



# THURSTON COUNTY

W A S H I N G T O N

SINCE 1852

*Photo by Paul Henderson*

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2014-2018



## Thurston County's Strategic Plan

The five year Strategic Plan presented here builds on functional operations plans developed by individual county offices and departments and has been informed by a rigorous process that included surveys, focus groups and input from staff, appointed department directors and elected officials. In addition, the plan reflects information developed through an intensive assessment of the county's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

The plan focuses on key service delivery responsibilities and articulates a unified approach to meeting community needs and statutory responsibilities. The underlying objective of the plan is to encourage and motivate collaboration, coordination and communication among county offices and departments in pursuit of the County's overarching vision and mission.

The plan is organized into two categories that distinguish between the things we do and the way we do them. These two areas are identified as External and Internal Goals. Associated with each goal is a list of major initiatives and projects which will be initiated as resources allow.

As noted, this plan articulates the key initiatives and projects that will be undertaken by county staff over the next five year period. Many, if not most, of the activities outlined in this plan align with other community based plans such as Sustainable Thurston<sup>1</sup> and Thurston Thrives<sup>2</sup>. These longer term plans will influence county priorities and add value to the goals and objectives in this document.

This Strategic Plan is a starting point. The duties and responsibilities of county government are diverse and wide ranging, and no single statement can articulate everything that we do. Because we live and work in such a dynamic environment, this plan will necessarily require an adaptive management approach to keep it current, vibrant and relevant. But the broad goals and priorities in this Strategic Plan set the overall direction for county offices and departments for the coming years.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.trpc.org/regionalplanning/sustainability/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/thrives/>

# OUR VISION

Thurston County is the best place in Washington State to live and work.

# OUR MISSION

To provide regional leadership to sustain and enhance safe, healthy, diverse and vital communities for future generations.

*We are constantly creating solutions for our future.*



# OUR FOUR EXTERNAL GOALS



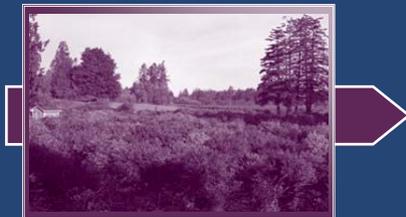
## **ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES**

Preserve and enhance our physical environment and natural resources.



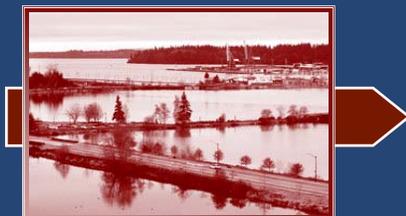
## **ECONOMIC VITALITY & OPPORTUNITY**

Promote and advance sustainable economic vitality and opportunity for all our citizens.



## **HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

Promote conditions in the community that support the health and well-being of individuals and families.



## **PUBLIC SAFETY & JUDICIAL SERVICES**

Help keep people safe in their homes and communities.

# OUR FOUR INTERNAL GOALS



## **FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP & PLANNING**

Use sound financial management and build long term financial strength.



## **QUALITY WORKFORCE**

Attract, hire, develop and retain an effective, diverse, professional, dedicated and responsive team of employees.



## **BUILDING & EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT**

Provide an affordable quality work environment using best available technology for the job.



## **COMMUNICATION**

Assure that the public is informed and engaged with the development and execution of county policies, programs and services.

*OUR*

# **FOUR EXTERNAL GOALS**

## **ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES**

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**Preserve and enhance our physical environment and natural resources.**

## Priorities, Principles and Values

- Foster community understanding of environmental issues.
- Minimize the county's environmental footprint.
- Protect and restore water quality, biodiversity, open space and ecosystems.
- Continue efforts to reduce water quality impacts of septic systems.
- Increase partnerships among local governments.
- Maintain a high level of recycling in the environment.
- Protect ground and surface water resources to improve Puget Sound water quality.
- Support the preservation and active use of working lands.
- Improve capacity for code compliance and permitting activities.

## Major Initiatives and Projects

- Complete watershed characterization and science to local policy projects.
- Continue to offer commute trip reduction and telework programs.
- Initiate creation of low impact development standards.
- Continue participation in the LOTT Groundwater Recharge Scientific Study.
- Develop Habitat Conservation Plans for prairie lands.
- Update the Shoreline Master Program.



*OUR*

# **FOUR EXTERNAL GOALS**

## **ECONOMIC VITALITY & OPPORTUNITY**

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**Promote and advance sustainable economic vitality and opportunity for all our citizens.**

## Priorities, Principles and Values

- Enhance our business environment through business process improvements.
- Encourage initiatives that improve the community's financial health and prosperity.
- Support a strong, diverse and sustainable economy.
- Network with county, city and regional partners to increase operational efficiency.
- Promote economic development.
- Support safe, positive events and activities for families.
- Coordinate county services and operations with Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

## Major Initiatives and Projects

- Provide local heritage grants.
- Continue to promote agritourism initiatives and working lands strategy.
- Implement recommendations of the Urban Corridors Task Force.
- Develop a plan to sustain a self-supporting County Fair.
- Bridge the Gap for the Chehalis Western Trail.
- Establish a Metropolitan Parks District.



*OUR*  
**FOUR  
EXTERNAL  
GOALS**

**HEALTH &  
SOCIAL  
SERVICES**

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**Promote conditions in the community  
that support the health and well-being  
of individuals and families.**

## Priorities, Principles and Values

- Work first to build community ownership, partnerships and regional approaches.
- Lead a community network of care providers to control infectious diseases.
- Protect ground and surface water quality, including Puget Sound.
- Assure food safety.
- Encourage healthy eating and active living.
- Encourage prevention, evidence based programs and promising practices generally.
- Improve collaboration in countywide housing services.
- Promote access to and integration of medical, behavioral health, and social support services.
- Seek a financially sustainable county role in which direct users pay costs wherever possible.
- Expand use of existing information technology.
- Use new media better to target health messages.

## Major Initiatives and Projects

- Complete watershed characterization and science to local policy projects.
- Complete Phase One of Thurston Thrives, including:
  - Update the On-site Sewage System Management & Hazardous Waste plans.
  - Create a strategy to prevent child abuse and neglect by reducing ACES.
- Develop housing and diversion programs, especially after inpatient and institutional services.
- Implement the Nisqually on-site septic system Operations & Maintenance program.
- Establish a consolidated inter-local health & social services planning and advisory structure.
- Implement a ban on tobacco use at county facilities.
- Build and maintain a homeless services system Countywide.
- Expand evidence-based treatments for co-occurring disorders and children's services.
- Advance the Septic Summit (Urban Septic Assessment Project).



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# FOUR EXTERNAL GOALS

## **PUBLIC SAFETY & JUDICIAL SERVICES**

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**Help keep people safe  
in their homes and communities.**

## Priorities, Principles and Values

- Reduce injury, death, or property loss by assuring a timely, professional response.
- Ensure a fair and accessible justice system.
- Improve data collection and analysis.
- Foster safety and security through education, prevention and enforcement activities.
- Develop a system to receive ongoing feedback from our communities on their justice needs.
- Use incarceration primarily to protect the community from offenders who pose the highest risk, and use this criminal justice tool sparingly to correct behavior.
- Encourage the use of collaborative models of justice when deemed appropriate and more effective than the traditional adversarial system.
- Seek out promising new practices and programs in criminal justice that value evidence-based results, but also value creativity and innovation.
- Promote and prioritize prevention as a critical component of any long term public safety strategy.

## Major Initiatives and Projects

- Improve courtroom functionality in District and Superior courts, including video courtrooms.
- Coordinate inter-jurisdictional planning with the County Law & Justice Council.
- Support grant funded implementation of the Target Zero program.
- Update and implement jail population management strategies.
- Evaluate and address workload demands of the justice system, including, but not limited to:
  - Redefine the defense function to incorporate a more holistic approach which also addresses all of the consequences of interaction with the criminal justice system
  - Implications of co-occurring disorders for motivating criminal behavior
  - Staffing requirements for effective patrol, prosecution, and defense
  - Demands for family law matters and general civil cases
  - Caseload requirements for indigent defense
  - Changing demand for jail capacity
- Move into the Accountability & Restitution Center.
- Improve approaches with non-English speaking citizens.
- Conduct a system-wide review of Medic One/ EMS system.
- Enact a Transportation Benefit District.



*OUR*

**FOUR**

**INTERNAL**

**GOALS**

**FINANCIAL**

**STEWARDSHIP**

**& PLANNING**

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**Use sound financial management and  
build long term financial strength.**

# Major Initiatives and Projects

- Develop a multi-year plan to match expenditures to revenues.
- Manage the rise of internal services costs to county departments and offices.
- Institute data analysis and performance management system.
- Implement linkage between budget and strategic planning.
- Demonstrate public return on investment.
- Develop and implement tools to improve efficient and effective use of resources.
- Improve county general fund revenues, including exploring voter approved initiatives such as a public safety tax.



*OUR*

**FOUR**

**INTERNAL**

**GOALS**

**QUALITY**

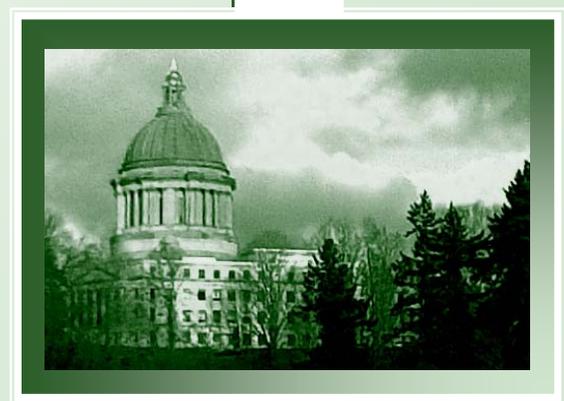
**WORKFORCE**

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**Attract, hire, develop and retain an effective, diverse, professional, dedicated, and responsive team of employees.**

# Major Initiatives and Projects

- Implement middle management training and development program.
- Successfully negotiate nine labor contracts.
- Align salaries and benefits with future fiscal realities.
- Address work schedule in Corrections to maximize efficiencies.
- Provide for a tobacco free work environment.
- Strengthen the county's recognition of the many valued employees and volunteers.



*OUR*

**FOUR**

**INTERNAL**

**GOALS**

**BUILDING &  
EQUIPMENT  
MANAGEMENT**

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**Provide an affordable quality work environment using best available technology for the job.**

# Major Initiatives and Projects

- Develop a ten year facility and capital building plan.
- Develop a five year technology improvement plan.
- Update asset inventory, management and replacement plans.
- Develop and implement tools to improve efficient and effective use of information.
- Monitor and improve customer service and satisfaction.
- Continue to reduce the use of leased space.
- Continue to develop a comprehensive fleet management plan



*OUR*

**FOUR**

**INTERNAL**

**GOALS**

# **COMMUNICATION**

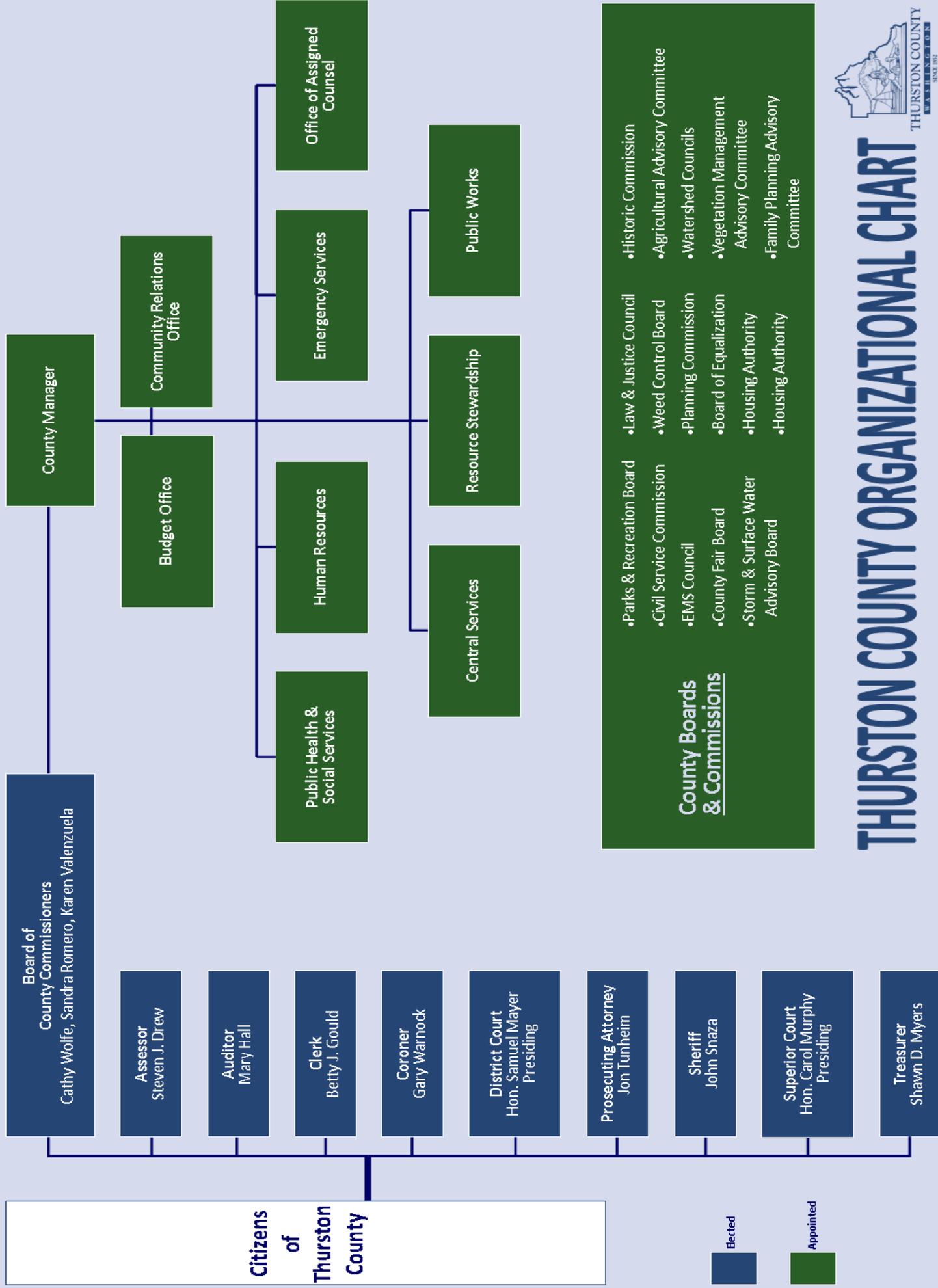
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**Assure that the public is informed and engaged with the development and execution of county policies, programs, and services.**

# Major Initiatives and Projects

- Develop new communication strategies to improve public knowledge of county business.
- Implement plain talk approach for all county public information materials.
- Develop effective rapid response and risk communication plans and strategies.
- Address work schedule in corrections to maximize efficiencies
- Keep web design and content up-to-date and current.
- Develop complete and effective use of social media concepts and tools.





**County Boards & Commissions**

- Parks & Recreation Board
- Law & Justice Council
- Historic Commission
- Civil Service Commission
- Weed Control Board
- Agricultural Advisory Committee
- EMS Council
- Planning Commission
- Watershed Councils
- County Fair Board
- Board of Equalization
- Vegetation Management Advisory Committee
- Storm & Surface Water Advisory Board
- Housing Authority
- Housing Authority
- Family Planning Advisory Committee



**THURSTON COUNTY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



# Thurston County Comprehensive Strategic Plan

Commissioner Cathy Wolfe  
• District One

Commissioner Sandra Romero  
• District Two

Commissioner Karen Valenzuela  
• District Three

Cliff Moore  
• Thurston County Manager

- February 2014 -



Photos by Paul Henderson