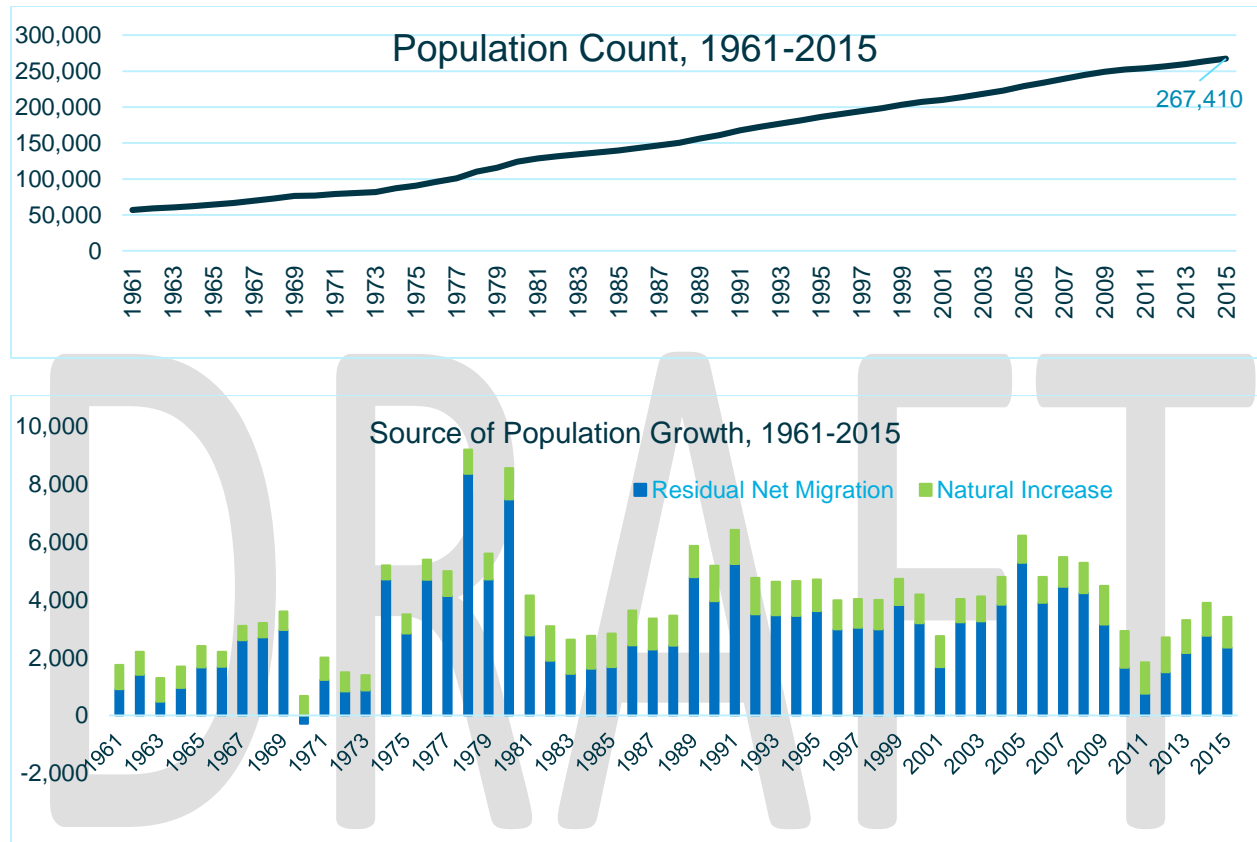
DATA CREDITS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">American Community Survey (US Census)Bureau of Labor StatisticsDean Runyan and AssociatesEconomic Modeling Services, Inc.J Robertson and Company (JRO)Office of the State Superintendent for InstructionSaint Martin's University | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Thurston County Economic Development CouncilWashington State Department of LaborWashington State Employment Security DepartmentWashington State Office of Financial Management |
|---|---|

Indicator 1: Components of Populations Change

Why it matters: Population change, and what's driving it, is an important indicator of market capacity.

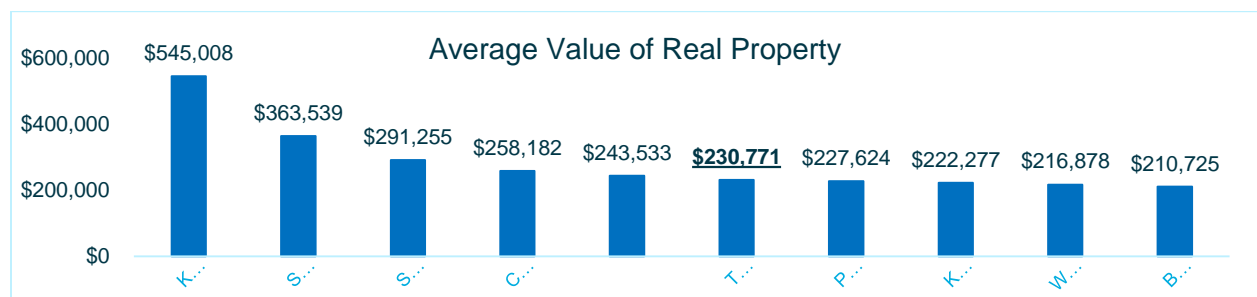
How we're doing: Thurston's population experienced growth spurts in the late 1970s and early 1990s, at times growing by nearly 10% per year. Since 2000, County population growth has averaged 1.73% per year.



Indicator 2: Real Property Value

Why it matters: Real property value provides a snapshot of overall prosperity. The higher the value, the more desirable the location.

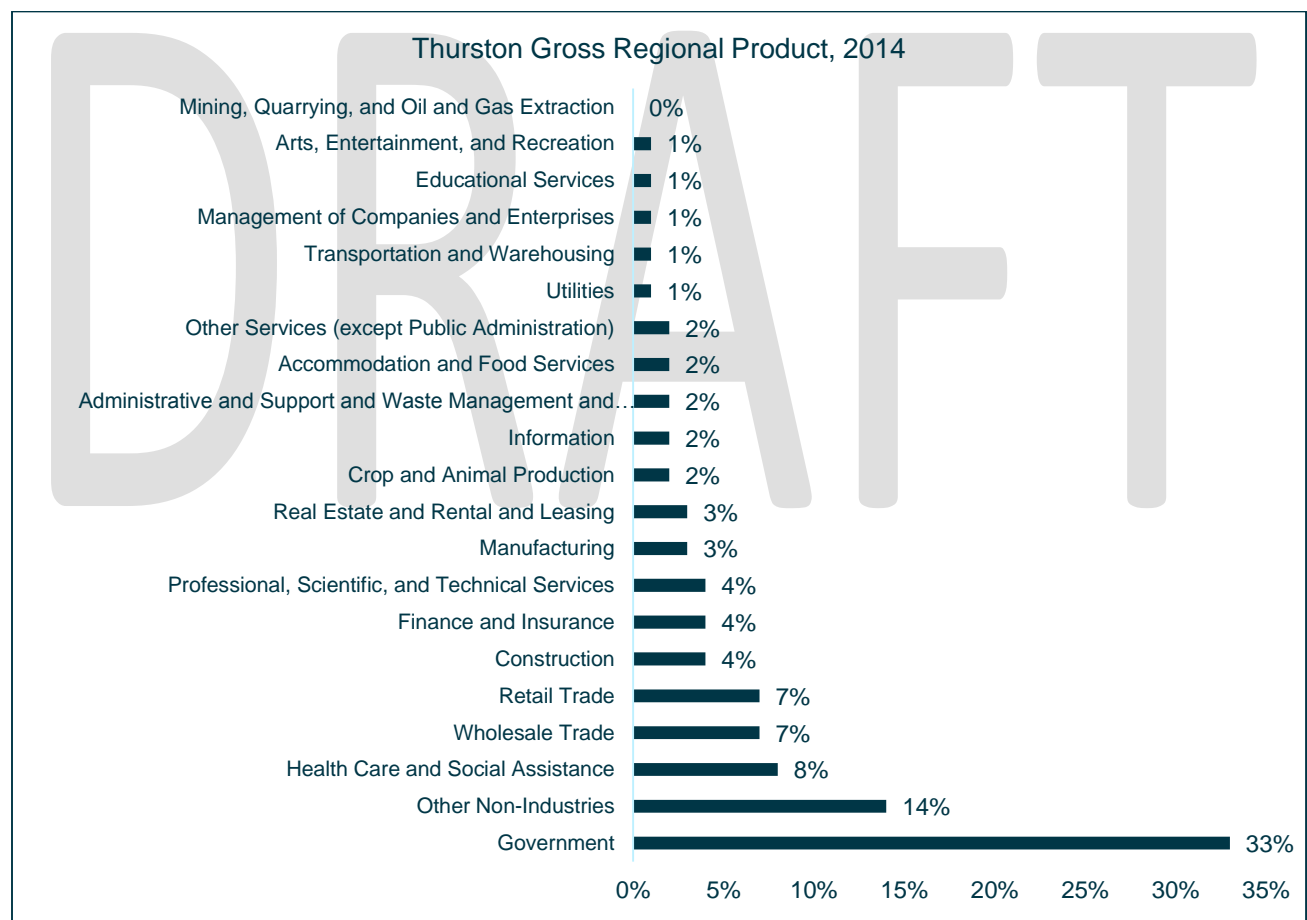
How we're doing: Thurston has the 6th highest average parcel value among in Washington. Thurston's average parcel value is \$230,771 and total county real value is \$25,662,646,633 - about 3% of statewide real property value. The mean value for all counties is \$162,390 per parcel, while the weighted mean is \$271,863.



Indicator 3: Gross Regional Product (GRP)

Why it matters: Gross Regional Product measures the final market value of all goods and services produced in a specific region including earnings, property income and taxation on production (less tax subsidies). Growth in the GRP indicates a thriving economy. In Thurston, there is also interest in seeing gains in particular industries including: health care; manufacturing; information; professional and technical services; arts, recreation and entertainment; accommodation and food services; and crop and animal production which align with our identified target industry clusters.

How we're doing: Thurston County's baseline GRP, as of 2014, is \$11.56 Billion. Government accounts for 33% of that value, while our target industries produce between 1% (arts, entertainment and recreation) and 8% (health care).



Indicator 4: Industry Presence and Impact

Why it matters: Local economies are comprised of multiple driving sectors. Understanding which sectors are generating the majority of employment, wages and revenue is essential to identifying where resources should be applied to protect core sectors and support emerging industries as conditions change.

How we're doing: The tables opposite provide a snapshot of Thurston industry performance in 2014. As has been the case for many years, Government is the single largest employer and wage payer in Thurston County. But other industry sectors play a significant role as well. Combined, non-governmental enterprises account for two-thirds of total employment, about 60% of total wages and some of the highest annual average wages.

| Number of Enterprises by Sector 2014 Baseline | |
|--|-------|
| Total Number Enterprises | 7,605 |
| Health care and social assistance | 1,886 |
| Construction | 862 |
| Professional and technical services | 726 |
| Retail trade | 670 |
| Other services, except public administration | 635 |
| Administrative and waste services | 489 |
| Accommodation and food services | 468 |
| Wholesale trade | 371 |
| Real estate and rental and leasing | 256 |
| Finance and insurance | 249 |
| Manufacturing | 179 |
| Government | 173 |
| Transportation and warehousing | 151 |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting | 146 |
| Information | 117 |
| Educational services | 106 |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation | 94 |
| Management of companies and enterprises | 18 |
| Utilities | 9 |
| Mining | 6 |

| Wages Paid by Sector 2014 Baseline | |
|--|-----------------|
| Total Wages Paid | \$4,642,069,506 |
| Government | \$1,980,942,731 |
| Health care and social assistance | \$572,388,814 |
| Retail trade | \$333,157,952 |
| Wholesale trade | \$269,580,752 |
| Professional and technical services | \$210,141,534 |
| Construction | \$183,693,460 |
| Manufacturing | \$153,266,049 |
| Finance and insurance | \$152,817,797 |
| Administrative and waste services | \$150,559,229 |
| Accommodation and food services | \$133,122,906 |
| Other services, except public administration | \$114,326,966 |
| Transportation and warehousing | \$78,650,648 |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting | \$55,052,472 |
| Educational services | \$72,640,288 |
| Information | \$53,657,469 |
| Management of companies and enterprises | \$48,651,071 |
| Real estate and rental and leasing | \$40,630,507 |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation | \$22,781,340 |
| Utilities | \$14,340,240 |
| Mining | \$1,667,281 |

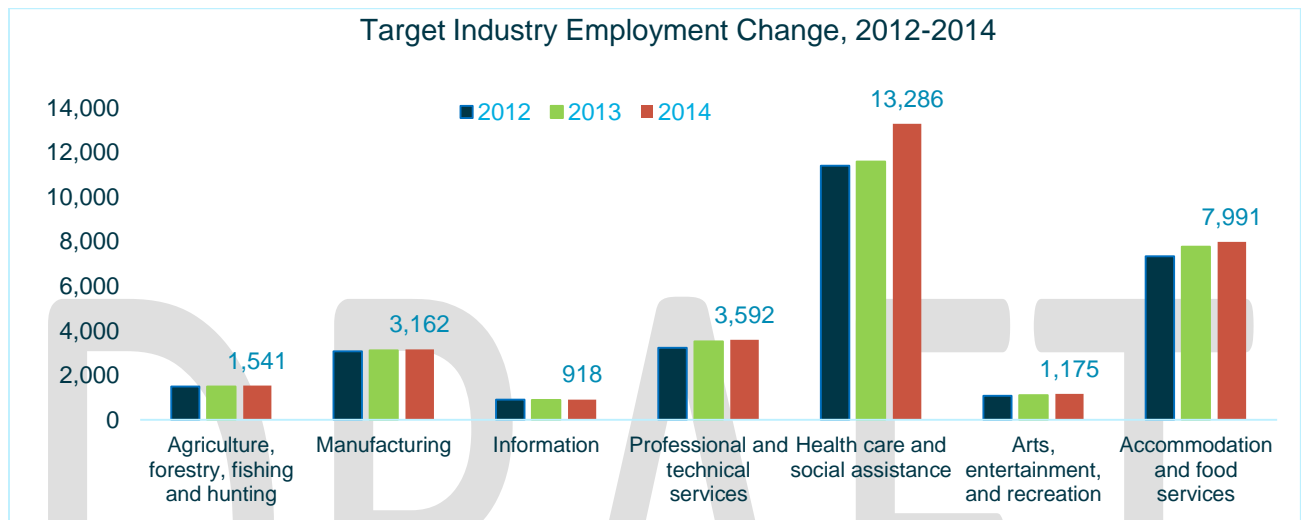
| Annual Average Employment by Sector Baseline 2014 | |
|--|---------|
| Total Industry Employment | 103,097 |
| Government | 35,435 |
| Health care and social assistance | 13,286 |
| Retail trade | 11,842 |
| Accommodation and food services | 7,991 |
| Administrative and waste services | 5,216 |
| Construction | 3,893 |
| Professional and technical services | 3,592 |
| Other services, except public administration | 3,377 |
| Manufacturing | 3,162 |
| Wholesale trade | 3,067 |
| Finance and insurance | 2,452 |
| Transportation and warehousing | 2,146 |
| Educational services | 1,848 |
| Real estate and rental and leasing | 1,233 |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation | 1,175 |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting | 1,541 |
| Information | 918 |
| Management of companies and enterprises | 724 |
| Utilities | 170 |
| Mining | 31 |

| Annual Average Wage by Sector 2014 Baseline | |
|--|----------|
| Average Wage All Industries | \$45,026 |
| Wholesale trade | \$87,897 |
| Utilities | \$84,354 |
| Management of companies and enterprises | \$67,198 |
| Finance and insurance | \$62,324 |
| Professional and technical services | \$58,503 |
| Information | \$58,450 |
| Government | \$55,904 |
| Mining | \$53,783 |
| Manufacturing | \$48,471 |
| Construction | \$47,186 |
| Health care and social assistance | \$43,082 |
| Educational services | \$39,308 |
| Transportation and warehousing | \$36,650 |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting | \$35,725 |
| Other services, except public administration | \$33,855 |
| Real estate and rental and leasing | \$32,953 |
| Administrative and waste services | \$28,865 |
| Retail trade | \$28,134 |
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation | \$19,388 |
| Accommodation and food services | \$16,659 |

Indicator 5: Target Industry Employment

Why it matters: Employment trends provide insight into the overall health of Thurston County's target industries.

How we're doing: Over the three-year period between 2012 and 2014, employment remained stable or grew in most of Thurston's target industry clusters, with the most significant growth occurring in "health sciences."

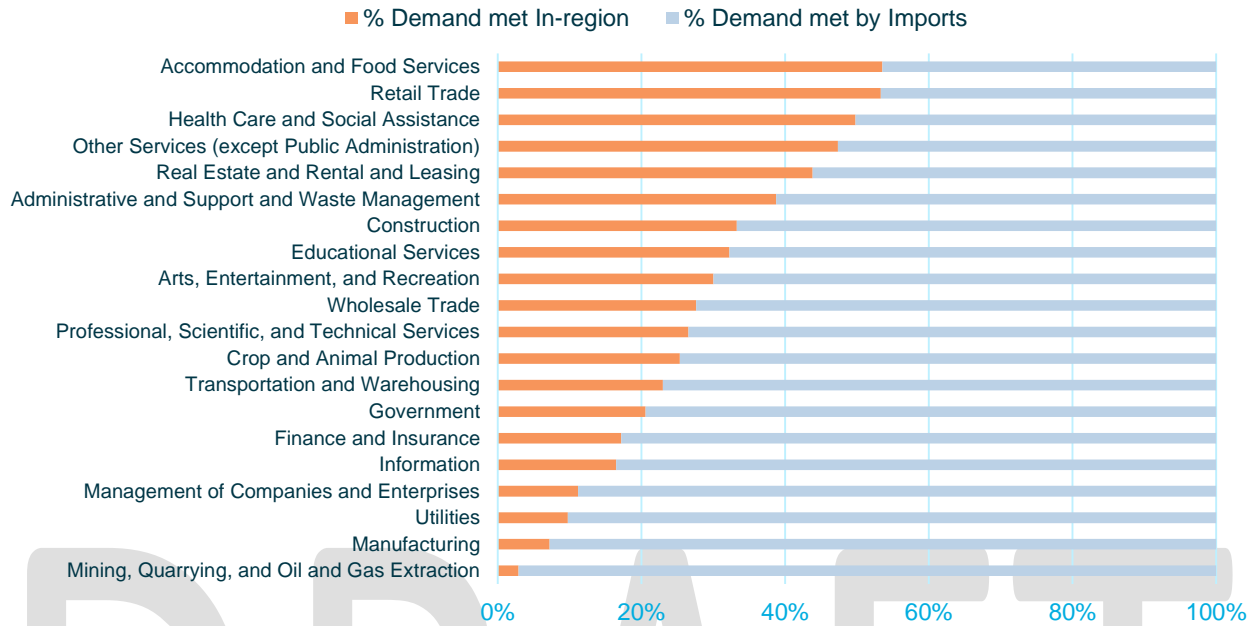


Indicator 6: Industry Sales Leakage

Why it matters: Goods and supplies purchased outside of Thurston represent lost income and tax revenue.

How we're doing: The graph below establishes 2014 baseline data for in-region purchases vs. imports for all major industry codes. The goal is to meet more of our local industry demand in-region as time passes.

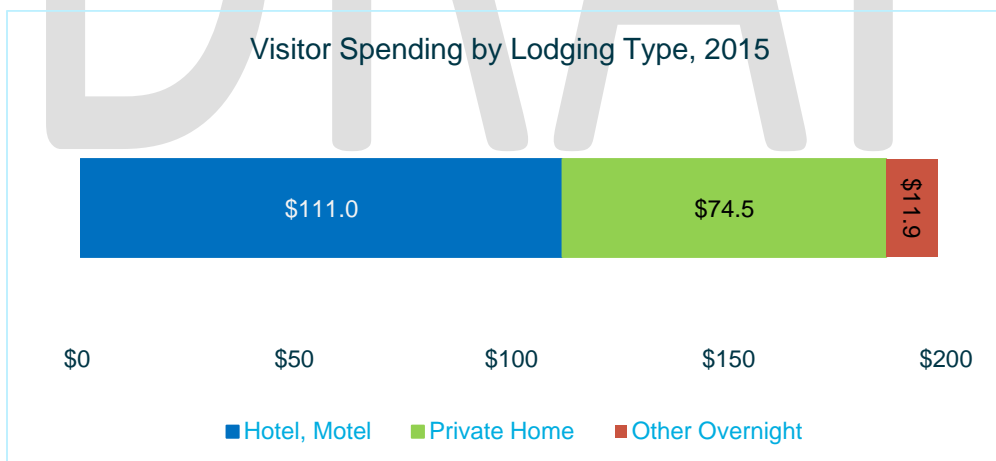
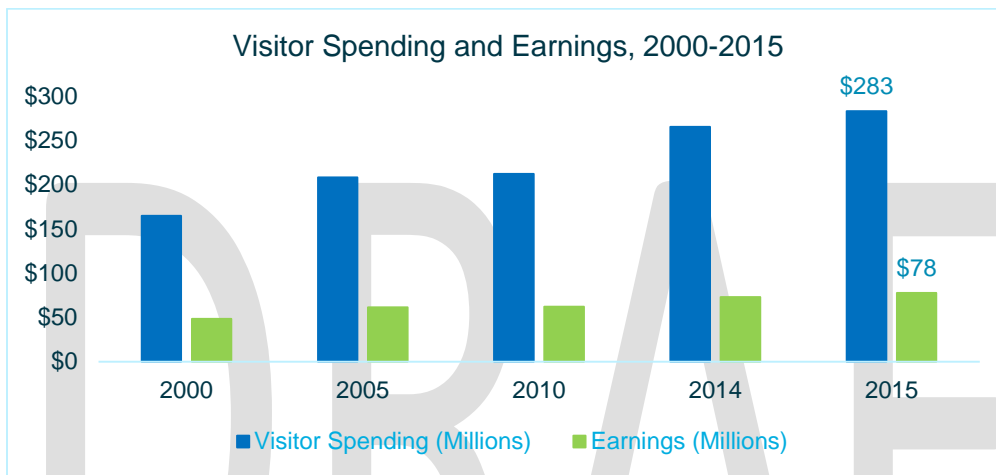
% Industry Demand Met In-Region vs. Imports, 2014



Indicator 7: Tourism Revenue

Why it matters: Tourism is an integral part of Thurston County's industry clusters. The spending and earnings generated by external visitors supplements year-round residents' economic activity and provides a high return on investment (after visitors spend, they leave...or come back to invest).

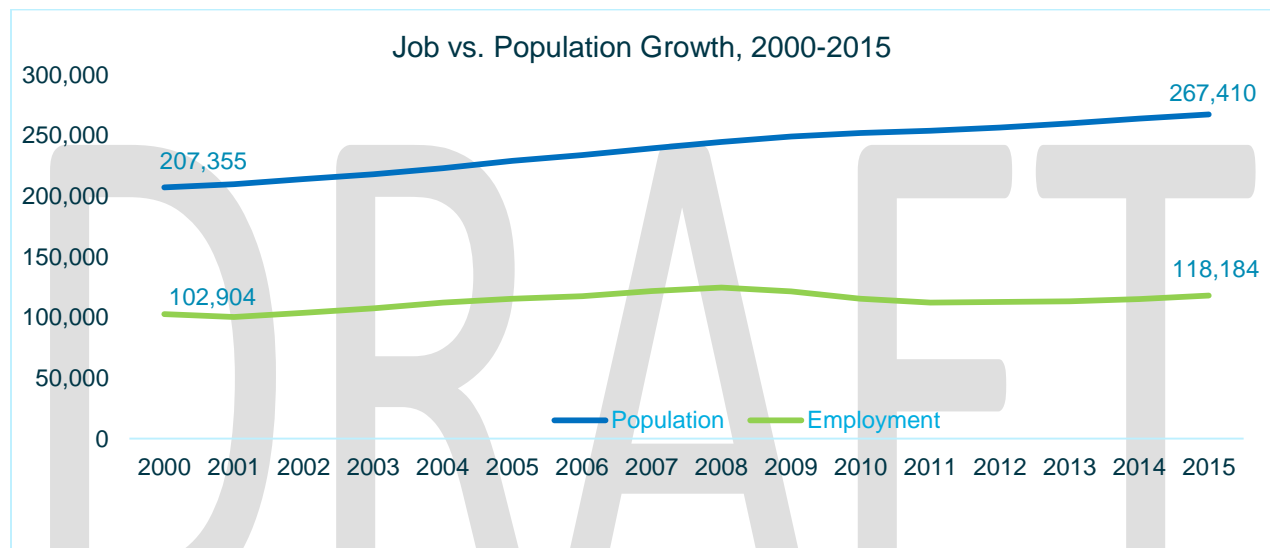
How we're doing: Visitor spending and earnings both hit an all-time high in 2015, and have expanded at an unprecedented rate (2014-2015) date back to the year 2000. Even though the majority of visitors stay in private residences (family, VRBO, etc.), those staying in hotel lodging generate the most spending on an annual basis.



Indicator 8: Overall Employment Growth

Why it matters: Prosperous communities maintain an employment growth rate at or above the rate of population growth. When population growth exceeds employment growth, there are generally three root causes: a county is attracting a higher proportion of retirees (or non-labor force participants) than working age residents; residents are community to work outside the county; and/or a number equivalent to the population-jobs gap are generating income through transfer payments as opposed to wages.

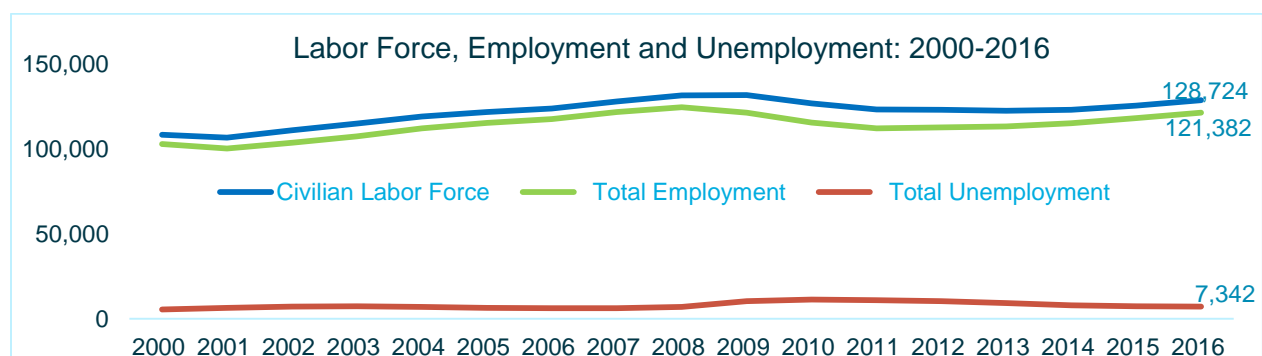
How we're doing: Between 2000-2015, Thurston added 60,000 residents but only 15,000 new jobs on balance. In other words, our population has grown 23%, while employment has only grown 13%.

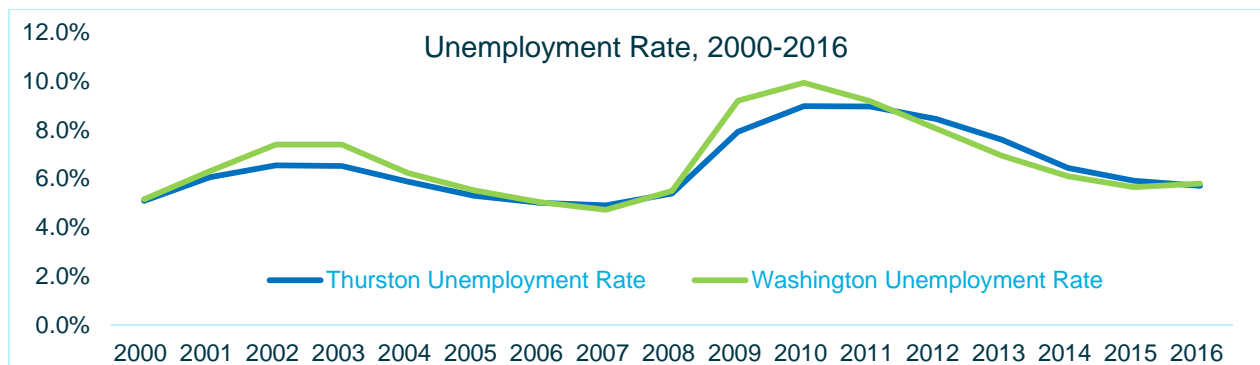


Indicator 9: Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rate

Why it matters: Labor force participation indicates how many people of work age are actually working.

How we're doing: The graphs below show Thurston has maintained a high labor force participation rate since 2010 and overall unemployment levels near the state average. The impacts of the “Great Recession” are readily visible in the 2009-2011 timeframe in the lower graph, followed by four consecutive years of falling unemployment rates.

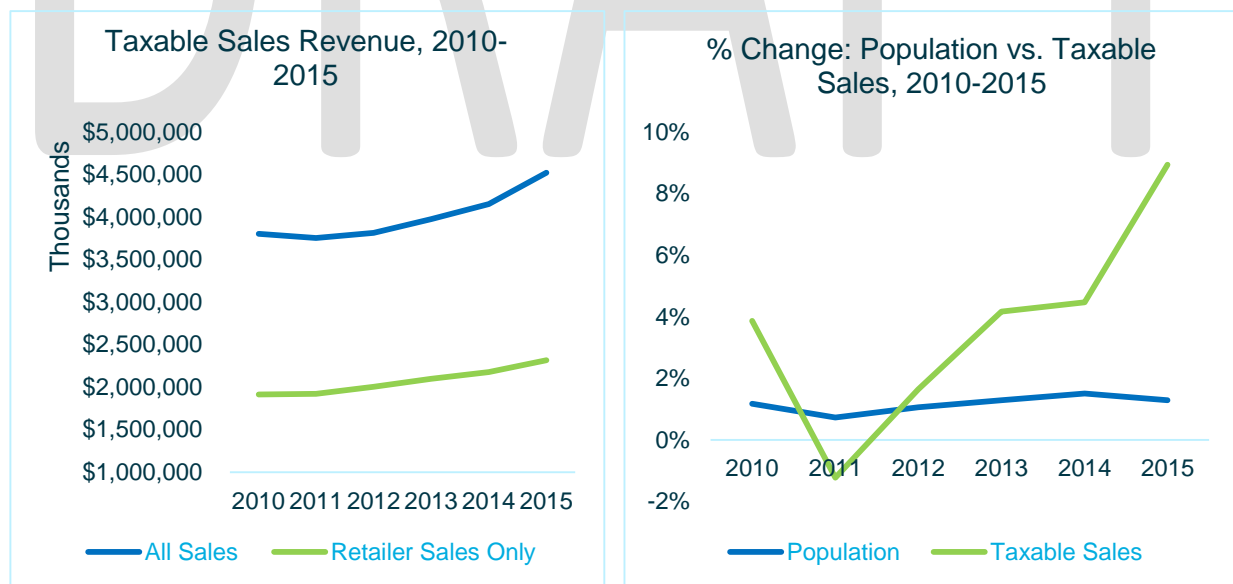




Indicator 10: Taxable Retail Sales

Why it matters: Taxable sales generate revenue for the county and jurisdiction where the sale takes place. Taxable sales are an indicator of overall economic activity. In Washington, the sales tax is especially important for local government given the absence of an income tax and limitations on property tax increases.

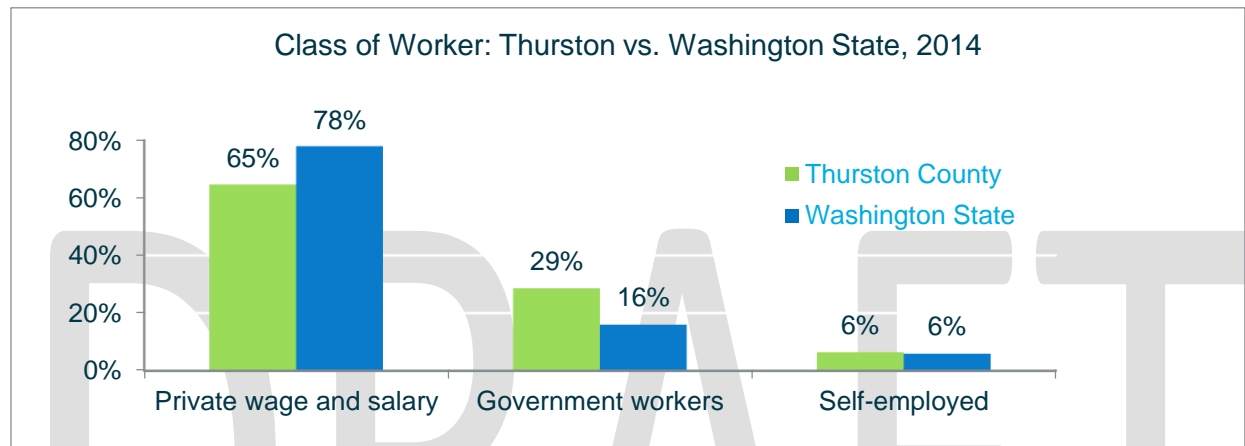
How we're doing: As the graphs below indicate, taxable retail sales have been trending upward in Thurston County the past several years, exceeding the growth rate of our population by a significant margin.



Indicator 11: Class of Worker

Why it matters: While a strong government sector helps maintain economic stability, it may also depress average wages and innovation. In some cases, a strong government sector presence can also equate to lower municipal revenue as a result of property tax exemptions.

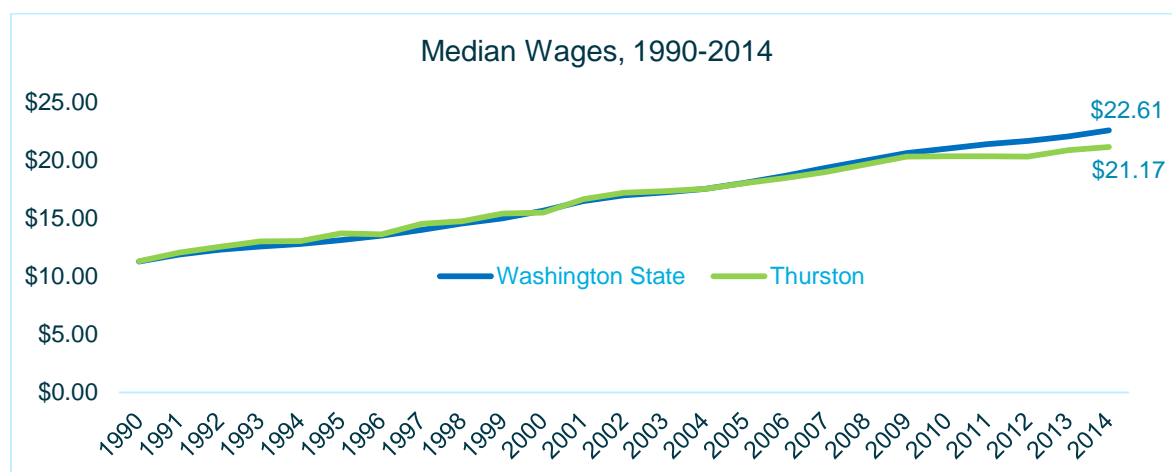
How we're doing: Statewide, approximately 84% of workers are private wage and salary earners and/or self-employed, compared to 71% in Thurston County.



Indicator 12: Median Wages

Why it matters: Higher median wages indicate a strong presence of high-wage jobs, a competitive employment environment and effective work readiness programs.

How we're doing: Thurston's median wage remained on-track with the Washington State average from 1990 to 2010. As of 2014, the median wage Thurston worker earned about \$1.50 less per hour than their statewide peer.

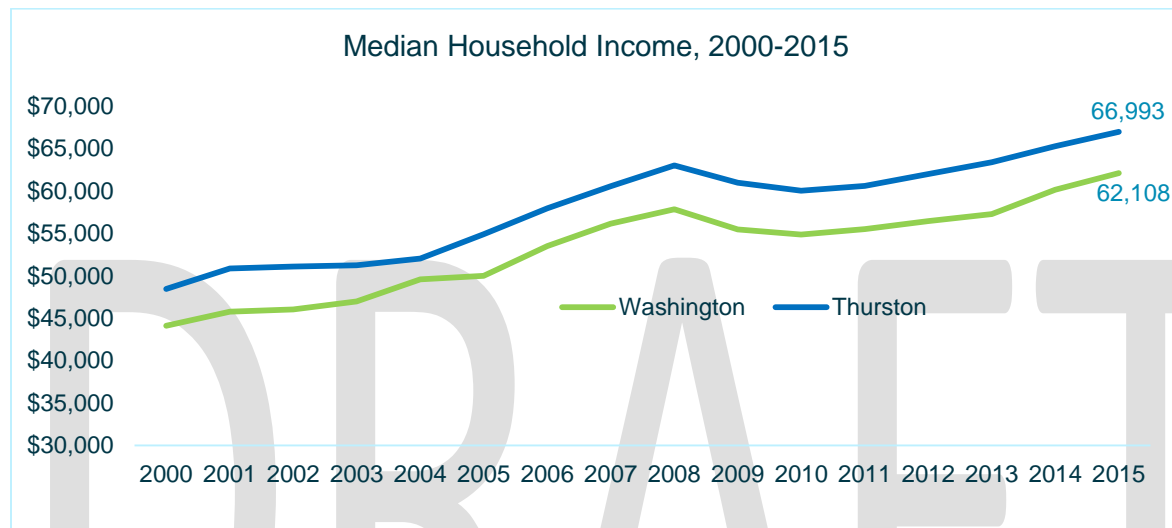


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Indicator 13: Household Income

Why it matters: Median household income provides a more accurate measure of earnings, taking into account the wages and other earnings a family or other household combination bring in over the course of a year.

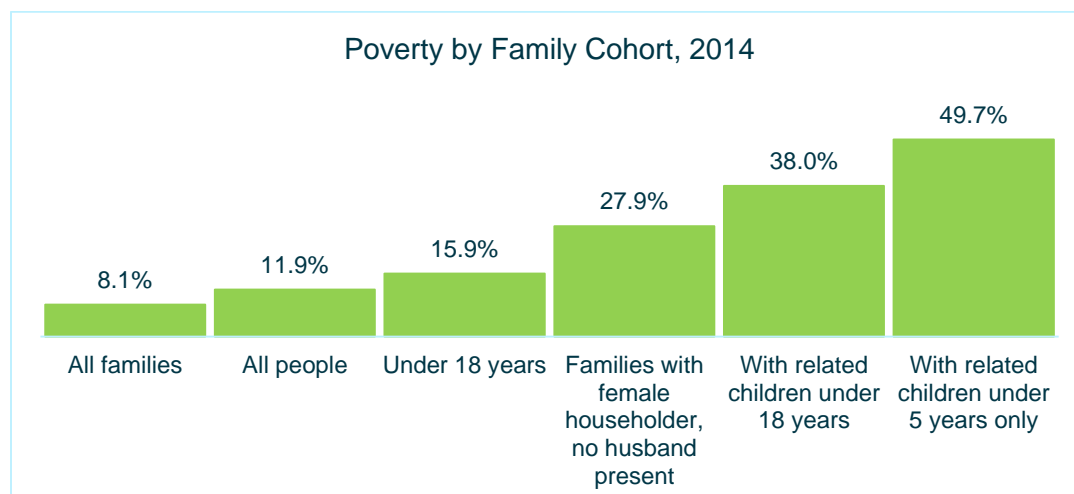
How we're doing: Thurston County household incomes are consistently lower than the statewide average, due in large part to King and Snohomish County (where cost of living is also higher), but have not lost significant ground over the past 15 years. As has been noted in prior Thurston EDC analyses, Thurston is home to fewer high wage earners *and* fewer low wage earners.



Indicator 14: Poverty

Why it matters: It is imperative to understand not only how many people are in poverty, but what specific groups are most impacted, in order to create effective poverty reduction strategies.

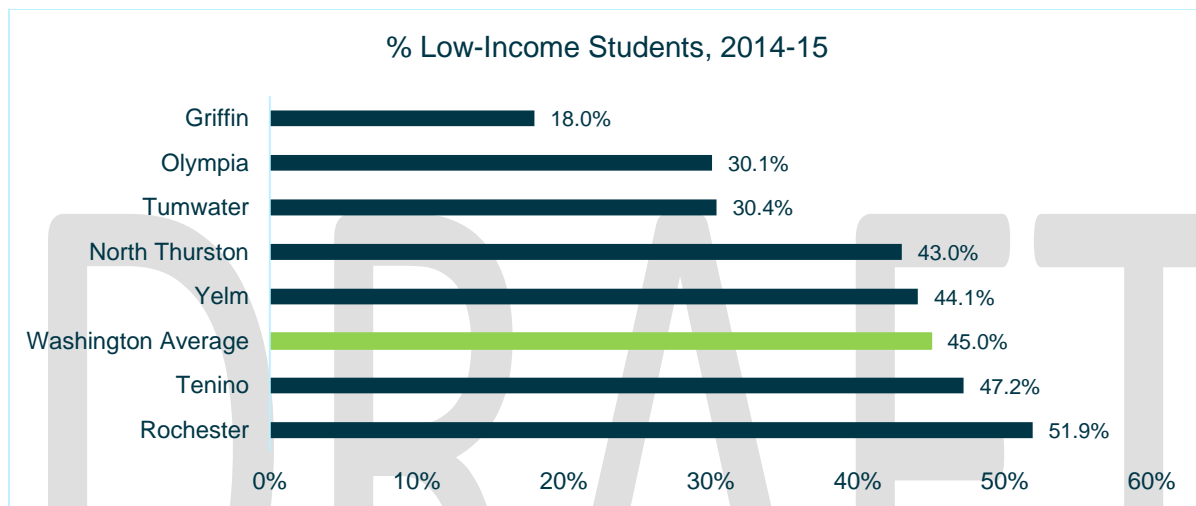
How we're doing: As of 2014, approximately 12% of Thurston residents were estimated to be living below the poverty threshold. As the graph below illustrates, seniors, married couples and families with two wage earners are far less likely to be living in poverty, compared to single-parent households.



Indicator 15: Percent Students Qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch

Why it matters: Another way to examine poverty is through the Free and Reduced Lunch program offered to school students from low income families.

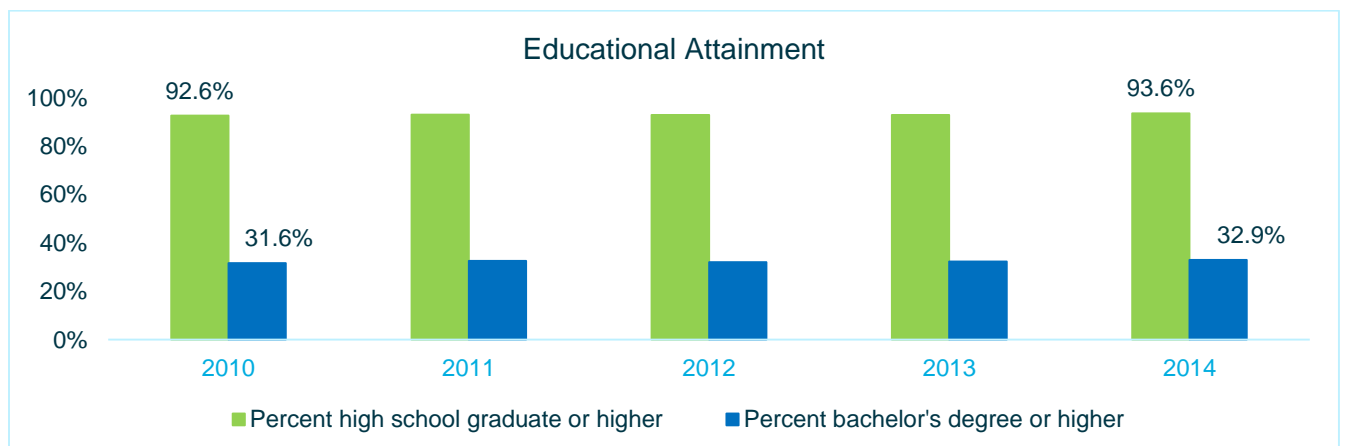
How we're doing: Four of seven local school districts are near or above the statewide average for number students identified as low-income.



Indicator 16: Educational Attainment

Why it matters: Education is one of the surest ways to reduce poverty and create higher wage career opportunities for Thurston residents.

How we're doing: From 2010 through 2014, educational attainment has slowly but steadily increased in Thurston County. Nearly 94% of residents have earned a high school degree or higher, and 33% have a college degree.

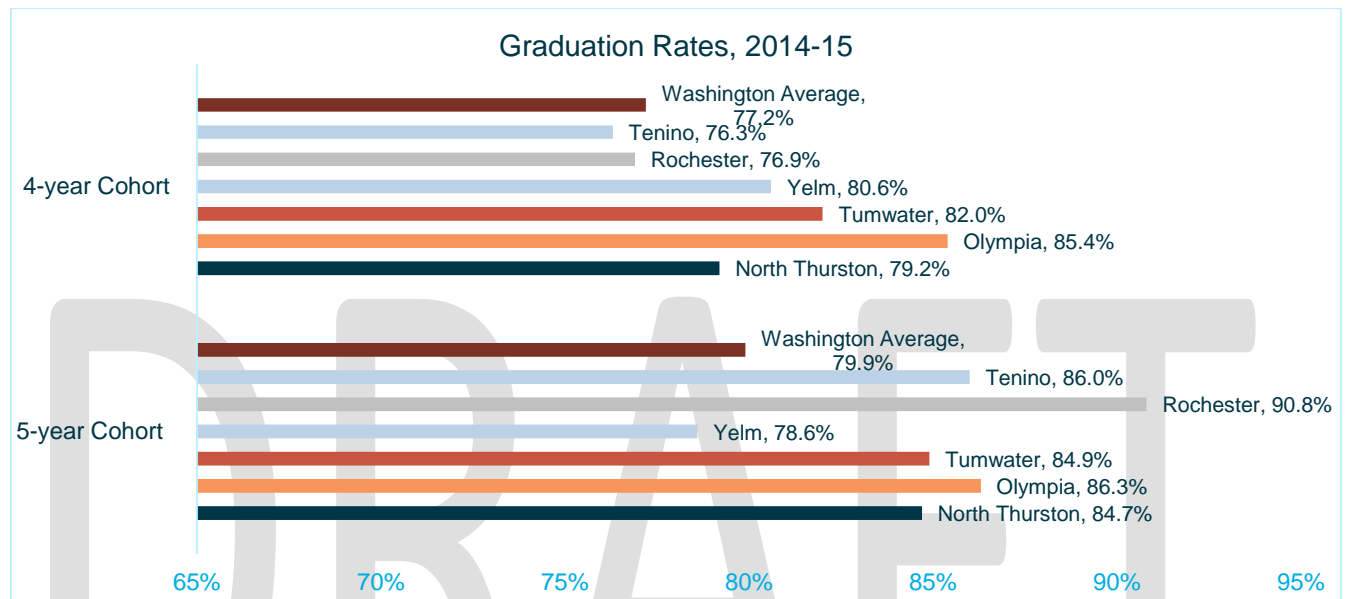


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Indicator 17: Graduation Rates

Why it matters: High graduation rates lead to reduced poverty and better career opportunities. High graduation rates are also an indication of strong schools and attendant social support networks.

How we're doing: For the most part, local school districts are exceeding the state average for graduation rates in both the 4-year and 5-year cohorts, with additional room for improvement.

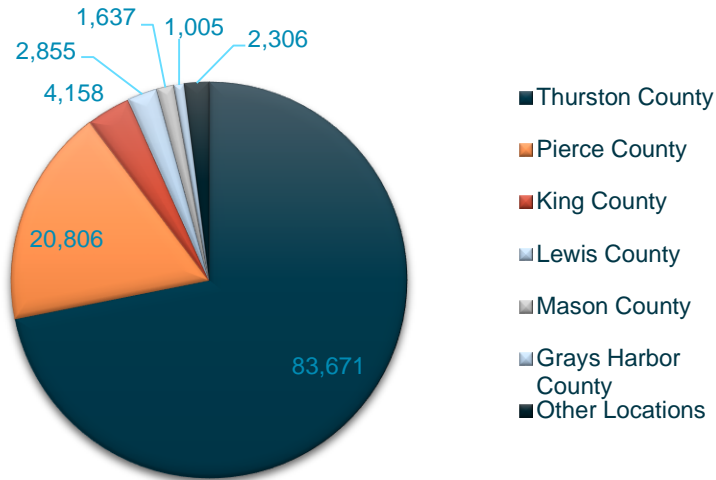


Indicator 18: Commuter Outflow

Why it matters: When residents work outside their home county, several potentially negative impacts can ensue. These include increased congestion (and carbon emissions), reduced in-county spending and a lower quality of life for the commuter, just to name a few.

How we're doing: Thurston residents work in more than 60 different locations throughout the US. Just over 35,000 - or about 30% of Thurston's working resident population - commutes outside of Thurston for employment (2013), with the vast majority traveling to neighboring Pierce County. Other top destinations include King, Lewis, Mason and Grays Harbor Counties.

Thurston Resident Place of Work, 2013

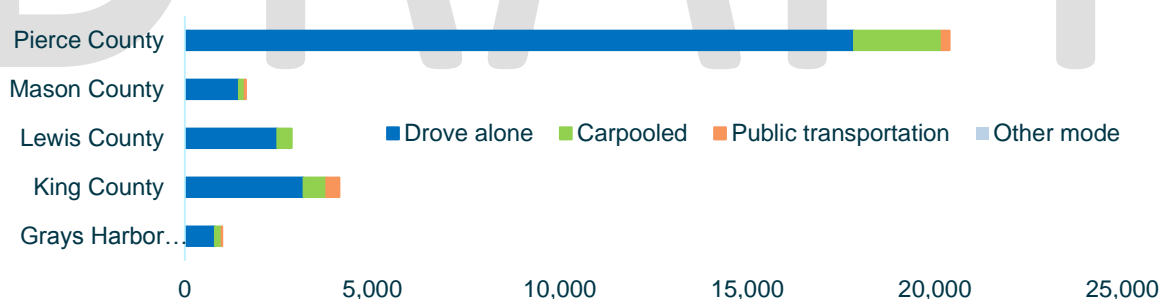


Indicator 19: Mode of Commute

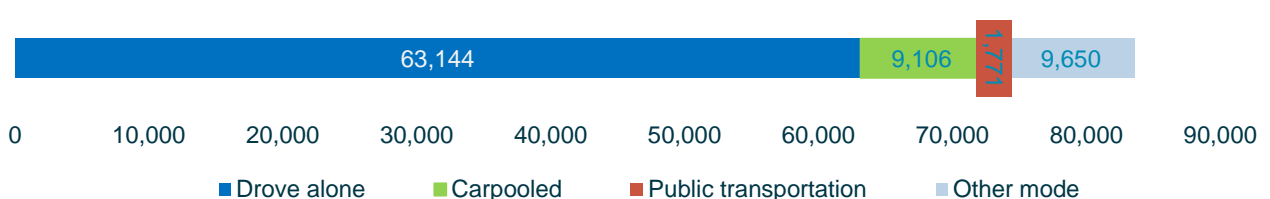
Why it matters: Alternative modes of transportation (vs. single-occupancy vehicle commuting) can help reduce congestion and carbon emissions while also increasing people's quality of life.

How we're doing: Within Thurston County, about 25% of workers commute to their job using an alternative form of transportation. That figure drops to 15% for those commuting to work outside of Thurston County. Carpooling is the second highest travel mode and public transportation, for now, a distant third.

Mode of Commute Outside of Thurston County, 2013



Mode of Commute Within Thurston County, 2013



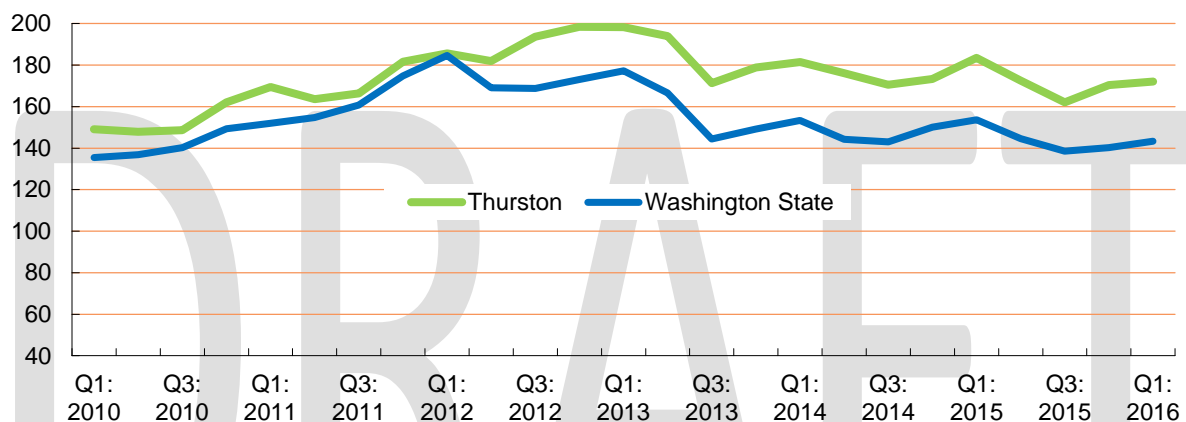
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Indicator 20: Housing Affordability

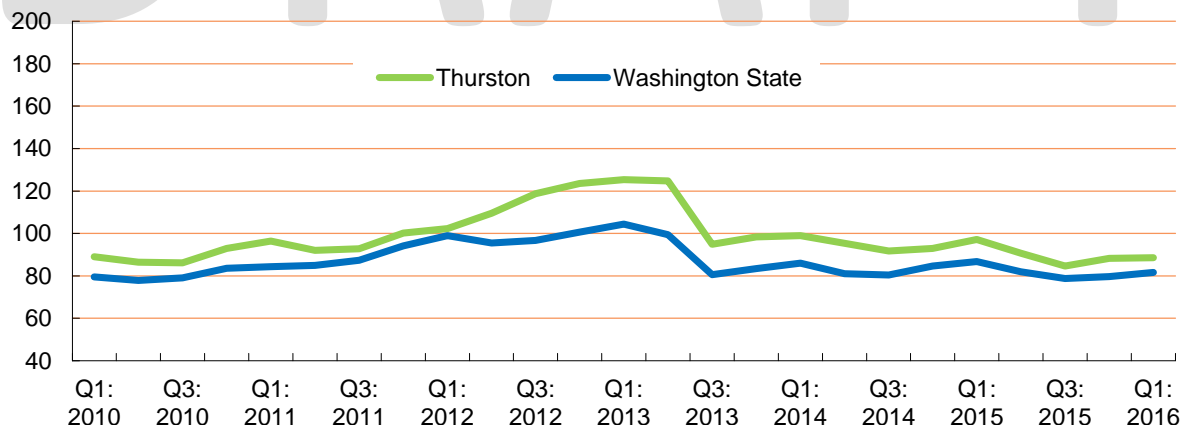
Why it matters: Housing affordability is an essential component for both retaining and attracting workers and investment. The ultimate goal is to achieve a balance between median income and median home price.

How we're doing: In the charts below, a score of 100 or higher means the median wage is in balance with the median home prices at any given point in time. For those with equity (e.g. have saved cash for down-payment and/or own another home already), Thurston is a relatively affordable place to live in Washington State. For the first-time home buyer without equity, median housing prices are starting to outpace median incomes.

Housing Affordability - Middle Income Families: Q1, 2010 to Q1, 2016



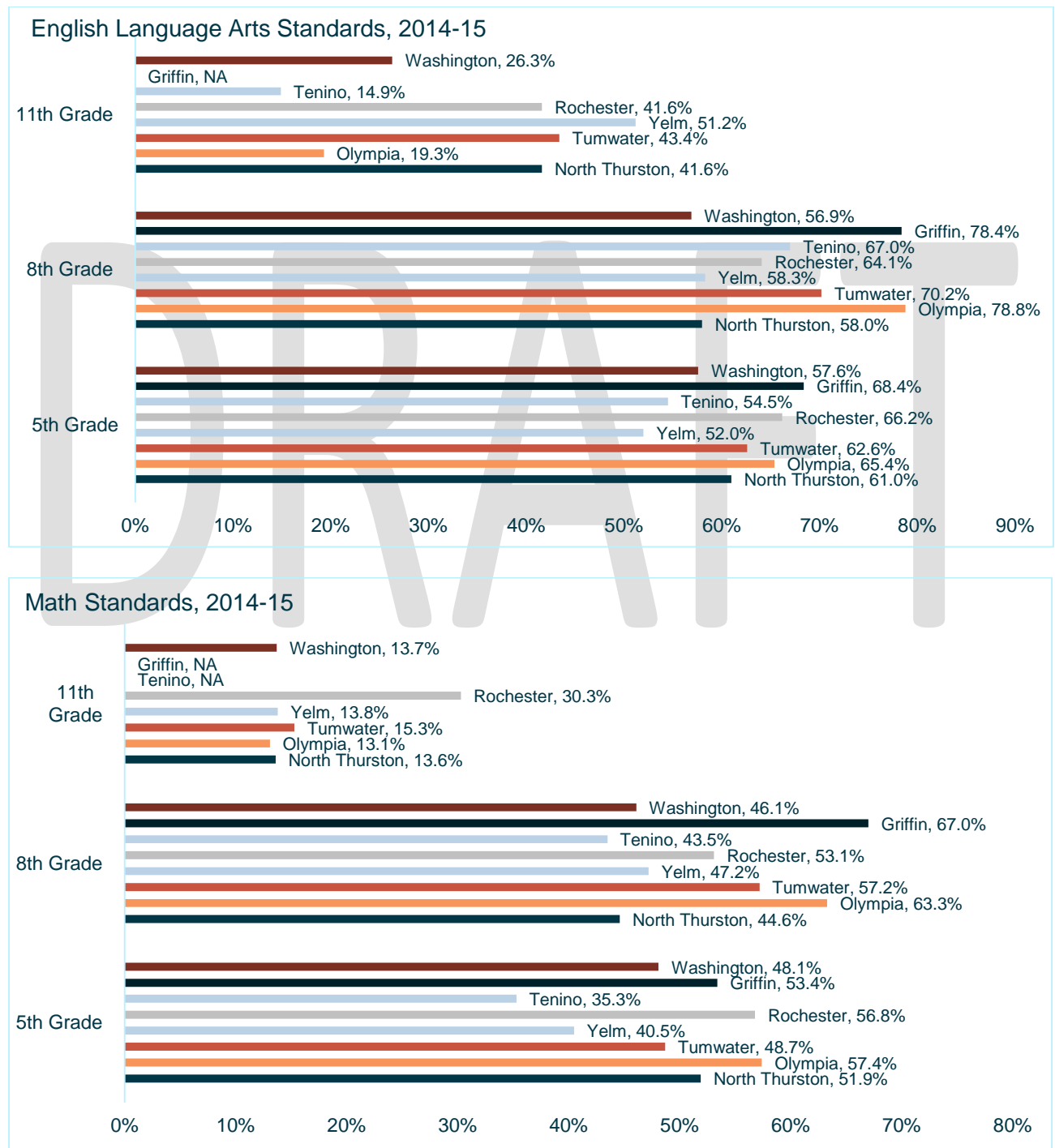
Housing Affordability - First Time Buyers: Q1, 2010 to Q1, 2016



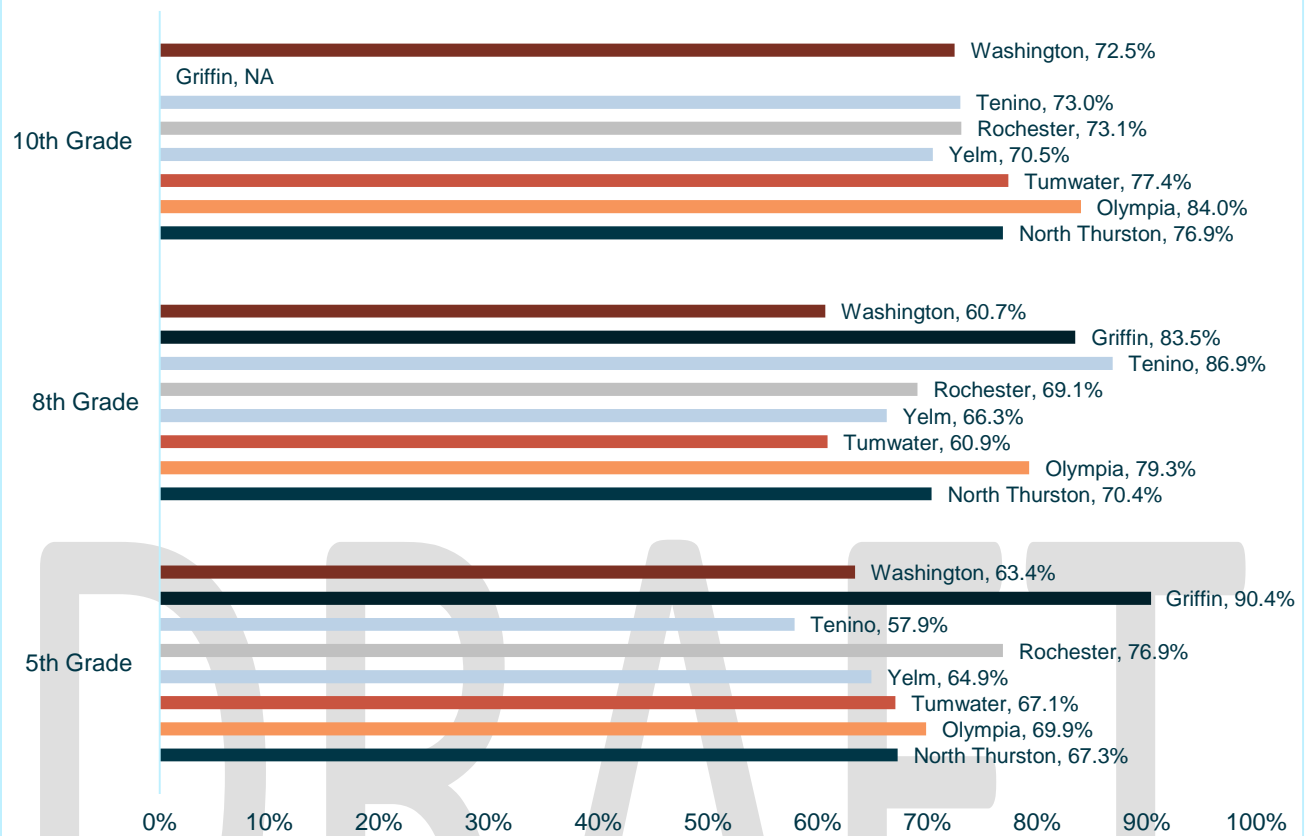
Indicator 21: K-12 School Performance

Why it matters: School performance is paramount to employers looking to invest in an area, just as it is to existing and prospective employees as they consider where to “drop roots.”

How we’re doing: As the following series of graphs displays, most area schools outpace the Washington State average for percent of students meeting various testing standards, with a few exceptions.



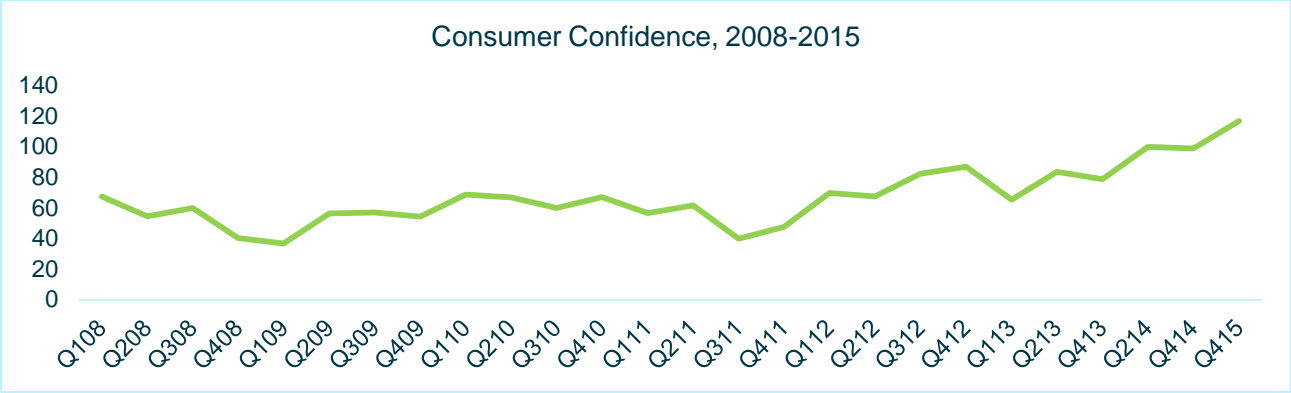
Science and Biology Standards, 2014-15



Indicator 22: Consumer Confidence

Why it matters: The Thurston EDC has been tracking consumer, CEO and small business confidence levels since 2008. The quarterly index measures residents' opinions about job security, timing of major purchases and expectations for the future. The results help businesses and financial institutions interpret the "mood" of consumers so they can plan accordingly.

How we're doing: After in inauspicious start, the index has been gathering steam over the past two years. With the "great recession" fading further into the rear view mirror, consumers are once again feeling confident about their job prospects, investments and spending activities.



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Implementation Structure

The Thurston Community Economic Alliance is comprised of a large and diverse range of partners, all of whom will be kept apprised of progress during the ensuing plan implementation and periodic plan updates. The following outlines how progress will be tracked and reported, and who will be involved at the various stages.

Initiative Implementation

Initiatives will be implemented by designated Lead Partners who have agreed to adopt one or more initiatives. Lead Partners were identified by the planning teams based on their organization's mission and/or skill set. Planning teams have also identified potential Support Partners, organizations that could materially contribute to implementation via resources or insights.

Lead partners are responsible for coordinating and facilitating implementation of adopted initiatives. In some cases, the lead partner will provide the majority of resources, while in others they may simply spearhead the identification and coordination of implementation resources. Lead Partners are responsible for coordinating with identified support partners, or other partners as they are identified.

Partner Reporting

Lead Partners will be surveyed annually regarding initiative progress. Specifically, they will be asked to:

- Confirm implementation status for their initiatives (not started, underway, implemented)
- Share highlights and outcomes that can be passed along to the broader community
- Identify barriers or challenges that could require initiative modification or Alliance assistance
- Acknowledge other partners that have contributed to success

Surveys will be distributed in late summer with the goal of producing a progress report each fall. In some instances, Thurston EDC staff or consultants will follow up with individual partners to secure photos and other information to develop highlight narratives.

Annual Progress Report and Partner Celebration

The Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) will assume responsibility for developing an overall Annual Progress Report for dissemination to all partner and the broader community. The annual report will include an overall implementation status summary, data indicators progress report and partner highlights from each of the five plan focus areas. The annual report

will be posted on the EDC website, with e-links provided to Alliance partners along with a limited set of print copies.

The annual report will be presented in conjunction with an annual Community Partner Celebration each fall. The EDC will manage logistics, but will invite various partners to participate in presentations and other features.

Partner Coordination Meetings

Alliance partners will be invited to attend quarterly update and coordination meetings. Meetings will be structured to promote information sharing, barrier-busting and, periodically, to structure action plan updates or review potential modifications. Additional coordination will occur among the public and private sector, between economic development practitioners and across partner initiatives as detailed in the Alliance action plan.

Administration and Oversight

The Thurston EDC will serve as Alliance administrator, responsible for scheduling and facilitating meetings, distributing notices and information and other duties in addition to the annual report. The EDC will internalize the majority of administration costs as this work aligns with its core mission and may actually streamline operations given clear and mutually agreed-upon priorities. Contracted support for specific tasks may be funded through a small percentage of the SIF funding. Costs for individual initiative implementation will be borne or secured by the initiative leads.

Strategic Initiatives Fund

As part of the action plan, the EDC has been tasked with managing a new Strategic Initiatives Fund (SIF). The purpose of the fund is to support economic development activities and investments not currently feasible under the existing EDC funding model. This includes participation in trade shows and association meetings for recruitment purposes, development of materials in support of infrastructure funding applications and other actions directly related to adopted Alliance initiatives.

The EDC is responsible for generating and administering SIF funding. As currently envisioned, the EDC intends to form an SIF subcommittee comprised of members from its Board of Directors and representing other Alliance partner entities. The SIF subcommittee will establish criteria for evaluating projects and recommend investments for full Board approval. Suggestions will also be requested during quarterly Alliance Partner Coordination meetings. Outcomes and impacts from SIF investments will be included in the Annual Progress Report.

Periodic Updates

The Alliance action plan is designed as a living document. While the vision and focus areas are long-term, the action plan will be updated on five year intervals. This allows us to adapt to evolving community priorities, take advantage of new technologies and techniques and integrate new voices and partners as our demographics shift over time.

Updates will include significant partner engagement, a broader public involvement and prioritization process and a “state of the plan” review. If any of the original initiatives have not been launched by the start of the 5-year update, they will be transferred to the “idea bank” for additional vetting by the community along with the other ideas proposed at that time.

If necessary, amendments to this implementation oversight structure will be incorporated into the update plan, as will then names of new partners and, potentially, any new focus areas.

Acknowledgements

Focus Group Participants and Community Interview Participants

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Andrew Barkis | Evan Parker | Kim Fry |
| Andy Ryder | Evette Temple | Kirk Veis |
| Ann Freeman-Manzanares | George Bridges | Lon Wyrick |
| Bill McGregor | George Smith | Lori Drummond |
| Bob Iyall | Graeme Sackrison | Michael McGaully |
| Brent Butler | Grant Beck | Mike Mason |
| Brian Fluetsch | Heidi Berhends-Cerniwey | Mike Mattox |
| Bryan McConaughy | Jace Munson | Mike Reid |
| Bud Blake | Jessica Jensen | Mike Strub |
| Carrie Whisler | Jim Geist | Mike Williams |
| Cathy Wolfe | Jim Greene | Norma Schuiteman |
| Cheryl Selby | Jim Haley | Pat Rants |
| Chris Richardson | Jim Larson | Patty Belmonte |
| Cindy Huntley | Jim Morris | Paul Knox |
| David Schaffert | Joe Downing | Pete Kmet |
| Denise Marroni | John Bash | Reid Bates |
| Dick Cvitanich | John Doan | Renee Sunde |
| Don Melnick | John Hurley | Rick Walk |
| Dr. Angela Bowen | John Setterstrom | Rob Rice |
| Dr. Molly Smith | John Weidenfeller | Rodney Youckton |
| Dr. Timothy Stokes | Jon Jones | Ron Harding |
| Dusty Demarest | Joseph Beaulieu | Sandra Miller |
| Ed Galligan | Joshua Cummings | Sandra Romero |
| EJ Zita | Kevin Ekar | Scott Spence |

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Tim Lew
Tom Oliva

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Vita Zvirsydyz-Farler
Wayne Mannie
Zach Kosturos

Thurston Economic Development Council

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Joseph Beaulieu, Joseph Beaulieu & Associates
Commissioner Bud Blake, Thurston County
Commissioner Joe Downing, Port of Olympia
Kevin Ekar, Heritage Bank
Brian Fluetsch, Sunset Air, Inc.
Jim Geist, Capital Medical Center
Jessica Jensen, Jessica Jensen Law PS
Zach Kosturos, Prime Locations, Inc.
Michael McGaully, StraderHallett PS
Wayne Mannie, Columbia Bank
Denise Marroni, Providence Health & Services SW
Sandra Miller, G Miller

Jace Munson, FORMA Construction
Councilmember Tom Oliva, City of Tumwater
Evan Parker, Kidder Mathews
Rob Rice, Rob Rice Homes
Mayor Cheryl Selby, City of Olympia
Perry Shea, SCJ Alliance
Dr. Molly Smith, Saint Martin's University
Councilor Michael Steadman, City of Lacey
Dr. Tim Stokes, South Puget Sound Community College
Mayor Tad Stillwell, City of Yelm
Kirk Veis, Owens Davies, P.S.
Carrie Whisler, Olympia Federal Savings

Professional Assistance



Jason Robertson, J Robertson and Company

Action Plan Matrix

Focus Area: Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness

Our Vision: Maintain a progressive education, training and workforce development system that creates career pathway opportunities for all residents and streamlines employer access to a highly-qualified talent pool.

| Key Words | (Draft) Initiatives | Partner Notes | Partners <i>Lead Partner in Bold Font</i> | Timeline | | |
|--|---|---|---|----------|---------|---------|
| | | | | 2017-18 | 2019-20 | 2021-22 |
| Workforce Readiness Planning | Implement and align activities with the Pac Mtn Workforce Development Strategic Plan, emphasizing employer engagement through sector partnerships and tailoring programming to support career pathway development for a diverse range of job-seekers. | Many of these activities will occur as part of broader regional effort, with participation and leadership; emphasize support for people with high barriers to employment including those re-entering the workforce after lengthy delays. | Pac Mtn , Chambers, B2B, Thurston EDC, School Districts, Colleges, Private Sector, Government Agency Partners | → | → | → |
| Workforce Education Consortium | Assemble a consortium of educators, workforce development practitioners and industry leaders to develop and integrate career education and work readiness skills for students of all ages. | If feasible, organize as part of Pac Mtn Sector Partnerships model. | Pac Mtn Youth Services , School Districts, New Market, Chambers, Colleges | | → | |
| Vocational Education and Work-based Learning Support | Conduct an education and technical assistance campaign to promote the value of vocational education and related career pathways, and connect students to internships and other on-site job education opportunities. *This, and all education-related actions acknowledge school districts are implementing their own strategic plans to achieve excellence. | Prepare materials with ROI for employers + road map for accessing and integrating work-based learning; develop inventory of training resources and willing employers who can effectively use work-based learning, including OJT, internships, leadership training, WEX and apprenticeships. | Thurston EDC , B2B, Pac Mtn, Chambers, School Districts, New Market, Colleges, Morningside, Trade Associations, Health Sciences and Other Industry Partners and Sponsors | → | → | → |
| Extended STEAM Learning Opportunities | Facilitate extra-curricular STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) learning opportunities for K-12 students to help prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow, and increase student-business interactions and understanding by convening integrated learning events, business tours and other educational opportunities. | Examples include permanent or mobile maker spaces; business sponsorships – i.e. robotics competitions, skills contests, etc.; targeted classes or workshops; pathway programs connecting high schools and colleges, etc. | Timberland Regional Library , SPSCC, Thurston EDC, Chambers, School Districts, Industry Partners and Sponsors | | → | → |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| Integrated Higher Education Programs | Continue and expand local college/university education and training programs that advance local employer workforce options and production capacity (i.e. tech-transfer). | Include internship and employment pipelines to retain talent in Thurston. Identify additional ways higher education can be a resource to private sector enterprises and industries – e.g. research projects and leadership development. | SPSCC , Colleges, Other Interested Partners and Employers | → | → | → |
| Expanded Access to Employment Training Resources and Services | Work with community-based non-profits to extend employer-supported workforce training to hard-to-reach audiences | Develop a “work-ready” certification program to facilitate hiring and/or on-the-job training opportunities with articulated and navigable career pathways for the long-term unemployed (see Pac Mtn IWI pilot project for inventory of employer “work-ready” skill and ability priorities). Share learning about work styles, skill gaps and best practices for integrated workplaces (i.e. millennials, seniors, etc.). | Pac Mtn , Colleges, Community-Based Non-Profits, School Districts | | | → |
| Employment for All | Promote and expand employment opportunities for people of all ages and abilities, and work with employers to remove or mitigate barriers to hiring and retention of those with employment challenges including seniors, people with disabilities, those with criminal record/re-entry citizens and the homeless. | Identify appropriate community service partners – e.g. Morningside as conduit to DVR and other State, Federal and peer non-profit resources and providers. | Morningside , Pac Mtn, Thurston County, Community-Based Service Providers, Thurston EDC, Chambers, Employers | → | → | → |

Focus Area: Target Industry Growth and Innovation (IT-Tech, Food-Ag, Life Sciences, Tourism, Wood Products, Manufacturing, Gov.)

Our Vision: Support and stimulate growth in empirically-defined “clean and green” traded-sector industries that provide critical jobs, generate significant taxable revenue and attract new investment.

| Key Words | (Draft) Initiatives | Partner Notes | Partners <i>Lead Partner in Bold Font</i> | Timeline | | |
|---|---|---|---|----------|---------|---------|
| | | | | 2017-18 | 2019-20 | 2021-22 |
| Real-time Data Analysis and Strategic Partner Briefings | Perform periodic data analyses to identify occupation and industry trends and provide pertinent information to employers and local government partners through periodic (quarterly) e-blasts. | Utilize existing EMSI, or similar future subscription source. See Oregon Department of Revenue for best practices example. Build and grow subscribers list. Create a network of brokers and agents and market Thurston assets through EDC's Zoomprospector site. | Pac Mtn , Thurston EDC, TRPC, Chambers | → | → | → |
| Business Retention Activities | Conduct industry and small enterprise “business walk” campaigns to identify top business priorities, barriers and proposed solutions, and ensure coordination and communication among municipalities, private enterprise and economic development partners. | Solutions include policy advocacy, additional Chamber, EDC or government-sponsored programs and/or technical resource support. Use community development asset map for referral networks that can support retention. Avoid “survey fatigue” by coordinating with peer partners to prevent duplication and share findings. | Chambers, Thurston EDC , TRPC, Cities | | → | → |
| Target Industry Recruitment | Identify supply chain gaps and opportunities within target industry clusters, develop marketing strategies and take coordinated public-private sector action to attract new investment. | Includes outreach, site visits, retention surveys, access to capital, association events, trade shows and incentives. Adopt goals for recruitment in each industry cluster and overall. Share “lessons learned” to enhance success rate. | Thurston EDC , Cities, Thurston County, Port of Olympia, Private Sector Partners, Pac Mtn, The Evergreen State College | → | → | → |
| Strategic Regional Partnerships | Continue to build strategic partnerships with neighboring counties to attract and retain regional target industry sector investment. | Some supply chain industries may better fit in another county, but drive economic opportunity in Thurston (e.g. mill in Mason, added value + banking activity in Thurston). Use commuter data to show interconnectedness. | Thurston EDC , Cities, Chambers, Port of Olympia, WA Department of Commerce, TRPC, Colleges | → | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Economic Development District Formation | Integrate with peer communities to form a federally-designated Economic Development District and secure grant and technical assistance to fund critical infrastructure projects and implement other portions of this Strategic Plan. | EDD designation and CEDS Plan required to access US EDA and other federal funds. Thurston best-positioned to serve as EDD administrator for region. | Thurston EDC , Thurston County, Peer Counties, Cities, Port of Olympia, Chambers, TRPC, WA Department of Commerce | → | | |
| Foreign-Direct Investment | Expand foreign-direct investment by visiting and hosting investor delegations, supporting EB5 Visa programs and facilitating projects and industry development with high job creation value. | Consider establishing an EB5 Program and/or "World Trade Center" within the Center for Business and Innovation. This could also include a non-affiliated self-branded international trade "mart" type center. | Thurston EDC , Chambers, Port of Olympia, Colleges, TRPC, Private Sector Employers | | → | → |
| Foreign Trade Zone Promotion | Promote the Port of Olympia's Foreign Trade Zone designation to existing and prospective manufacturing industries to encourage expansion and new investment. | Consider creating a cross-walk product for local manufacturers that could access foreign markets; host annual trade summits to expand local knowledge of international trade options. | Port of Olympia , WSU, SPSCC, Thurston EDC, Chambers, Cities, Saint Martin's University, Export-Import Banks, Congressional Delegation, Trade Associations | → | → | → |
| Innovation Partnership Zone Support | Support development of Thurston's first IPZ in Tumwater to advance the emergent brewing-distilling industry and stimulate job growth and retail sales. | Success at the Tumwater site could potentially foster additional sites in other Thurston communities. | City of Tumwater , Thurston EDC, Cities, WSU, Port of Olympia, Private Sector Employers | → | → | → |
| Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Food Manufacturing | Develop a strategic plan for Thurston County agriculture preservation and enhancement and value-added food manufacturing. | Food man/ag is a primary industry cluster. Explore opportunities in urban and rural settings (e.g. ag business center, cold storage, farm to table promotion, new farmer land acquisition, urban + vertical farming, business development and marketing education, etc.). | WSU Extension, Thurston County , Port of Olympia, Thurston Conservation District, Cities, Enterprise for Equity, Edible Forest, Other Interested Parties | | → | → |
| State Government Workforce and Local Investment Coordination | Establish a proactive approach to supporting state government workforce development needs and engaging state agencies in local community and economic development initiatives. | While not a traded-sector industry, state government accounts for a significant portion of local employment, infrastructure usage and retail spending in Thurston. | Chambers , Cities, County, EDC, TRPC, Legislative Delegation | | → | → |

Focus Area: Small Business and Entrepreneurial Resources

Our Vision: Promote and support a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship by connecting small and emerging business with the resources they need to launch and grow.

| Key Words | (Draft) Initiatives | Partner Notes | Partners <i>Lead Partner in Bold Font</i> | Timeline | | |
|---|---|---|--|----------|---------|---------|
| | | | | 2017-18 | 2019-20 | 2021-22 |
| Culture of Innovation | Foster a culture of innovation at all ages, by offering school programs, providing business advising, coaching and training, hosting meet-ups and entrepreneur competitions, publicizing local success stories and telling our story through the communications plan (see Brand Development, Partnerships and Communication). | A culture of innovation via tools, activities + inspiration to re-invent. Innovative communities attract and grow majority of new enterprises. In addition, data suggests Thurston is vulnerable to downturns in State Government employment, and thus could benefit from sector diversity. | SPSCC/CBI , Chambers, Tribal Enterprise Programs, TESC, SPSCC, SMU, School Districts, Cities, South County Communities, Lacey Veteran's Center, Boots2Business | → | → | → |
| Center for Business and Innovation (CBI) Resource Promotion | Increase awareness and use of CBI business training, education, advising and coaching services and resources for business start-up, strengthening and growth. | Includes SBA, SCORE, SBDC, Scale-Up, Procurement Tech. Assistance Center, WA Center for Women in Business, Economic Gardening + SPSCC services: entrepreneurial cert., advanced manufacturing / computer labs and high-tech conference rooms. Promote SPSCC manufacturing resources to help develop prototype products. | SPSCC/CBI , State of Washington (business licensing), Cities, SMU, TESC, College and High School Classes and Clubs (e.g. Decca), Chambers, Timberland Library District, Service Clubs, Financial Institutions | → | → | → |
| Emerging Business Sector Support and Expansion | Grow the number and range of services, facilities and networks available to support growing businesses and start-ups. | Expand to serve other sectors and cities, and offer facility variety (co-work, manufacturing/makerspace, tech, commercial kitchen, etc.) | SPSCC/CBI, Cities , Port of Olympia, Thurston County, Chambers, Non-Profits, Oly Mega, Enterprise for Equity | → | → | → |
| Access to Financial Resources | Facilitate access to start-up and expansion funding for emerging businesses and entrepreneurs, and strengthen education around business planning and financing. | Build knowledge and use of existing options (e.g. Enterprise for Equity, WA Crowdfunding, Kickstarter) and participate in developing new ones (e.g. SPSCC Foundation Microloan Fund, Local Investing Network). | SPSCC/CBI , SBA, SPSCC Foundation, Enterprise for Equity, Financial Institutions | → | → | → |

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| Multi-Cultural Business Development Support | Incorporate multi-lingual and multi-cultural capacity to existing business development services array, and expand awareness of services through culturally-competent outreach and engagement. | Reach out to Hispanic Chamber Asian, Muslim and other religious communities, Community Action Council, other non-profits / agencies that have established trust with target communities. | Thurston EDC , Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Cielo, JBLM, Tribes, Community Action Council, Thurston EDC, Chambers, Thurston County, Cities | | → | → |
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Focus Area: Infrastructure, Policy and Funding Coordination

Our Vision: Strengthen collaboration to ensure policy alignment, adequate infrastructure funding and effective implementation of strategic community initiatives.

| Key Words | (Draft) Initiatives | Partner Notes | Partners <i>Lead Partner in Bold Font</i> | Timeline | | |
|--|--|---|---|----------|---------|---------|
| | | | | 2017-18 | 2019-20 | 2021-22 |
| Land Use and Transportation Coordination | Convene multi-jurisdictional land use and transportation system planning sessions to ensure alignment between planning and community development directors and economic development practitioners, and provide updates to interest parties through periodic public forums. | Align policies where feasible, ID shared priorities/solutions, update private sector via EDC forums. Engage electeds via Sustainable Thurston. Early goals: Contact + ombudsman info + transit solutions for employment centers. | Thurston EDC, Cities, Thurston County, Chambers, Intercity Transit, TRPC, Developers | → | → | → |
| Native American Tribal Support and Initiative Coordination | Support local Tribes in development initiatives that have broader community impact (jobs, spending, and investment). | Establish regular communications, identify key initiatives and prioritize mutually-beneficial projects. | Thurston EDC, Cities, Thurston County, Tribes, TRPC, Pac Mtn | → | → | → |
| Industrial and Commercial Site Inventories | Develop, update and market inventories of available industrial and commercial land and sites in all Thurston communities. | Include site-readiness data, environmental status, clear contact info for follow up; verify with local jurisdictions to ensure continuity and accuracy. Consider pursuing planned action EIS process to pre-certify key commercial/industrial land for desired development. | Thurston EDC , TRPC, Thurston County, Cities, Thurston PUD, Real Estate Brokers, Port of Olympia | → | → | → |
| Permitting Assistance | Create ombudsmen within municipal permitting departments to provide clarity and assistance navigating the development process, tax and business-related issues. | Train EDC staff so they can help facilitate conversations with private sector regarding local agency development processes. | Cities, Thurston County, Thurston EDC , TRPC, Cities, Chambers, Intercity Transit | | | |

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| Infrastructure Investment Priorities and Funding Strategies | Identify priority infrastructure initiative likely to generate high return on investment and coordinate grant and legislative strategies to secure implementation dollars. | Can be initiated through existing Shared Legislative Priorities work group, but potentially expand to include legislative delegation. | Thurston Chamber, Thurston County, TRPC, Cities, Intercity Transit, Port of Olympia, Legislative Delegation | → | → | → |
| Transit/Transportation System | Increase transit ridership by offering workplace incentives, increasing service to employment centers and targeted marketing to potential system users. | Include cross-county transit analysis and strategies. | Intercity Transit, Thurston EDC, Chambers, Large Employers, Thurston County, TRPC, Cities | → | → | → |
| Reclaimed Water Strategy | Support development of reclaimed water infrastructure to reduce new source need, ensure capacity and develop alternative source supply for applicable industries. | Strategy to begin following results of ongoing infiltration study. Identify potential uses/benefits for ag industry. | LOTT, City of Yelm, Thurston County, Cities, Thurston EDC, Chambers | → | → | → |
| High Speed Communications Networks | Update communications infrastructure and ensure adequate system capacity to support emerging IT-Tech sector. | Begin with extension of network to strategic employment centers. | Cities, Thurston County, Infrastructure Providers, Thurston PUD, Thurston EDC, TRPC, Chambers, TCM (TCTV) | | → | → |

Focus Area: Brand Development, Partnerships and Communication

Our Vision: Develop a Thurston brand and promote our community as a preferred destination for investors, employers and employees based on our geographic location, cultural assets, affordability and integrated workforce and educational systems.

| Key Words | (Draft) Initiatives | Partner Notes | Partners <i>Lead Partner in Bold Font</i> | Timeline | | |
|--|--|---|--|----------|---------|---------|
| | | | | 2017-18 | 2019-20 | 2021-22 |
| Brand Alignment and External Marketing | Create a Thurston Business Brand and Marketing Strategy with ancillary materials and dedicated implementation funding. | Integrate quality of life, housing affordability, workforce support. Build on VCB brand. Use materials and tool kits tailored to specific industry types. Define “who” we’re trying to attract/recruit. | Thurston EDC, Thurston VCB , Thurston County, Cities | → | → | → |
| Partner Coordination and Information Sharing | Establish a peer cities networking group and meet regularly to discuss trends and conditions, retail recruitment and retention strategies and resource needs and approaches. | Goal is to reduce competition for revenue sources and increase broader regional appeal to investors. Consider integrating the Thurston Economic Alliance Strategic Plan within the Thurston Thrives structure. | Cities , Thurston EDC | → | → | → |
| Communications Plan | Develop a communications plan for reporting Economic Development Plan progress, priorities and impact to internal and external audiences. | Address hot topic issues. Use indicators to tell community “how we’re doing” / show how economic development is integrated with other community priorities (health, service funding, etc.). May need to break down by municipality. | Thurston EDC , Chambers, Thurston County, Cities, TRPC | → | → | → |
| Alliance Funding Strategies | Establish an ad-hoc committee as part of the Strategic Plan implementation program responsible for identifying funding strategies for priority initiatives. | | Thurston EDC , TRPC, Port of Olympia, Cities, Thurston County, Chambers, Private Sector, Colleges | → | → | → |
| Conference and Meeting Space Strategy | Create and implement a conference and meeting space development strategy to serve Thurston’s growing population and visitor industry. | Initiate partner planning to scope viability, competition, demand, barriers, concerns and timing. | Thurston VCB , Cities, Thurston County, Thurston EDC, Chambers, Colleges, Hoteliers | | | → |
| Signature Projects and Place-Making | Prioritize investment in strategic place-making initiatives that increase Thurston | E.g.: Woodland District, Brewery District, Oly Downtown and Harrison) – reach out to I.D. | Cities , Thurston EDC, Chambers, Thurston VCB, Port | → | → | → |

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| | County's appeal to investors and employers. | where most in need of targeted support. | of Olympia, Developers, Cultural Groups | | | |
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