



Thurston County

Board of Commissioners Goals, 2010

Fiscal Sustainability

The financial health of county government is paramount to the delivery of services to our citizens. To restore fiscal sustainability, the Board of County Commissioners is committed to a range of financial initiatives that include adopting a fund balance policy for all county funds, and increasing the capacity for timely and thorough fiscal analysis. 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.

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Cultural Resource 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. We will take steps to fully implement the county’s transfer of development rights program to preserve agricultural lands and open space.

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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.” It also includes strengthening Thurston County’s internal sustainability policies regarding purchasing, public facilities and waste reduction. In addition to completing and adopting an update of the Critical Areas Ordinance, we will work with other jurisdictions on climate change issues.

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Public Health & Social Services

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

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Public Safety

The county’s criminal justice system commands a significant portion of its general fund resources. In recognition of this commitment, it is a goal of the Board of Commissioners to invest in those strategies and practices known to prevent and deter behaviors that endanger public safety and stress the capacity of the criminal justice system. Top priorities include completing 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.

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, color, creed, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, or the presence of any disability unless such a disability effectively prevents the performance of the essential functions required of the position.

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Water Resources

The Commissioners and staff 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.

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Regional Leadership

Thurston County will continue to serve as a leader in regional and multi-jurisdictional initiatives. Under direction of the Board of County Commissioners, 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 and sustainability, support for local agriculture, growth management, health and human services, economic development and cooperative transportation initiatives between 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.

Keeping the big picture in mind, we will consider the merits of inter-local partnerships and governance alternatives to meet the needs of county citizens. Under the Board’s direction, staff will also develop a plan to encourage and facilitate community volunteerism that will help bring needed services to our residents.

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Regional Parks & 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 Commissioners to be effective stewards of regional parks, trails, historical 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. Key themes include preserving special recreation services, keeping Tolmie State Park open, establishing a dog park and completing the county’s walking and cycling trails system.

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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 and expanding opportunities to conduct business online. The Board will also seek ways to decrease the size of the workforce carbon footprint by encouraging telecommuting and alternative work schedules.