

Thurston County Board of County Commissioners' Goals for 2011 and beyond

Cultural Resources and Identity Preservation

We are committed to protecting the natural beauty and cultural richness of Thurston County including key elements such as working farms, native forests, and our rural character. Preserving resources of cultural and historical importance is also a priority. The Board will take steps to fully implement the county's transfer of development rights program to preserve agricultural lands and open space. We will support efforts to preserve historic records and buildings.

Cultural Diversity

The Board will continue to lend its full support to the promotion of a diverse workforce and providing equal opportunity to all persons seeking or having access to its employment, services, and activities, free from restrictions because of race, ethnicity, creed, religion, national origin, age, gender, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, or the presence of any disability unless such a disability effectively prevents the performance of the essential functions of the position.

Economic Vitality

The prosperity of the families and communities in our county depend on a healthy and diverse economic framework. Retention and creation of jobs is essential to economic recovery. The Board is especially supportive of green jobs and those that contribute to energy efficiency and environmental conservation. We support tourism, and will work to promote agri-tourism in our rural communities. We will partner with our cities and neighbors to the north to plan for support of the growth in the Joint Base Lewis McChord. We will consider the needs of business when we select transportation projects. We will continue to participate on the Work Force Development Council in support of development and training for those who are seeking new employment opportunities.

Environmental Sustainability

The Board supports a quality physical environment for the future – one that assures land use and transportation patterns are sustainable over time. This means curtailing sprawl, supporting transportation alternatives that consume less space and energy, and encouraging economic development that produces “green jobs.” The Board recognizes that sprawl is more than an environmental issue – it impacts the cost and ability to provide services to our citizens. In addition to completing and adopting an update of the Critical Area Ordinance, we will work with other jurisdictions on environmental health and climate change issues. We will also strengthen Thurston County's internal sustainability policies regarding purchasing, public facilities and waste reduction.

Fiscal Sustainability

The financial health of county government is paramount to the delivery of services to our citizens. To restore fiscal sustainability, the Board is committed to a range of financial initiatives that include adopting a fund balance policy for all county funds, increasing the capacity for timely and thorough fiscal analysis, implementing multi-year forecasts, and monitoring the county's financial status and issues. The Board is also committed to strengthening the county's grant development and management functions, implementing development impact fees, centralizing purchasing, establishing a building maintenance reserve and investing in public infrastructure. The Board will seek ways to address systemic revenue issues that create barriers to fiscal sustainability.

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Public Health and Human Services

Preservation of public health and human service programs is vital to the safety and well-being of our citizens. Thurston County will work to reduce homelessness, promote community wellness and support family prosperity. We support the investment in prevention and early intervention practices, and will work in partnership with community-based organizations to achieve this goal.

Public Safety

The County's criminal justice system commands a significant portion of general fund resources. In recognition of this commitment, it is a goal of the Board to invest in those strategies and practices known to prevent and deter behaviors that endanger public safety and that stress the capacity of the criminal justice system. Top priorities include effective use of the Thurston County Accountability and Restitution Center, supporting problem-solving courts, and utilizing programs known to change offender behavior and reduce recidivism. Additionally, we acknowledge a key responsibility to maintain adequate criminal justice staffing levels to meet basic public safety standards. We also recognize protecting the public involves more than the County's criminal justice system. It includes enforcement of building and fire codes, delivery of public health services, maintaining transportation infrastructure, keeping water supplies safe to drink, providing protection from malicious pets, and many other county programs and services.

Regional Leadership

Thurston County will continue to service as a leader in regional and multi-jurisdictional initiatives. We recognize that our actions will affect the generations to come. Under direction of the Board, staff will prepare a strategic plan to address critical issues that will affect the quality of life of our citizens for decades to come. These issues include climate change, sustainable communities, support for local agriculture, growth management, health and human services, economic development and cooperative transportation initiatives among jurisdictions. The Board will work with cities and towns to evaluate annexation practices and make improvements where appropriate. Government-to-government relations with the sovereign nations of local Tribes are also of key significance. The Board values inter-local and public-private partnerships and community involvement.

Regional Parks and Recreation

Recreation, the pursuit of leisure activities, enjoyment of the outdoors and preservation of open space, habitat and the natural environment are essential elements in maintaining a balance in the quality of life throughout Thurston County. It is the goal of the Board to be effective stewards of regional parks, trails, historic and cultural resources, open space and natural resource lands, and waterways which are designated for use by the public. We will work to establish partnerships with local towns and cities in support of a regional parks system with diverse recreational opportunities.

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Technology

Doing county business with maximum efficiency requires an upgrade of Thurston County's technology infrastructure and an update of technology policies for the "next generation" workforce. This includes redesigning our website to accommodate conducting business online. The Board will also seek ways to decrease the size of the workforce carbon footprint by encouraging telecommuting, alternative work schedules and other alternatives.

Transportation

A robust transportation system supports the mobility of people, goods and services throughout the county. The Board supports strategies that enhance the safety, security and quality of our roads, bridges and alternative methods of transportation. Keeping regional needs in mind, we will select public works projects that meet the demand of a growing population and extend the life of existing infrastructure. We will promote alternative forms of transportation and trip reduction through projects that include transit systems, bicycle paths, sidewalks and trails. We will continue our efforts to establish a regional transportation system that coordinates projects with our partner jurisdictions.

Water Resources

The Board will protect and preserve Thurston County's precious water resources by taking the following actions: completing and adopting the Shoreline Master Program, adopting and implementing a new storm water drainage manual, improving septic system standards, participating in the Puget Sound Partnership, and promoting water conservation and reuse. We will also work to extend and install sanitary sewer systems where there are documented water quality problems associated with higher densities and septic system failures.