

MEETING AGENDA

TCMC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Monday, August 24, 2026, 4-6 PM

Hybrid Meeting

Virtual Option: This meeting will be held virtually via Teams. To register to attend the meeting, please use the following link: <https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/42c05387-6484-4546-b3b3-5a7c6fe5d4c7@4ac47f73-7479-484a-903a-7c08b6270689?source=copyLinkLegacyShareLinkDialog>

In-Person Option: Members of the public are invited to attend virtually using the link above or attend an in-person stream of the meeting at the City of Tumwater Water Resources & Sustainability Office, 32 Dr. Nels Hanson Way S, Olympia, WA 98512 (South Puget Sound Community College, Building 32).

1. OPENING

1.A. Call to Order

1.B. Approval of Agenda

1.C. Approval of Previous Meeting Summaries

- *Attachment: May 18, 2026 Draft Meeting Summary*

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

During this portion of the meeting, members of the public may address the Committee regarding the Committee's business. Public comment for this meeting will be accepted in written and oral format.

- **Written comments:** The deadline for submitting written public comments is noon (12 pm PST) the Friday preceding the meeting, August 21, 2026. For written comments, please include your name and address, your comment, and email them to Keren.Bolter@exp.com. Written comments received by the deadline will be provided to the Committee prior to the meeting.
- **Oral comments:** Please indicate that you wish to provide public comment when registering for the meeting. The Chair may limit oral public comments to two (2) minutes or less, depending on the meeting agenda and number of people wishing to comment. The Chair may allow for additional public comment to be taken at the end of the agenda for those who signed up at the beginning of the meeting and did not get an opportunity to speak during the allotted time.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

4.A. VMT Gap Analysis

BRIEFING

Alyssa Jones Wood, Staff Team (City of Tumwater)

- *Attachment: VMT Gap Analysis Briefing Memo*
- *Attachment: A – Plan and Policy Review Memo*
- *Attachment: B – Staff Interviews Memo*
- *Attachment: C – Analysis Methodology and Key Takeaways Memo*
- *Attachment: D - Presentation*

4.B. 2027-2028 TCMC Workplan and Budget

ACTION

Rebecca Harvey, Staff Team (Thurston County)

- *Attachment: 2027-2028 TCMC Budget Memo*
- *Attachment: TCMC 2027-2028 Proposed Budget Table*

5. STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

5.A. CAW Updates

CAW Facilitator will provide a summary of key topics and outcomes from recent CAW meetings.

5.B. Jurisdiction Updates

Members will share progress on implementation of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan or other relevant topics.

6. ADJOURN

NOTE ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION VIA ONLINE MEETING:

TCMC reserves the right to limit public participation to the public comment section of the agenda. A participant may be removed from the meeting if they engage in disruptive behavior which may include the following:

- Promoting or advertising commercial services, entities or products.
- Supporting or opposing political candidates or ballot propositions.
- Distributing obscene content.
- Engaging in illegal activity or encouragement of illegal activity.
- Promoting, fostering or perpetuating discrimination on the basis of creed, color, age, religion, gender, gender identification, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- Threatening or intimidating language, containing cyber bullying.
- Otherwise engaging in disruptive behavior that is unrelated to the content of the meeting.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative (TCMC) Jurisdictions are committed to the non-discriminatory treatment of all persons in employment and the delivery of services and resources. If you require accommodation for your attendance at the Executive Committee meeting, please contact Eleanor Garrett (the Executive Committee Facilitator) (626-831-8734) at least 48 hours in advance of the

meeting. For hearing impaired, please contact us by dialing the Washington State Relay Service at 7-1-1 or 1.800.833.6384.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) MEETING SUMMARY (DRAFT)

Monday, May 18th, 2026, 4 – 6 PM

Link to packet and presentations: [Executive Committee Meetings - Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative](#)

EC Members Present: Tumwater City Councilmember Eileen Swarthout (Chair), Olympia City Councilmember Robert Vanderpool, Thurston County Commissioner Emily Clouse (Vice Chair), Lacey City Councilmember Ryan Siu, and Thurston County Commissioner Tye Menser (alternate)

EC Members Absent: Olympia City Councilmember Dani Madrone (alternate), Tumwater City Councilmember Kelly VonHoltz (alternate) and Lacey City Councilmember Carolyn Cox (alternate).

CAW Representative: None

Staff Present: Linsey Fields (City of Lacey), Pamela Braff (City of Olympia), Julia Downing (City of Olympia), Rebecca Harvey (Thurston County), Alyssa Jones Wood (City of Tumwater), and Eleanor Garrett (EXP).

Agenda Item	Notes
1. Opening 1A. Call to Order 1B. Approval of Agenda 1C. Approval of Previous Meeting Summary Attachment: July 28, 2025, Draft Meeting Summary	Executive Committee Chair Eileen Swarthout called the meeting to order at 4:05pm. Vice Chair Emily Clouse motioned for approval of the agenda; the motion was seconded by Committee Member Ryan Siu. The motion carried unanimously. Vice Chair Emily Clouse motioned for approval of the previous meeting summary for the February 23 rd meeting; the motion was seconded by Chair Eileen Swarthout. The motion carried unanimously.
2. Public Comment	No public comment was provided.
3. Announcements	No announcements were made.

4. Committee Business 4A. Election of Chair and Vice Chair <i>Decision</i> Attachment: Officer Elections Memorandum	Staff Team Member Alyssa Jones Wood gave an overview of the Chair and Vice Chair election process and term limits. Per the Executive Committee Charter, there must be an election for Chair and Vice Chair every second quarter meeting of the year, resulting in the election of a Chair and a Vice Chair who will take office at the close of that meeting and hold that position for one year. With this reminder given, she opened the floor to nominations. Chair Eileen Swarthout nominated Vice Chair Emily Clouse for Chair, and Clouse accepted the nomination. Committee Member Robert Vanderpool nominated Committee Member Ryan Siu for Vice Chair, and Siu accepted the nomination. With no other nominations for either position, Chair Swarthout called for a vote. By unanimous votes, Vice Chair Emily Clouse was elected Chair and Committee Member Ryan Siu was elected Vice Chair.
4B. State Forest Land Management Advocacy <i>Briefing</i> Attachment: State Forest Lands Management Advocacy Update Memorandum	Staff Team Member Rebecca Harvey provided a brief background overview on the State Forest Lands Management Advocacy Regional Initiative. Commissioner Tye Menser then provided some more details, including: • Explaining what “legacy forests” (a now less commonly used term) are – essentially mature and structurally complex forests (SCF) that were not clear cut and could become old growth forests with proper protections. • Describing the political and bureaucratic environment that temporarily halted any permitted timber cutting in SCF. • Connecting the ecological importance of SCF, the pause in timber harvesting in these areas that was lifted in 2020, and the 2024 letter sent to the Board of Natural Resources (BNR) by the TCMC Executive Committee advocating for pausing timber sales in Thurston County for parcels that met certain standards of forest maturity.

	Commissioner Menser then outlined the current decision-making environment around SCF and timber sales, including the “Forest Forward” commissioner order which aims to protect mature forests, but mismatches SCF that advocates want to see protected and the land actually mapped for exclusion from timber sales. SCF decisions are also being influenced by the recently failed Ecosystem Services Bill designed to give legislative authority to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to sell “ecosystem services” in the form of carbon credits and offsets, as well as a King County SEPA court case that disallows land decisions that make other uses impossible (i.e. timber harvest reducing capacity for carbon sequestration). In January 2026, the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) submitted a proposal to the BNR aiming to preclude a handful of lands from timber sales while opening up sales of other parcels that are less valuable from an SCF-perspective. This proposal was ultimately rejected. Following this presentation, the TCMC committee members discussed how the EC and the EC members within their respective governments could help Thurston County advocate for protecting SCF.
4C. Energize Thurston <i>Briefing</i> Attachment: Energize Thurston Program Update Memorandum	Staff Team Member Julia Downing provided an overview of the Energize Thurston program, describing the program, going over the prior year’s program outcomes, and discussing the 2026 program. The 2025 program had two pathways: an income-qualified pathway which provided 80-100% cost coverage, and a self-funded pathway that offered a group discount. Full details on the outcomes of the 2025 program can be found in this campaign evaluation report. 139 participants were waitlisted in 2025, over 100 of which are still interested in being included in the 2026 campaign. While the 2025 campaign operated under an installer model in which 4 installation partners were selected through a competitive bidding process, the 2026 campaign will operate under a distributor model, where equipment distributors are selected through the competitive bidding process, allowing a broader network

	of installers that offer the group purchase discount and removing limits on specific equipment that qualifies. The 2026 campaign has received funding through the WSU Community Energy Efficiency Program, the PSE Residential Decarbonization Grant Program, and the CDBG program (Olympia only). The Energize Thurston team also applied for Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate (HEAR) funding and is waiting to hear back. Over the summer, the program will roll out outreach and marketing and then move on to opening the self-funded pathway and working on waitlist installations before opening any remaining funding to new LMI applicants. The EC had no questions for Julia.
4D. Home Energy Score <i>Briefing</i> Attachment: Home Energy Score Policy and Program Update Memorandum	Staff Team Member Rebecca Harvey provided an overview of the Home Energy Score (HES) Ordinance. Development of a HES model ordinance was selected as a regional initiative in 2023, and after a year of policy research and stakeholder engagement the TCMC EC recommended approval of the model ordinance in January 2025. The jurisdictions held work sessions on the model ordinance throughout 2025, and following County-led engagement in early 2026 both Thurston County and the City of Olympia adopted the ordinance by April of 2026. The City of Tumwater has continued to hold work sessions, and the City of Lacey has the HES adoption process on the schedule for 2027. The County ordinance will go into effect in March of 2027 and the City of Olympia ordinance in May of 2027. The Staff Team is working on program development to support the ordinance, which involves: 1. Contracting: obtaining a service provider to support implementation 2. Stakeholder Engagement: including with the Thurston County Realtors Association, Olympia Master Builders, and Puget Sound Energy 3. Administrative Process Development: both centralized (county-led) and jurisdiction-specific 4. Workforce Development: preparing HES assessors 5. Communications Plan: education and awareness-focused

	6. Implementation and Monitoring Plan: establishing roles and responsibilities, standard operating procedures, timelines, and reporting standards 7. HES Program Launch
5. Standing Agenda Items 5A. CAW Updates	CAW Facilitator Eleanor Garrett shared updates on the CAW. At their most recent meeting, the CAW held a discussion on people-centered streets and transportation planning, with transportation planners from the TCMC jurisdictions sharing how they approach planning and leading the discussion. A sub-group of CAW members have also formed a sub-committee to advocate for and support implementation of the Home Energy Score (HES) program, beginning with a letter of support for the program directed to the jurisdictions that have yet to adopt.
5B. Jurisdiction Updates	Thurston County Updates were provided by Vice Chair Clouse • Thurston County won the Green Business Municipality of the Year Award in recognition of the county's work in clean energy, waste reduction, watershed protection, and climate planning. • The Solid Waste Division hosted its third compost giveaway on May 16th at the county fairgrounds, in partnership with Brady Trucking who donated 40 cubic yards of finished compost. • The Solid Waste Division held its 4th annual or 4th Fix-It Fair on April 15th in partnership with the Lacey Makerspace • On May 5th, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the 2026-2027 official Comprehensive Plan amendment and development code dockets. This includes programmatic actions and policies to implement the Climate Element of the Comprehensive Plan. • The Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) team is making progress on the Nisqually Watershed Plan, which lays the foundation for cross-jurisdictional collaboration on long-range environmental planning, stormwater management, and other future climate-related initiatives.

	• The CPED Water Resources Monitoring Team published the 2025 Thurston County Water Year Report. • The county is conducting an outreach campaign about water conservation in response to the statewide drought that has been declared for the 4th year in a row. This campaign focuses on what residents can do to conserve water and what the county is doing to actively monitor rainfall and lake levels. • The County is working on the Critical Areas Ordinance update, a required 10-year update under the Growth Management Act. • CPED is working to finalize the Working Lands Conservation Strategy, developed in partnership with tribes and regional land trusts and aiming to coordinate and strengthen the county's existing conservation efforts by developing an actionable strategy to incentivize habitat protection and restoration on working farms and forest lands. City of Olympia Updates were provided by Committee member Robert Vanderpool and Staff Team Member Linsey Fields: • The City passed the Home Energy Score ordinance • The City's climate program has launched a pilot program on extreme heat and wildfire smoke preparedness with the Lewis Mason Thurston Area Agency on Aging. This program has an educational and outreach component, as well as a subsidized portable heat pump and air filtration program for older adults who are homebound and at higher health risk during heat and smoke events. • The City has been conditionally awarded a \$50,000 youth climate fund grant to support 10 micro-grants to Olympia youth (ages 15-24) to implement community projects that advance the city's climate goals. Applications will open in Summer 2026. City of Lacey Updates were provided by Committee Member Ryan Siu:
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	• The City has a new air monitoring system in place as of April 2026. • The City is also piloting the extreme heat and wildfire smoke preparedness in partnership with the Lewis Mason Thurston Area Agency on Aging • The City has 53 applications for the employee e-bike lease to ownership program and has distributed 15 bikes so far. • The City will be posting an RFQ for an Urban Forestry Management Plan update. • The City will be posting an RFQ for a vulnerability and risk assessment for sea level rise • Four additional chargers were installed through Puget Sound Energy at City Hall. City of Tumwater updates were provided by Staff Team Member Alyssa Liu • The City is also working with the Lewis Mason Thurston Area Agency on Aging on an extreme heat and wildfire smoke preparedness program, but does not have funding for a subsidized portable heat pump program and so is focused on education and outreach, ensuring that materials are translated into all languages spoken in Tumwater by populations served by the Agency. • The City had its first Bike Anywhere Day relief station and served 15 people • The City was awarded a grant from Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) to install EV charging at multifamily housing sites, following the program roadmap established by the City of Olympia • The Director of Planning has issued Zoning Determination Letter establishing that data centers are not allowed in Tumwater, based on the recommendations of a staff report • The City is working on a vulnerability assessment focused on identifying all hazards and assets, including communities that are at risk from climate hazards • The City's Urban Forester has developed a tree canopy equity program that distributes trees in neighborhoods that have less canopy, lower income, and higher ambient air temperature,
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	targeting 2 neighborhoods over the course of two years. This program is 100% grant funded • On May 26th, the Planning Commission and Tree Board will hold a joint meeting to discuss revising the City tree code. The Planning Commission will also be discussion regulating Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) in the city
6. Adjourn	The meeting was adjourned at 5:58.

Meeting summary was prepared by the consultant (EXP) and TCMC Staff Team. This summary is not verbatim.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Executive Committee

FROM: Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Staff Team:
Alyssa Jones Wood, City of Tumwater
Linsey Fields, City of Lacey

DATE: August 24, 2026

SUBJECT: Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Gap Analysis

Requested Action

Receive a briefing on the status and evolving findings of the VMT Gap Analysis project.

Background and Analysis

Prior to the beginning of this work, the Washington State Legislature passed HB1181 in 2023 that aimed to improve the state's response to climate change by updating the Growth Management Act planning framework to include climate change. This included the requirement for jurisdictions to reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled among other new requirements.

At the June 24, 2024 Executive Committee meeting, following the 2024 TCMC Retreat, the Committee selected a gap analysis of VMT as a 2026 regional initiative. This initiative was appropriately timed to begin after the adoption of new Comprehensive Plans by each TCMC partner jurisdiction.

The core questions being answered by this regional initiative are:

- Are existing jurisdictional plans, practices, and policies sufficient to meet established VMT reduction targets at the countywide level?
- How should existing planned actions be prioritized to meet the targets?
- If existing plans, policies, and practices are insufficient, how much additional action is needed?

In the autumn of 2025, a request for proposal was released by the City of Tumwater, and in December 2025 an agreement was executed with Fehr & Peers to complete this work.

One of the first tasks of this regional initiative was to determine the VMT target against which to measure progress. The TCMP VMT targets were total reduction targets, not per-capita targets as required by the new state law. Also, the jurisdictions each passed different VMT targets in their Comprehensive Plan updates. Ultimately, the Staff Team opted to use VMT reduction data provided by the Department of Commerce in their "GHG Forecast & Scenario Tool" (delivered to Thurston County in January 2026) to define the following targets:

- Reduce per capita VMT by 27% through 2040.
- Reduce per capita VMT by 41% through 2050.

In April and May 2026 Fehr & Peers conducted a Plan and Policy Review and provided a memo to the Staff Team summarizing their findings (Attachment A).

In May and June 2026 Fehr & Peers interviewed relevant staff from the TCMC jurisdictions as well as the Thurston Regional Planning Council and Intercity Transit. These interviews are summarized in Attachment B.

In June 2026 Fehr & Peers purchased VMT data and conferred with the TCMC Staff Team to establish an analysis methodology. The data purchased is 2025 Streetlight Origin-Destination data. It provides recent data and estimates for total vehicle trips generated by geography, is granular to the level of Census block groups, and facilitates comparison of VMT magnitude across jurisdictions.

In July 2026 Fehr & Peers presented preliminary results to the CAW. In August 2026, Fehr & Peers provided the staff team with their memorandum on analysis and key findings (Attachment C). Remaining work for this project includes the list of recommendations. The recommendations will be presented as a practical, actionable playbook that identifies:

- Strategies that are most effective in different contexts,
- Strategies that require regional coordination,
- Strategies that can be advanced locally, and
- Specific strategy gaps based on what other nearby communities have adopted related to VMT reduction.

All work on this project is anticipated to be complete by the end of the 2026 calendar year.

Decision Options

N/A - Briefing Only

Attachments

Attachment A – Plan and Policy Review Memo

Attachment B – Staff Interviews Memo

Attachment C – Analysis Methodology and Key Takeaways Memo

Attachment D - Presentation

Memo

Date: April 23, 2026

To: Alyssa Jones Wood and Linsey Fields, Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative (TCMC)

From: Abigail Powell, Marissa Milam, and Chris Breiland, Fehr & Peers

Subject: Plan and Policy Review for VMT Gap Analysis

Overview

As part of the TCMC VMT Gap Analysis, Fehr & Peers conducted a structured review of relevant regional plans, comprehensive plans, and other jurisdictional plans related to transportation across Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative (TCMC) jurisdictions, including Thurston County, Lacey, Tumwater, and Olympia.

This memorandum summarizes the results of that review, including existing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction targets and the policy frameworks intended to support those targets. The review identifies policies and implementation actions that are likely to meaningfully influence travel behavior and reduce VMT, as well as gaps where policies are limited, lack specificity, or where best-practice strategies are not yet reflected in jurisdictional plans. These findings inform the broader VMT Gap Analysis by helping identify areas where additional implementation actions, policy refinement, or coordination may be needed to achieve regional VMT reduction goals.

Plan Review

The review was organized around transportation and land use emissions reduction strategies identified in the [Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan \(TCMP\)](#) and framed against established best practices for VMT reduction. The TCMP strategies include:

- **Strategy T1.** Set land use policies that support increased urban density, efficient transportation networks, and reduced urban sprawl.
- **Strategy T2.** Increase efficiency of the transportation system.
- **Strategy T3.** Increase adoption of electric vehicles.
- **Strategy T4.** Increase the use of public transit.
- **Strategy T5.** Increase use of active transportation modes, such as bicycling and walking.

Approach

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of existing plans and policies across TCMC jurisdictions, Fehr & Peers reviewed a broad set of documents provided by TCMC jurisdictions. These materials included comprehensive plans (including transportation, land use, and climate elements), as well as other relevant local and regional plans such as jurisdictional Pedestrian and Bicycle Plans and the TRPC Regional Transportation Plan. The review focused on identifying adopted goals, policies, and strategies that are intended to influence travel behavior and reduce VMT across participating jurisdictions.

The purpose of this review was to assess the **strength, specificity, and prioritization embedded in adopted policy frameworks**, rather than to evaluate individual projects. Comprehensive plans and related transportation planning documents are intended to establish clear long-term priorities and decision-making criteria that guide how projects and programs are selected, funded, and implemented over time. These prioritization frameworks are more indicative of a jurisdiction's ability to achieve sustained VMT reduction than individual project lists, which represent time-limited snapshots influenced by current funding assumptions, project readiness, and agency capacity. Documents that do not include adopted policy direction such as greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories, technical analyses, or project lists were reviewed to understand context, targets, and existing conditions but were not used as primary sources for policy extraction.

This plan and policy review represents one component of the broader VMT Gap Analysis. It focuses on what is currently adopted/accepted in plans and where there may be gaps in policy direction, specificity, or implementation mechanisms. A subsequent phase of the project will include jurisdictional staff interviews to better understand how adopted policies are translated into project and program decisions in practice, how priorities are applied, and what constraints or opportunities to further reduce VMT per capita exist. **These interviews will help fill information gaps that cannot be fully understood through document review alone.**

Table 1 summarizes the full set of documents reviewed and describes how each document informed this analysis.

Table 1: List of Documents Reviewed

Document Reviewed	Role in Plan and Policy Review
Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (2020)	Primary source of proposed VMT reduction strategies and actions for region.
TRPC Regional Transportation Plan (2025)	Primary source of adopted transportation goals and policies for region; substantive VMT reduction policies incorporated into review.
TRPC Regional Trails Plan (2023)	Provided recommended policies and strategies related to regional active transportation; substantive policies that are also related to VMT reduction policies incorporated into review.
TRPC Regional Commute Trip Reduction Plan (2025)	Primary source of information related to how TRPC will support commute trip reduction (CTR) programs and strategies to achieve CTR targets in Thurston region.

Thurston County 2022 Inventory of Community-Wide Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2022)	Reviewed to understand baseline conditions and VMT/GHG context; used to confirm targets.
Thurston 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 2: Climate (2025)	Primary source of adopted long-term goals and policies in Thurston County; substantive VMT reduction policies incorporated into review.
Thurston 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 3: Land Use (2025)	
Thurston 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 8: Transportation (2025)	
Thurston 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Appendix B: Implementation Plan (2025)	
Thurston County Six Year Transportation Improvement Program (2026)	Provided information on planned projects in Thurston County; does not include information on how VMT reduction policies inform prioritization or implementation.
Thurston County Commute Trip Reduction Plan (2025)	Primary source of information related to Thurston County's commute trip reduction (CTR) program; strategies to achieve CTR targets incorporated into review.
Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Climate Action and Resilience Chapter (2025)	Primary source of adopted long-term goals and policies in Olympia; substantive VMT reduction policies incorporated into review.
Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Land Use and Urban Design Chapter (2025)	
Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Chapter (2025)	
Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Housing Chapter (2025)	
Olympia Downtown Parking Strategy (2019)	Primary source of proposed strategies and actions related to parking management in Downtown Olympia; substantive strategies and actions also related to VMT reduction incorporated into review.
Olympia Transportation Master Plan (2021)	Provided information on planned projects in Olympia, including context on how VMT reduction informs project prioritization, as well as insights into future policy considerations the City may explore related to VMT reduction.
Olympia 2021 Inventory of Community-Wide Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2021)	Reviewed to confirm GHG and VMT reduction targets and baseline conditions; does not include adopted policies.
Olympia 2021 Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Strategy Analysis (2021)	Reviewed to confirm GHG and VMT reduction targets and baseline conditions; does not include adopted policies.
Olympia Commute Trip Reduction Plan (2025)	Primary source of information related to Olympia's commute trip reduction (CTR) program; strategies to achieve CTR targets incorporated into review.

Tumwater 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Climate Element (2025)	Primary source of adopted VMT reduction goals and policies in Tumwater; substantive content incorporated into review.
Tumwater 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Element (2025)	
Tumwater 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Element (2025)	
Tumwater 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Appendix B – Bicycling, Walking, and Rolling Plan (2025)	Provides supporting detail on implementation of active transportation improvements in Tumwater; does not include additional adopted policies beyond those in the Comprehensive Plan.
Tumwater Six Year Transportation Improvement Program (2026)	Provided information on planned projects in Tumwater; does not include information on how VMT reduction policies inform prioritization or implementation.
Tumwater Commute Trip Reduction Plan (2025)	Primary source of information related to Tumwater’s commute trip reduction (CTR) program; strategies to achieve CTR targets incorporated into review.
Lacey 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Element (2025)	Primary source of adopted long-term goals and policies in Lacey; substantive VMT reduction policies incorporated into review.
Lacey 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Element (2025)	
Lacey 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Climate & Sustainability Element (2025)	
Lacey 2045 Comprehensive Plan, Housing Element (2025)	
Lacey Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (2019)	Provided policy and program support recommendations for active transportation in Lacey; substantive actions that are also related to VMT reduction incorporated into review.
Lacey Six Year Transportation Improvement Program (2026)	Provided information on planned projects in Lacey; does not include information on how VMT reduction policies inform prioritization or implementation.
Lacey Commute Trip Reduction Plan (2025)	Primary source of information related to Lacey’s commute trip reduction (CTR) program; strategies to achieve CTR targets incorporated into review.

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

Role of TCMP Strategies in Reducing VMT

The transportation and land use strategies identified in the TCMP represent a comprehensive framework for reducing transportation-related GHG emissions across the Thurston region. The TCMP also proposed a suite of actions associated with each strategy that jurisdictions can use to advance

these goals. These strategies and actions serve as a starting point for partner jurisdictions to develop more detailed implementation plans and work programs.

All of the TCMP transportation and land use strategies (except Strategy T3¹) target VMT reduction as a method to reduce GHG emissions. **Strategy T1** likely has the greatest long-term potential of all the strategies to reduce VMT and GHG emissions because it aims to change land use and development patterns to shorten trip lengths and enable more trips to occur by walking, biking, or transit. **Strategy T2** focuses primarily on improving transportation system performance through operational improvements and vehicle efficiency measures. **Strategies T4 and T5** directly target VMT reduction by increasing the use of public transit and active forms of travel.

As noted, the TCMP strategies are intended as a starting point, and there are additional strategies to meaningfully reduce VMT not currently included. For example, many of the actions included in **Strategy T2**, such as signal coordination, speed management, and vehicle maintenance outreach, are focused on reducing delay, idling, and emissions rather than directly reducing VMT. The strategy also includes actions related to teleworking and flexible schedules that may reduce some drive-alone vehicle trips but does not include system efficiency tools (such as parking pricing, curb management, or other demand management measures) that are more directly tied to reducing driving. This VMT Gap Analysis aims to consider all potential VMT reduction policies and actions that the jurisdictions could implement, not only those currently emphasized in the TCMP. For example, in this Gap Analysis, TCMP Strategy T2 is defined more broadly to include system efficiency tools such as parking pricing and curb management.

Strategy Effectiveness and Implementation Timeline

The strategies with the greatest potential to reduce VMT are often the most complex and take the longest to implement because they require significant changes to development patterns and travel behavior. In contrast, other strategies, such as expanding active transportation networks or improving transit access, may yield more modest reductions individually but are essential in supporting broader shifts away from driving. These investments help create viable alternatives to driving and provide the foundation needed for land use policies, transportation demand management programs, and parking reforms to be effective and equitable.

While individual strategies may not produce large VMT reductions on their own, many provide important co-benefits, such as improved multimodal connectivity, safety, and equitable access to transportation, that amplify the effectiveness of other efforts. Investments in multimodal transportation or changes in land use patterns alone are typically not sufficient to achieve meaningful VMT reductions—both are necessary and most effective when implemented together. As a result, achieving meaningful VMT reductions typically requires a coordinated approach that advances multiple strategies over time. Near-term investments in multimodal transportation and transportation demand management can help build momentum toward longer-term changes in land use patterns and travel behavior.

¹ Strategy T3 focuses on increasing the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs). While EV adoption reduces GHG emissions associated with transportation, it does not directly reduce VMT because it does not decrease driving or shift trips to other modes. As a result, EV adoption primarily addresses the emissions intensity of vehicle travel rather than the amount of travel itself.

Achieving these outcomes also requires coordination across jurisdictions and agencies. While cities and counties often have direct control over policies such as active transportation investment, parking management, and development regulations, many of the strategies with the greatest potential to reduce VMT depend on regional collaboration. These include coordinating land use and transportation planning across jurisdictions, advancing roadway pricing or other demand management tools, collective agreements on reallocating roadway space for multimodal travel, and expanding regional transit service and non-motorized infrastructure for trips that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Given that a significant share of trips contributing to countywide VMT occur between jurisdictions, regional coordination is critical to achieving meaningful VMT reductions.

VMT Reduction Targets and Policy Inventory

Through this review, Fehr & Peers identified existing VMT reduction targets for each partner jurisdiction to establish a baseline understanding of how each jurisdiction currently defines and measures VMT reduction. **Table 2** summarizes the VMT reduction goals established by each jurisdiction, which differ in scale, calculation methodology, and timeline.

Table 2: TCMC Partner Jurisdictions VMT Reduction Goals

Jurisdiction	Baseline Year	Per Capita or Total VMT	% VMT Reduction Goal (from Baseline)	Source
Region	2015	Total	Passenger vehicles: 5% by 2030 20% by 2050 Light-duty trucks 10% by 2030 15% by 2050 Heavy-duty trucks: 20% by 2050	Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (2020), page 88.
Region	1990	Total	30% by 2035 50% by 2050	6.i, TRPC Regional Transportation Plan (2025), page 94.
Thurston County	2015	Per Capita	Passenger vehicles: 5% by 2030 20% by 2050 Light-duty trucks 10% by 2030 15% by 2050 Heavy-duty trucks: 20% by 2050	Thurston 2045 Comprehensive Plan (2025), page 8-12.
Olympia	2021	Total	20% by 2040	Olympia 2045 Comprehensive Plan, page 56.
Tumwater	2022	Per Capita	27% by 2040 41% by 2050*	T-4.5.1, City of Tumwater 2025 Comprehensive Plan Transportation Plan (2025), page 27.

Lacey	2022	Per Capita	50% by 2045	T-4B, City of Lacey Comprehensive Plan (2025), page 16.
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Fehr & Peers, 2026.

* Tumwater’s VMT reduction targets will be used as the basis for this project which are the same goals as the Department of Commerce Greenhouse Gas Emissions Forecast and Scenario Planning Tool (2024 version).

Understanding Best Practices

This review highlights important differences in the types of VMT reduction tools available across jurisdictions in the Thurston region. Much of Thurston County includes rural and low-density areas where development is more dispersed and access to transit and multimodal infrastructure is limited. In these areas, reducing VMT is inherently more challenging because residents tend to be more auto dependent and distances between destinations are greater. Policies affecting rural areas often focus on limiting urban sprawl, supporting regional trail connections, and improving regional connectivity (e.g., park-and-ride access to transit and carpools/vanpools) rather than relying on transportation demand management (TDM) tools that are more effective in higher-density environments. This context also influences the types of land use policies available to the County, which generally focus on managing development within and around urban growth areas rather than implementing urban regulatory tools such as parking reform or transit-oriented development (TOD) standards.

In this context, one of the most significant ways the County can support regional VMT reduction efforts is by limiting the expansion of urban development into rural areas and ensuring that higher-density growth remains within designated urban growth areas (UGAs). Maintaining clear boundaries between urban and rural development patterns helps reduce low-density development that generates longer vehicle trips and higher per-capita VMT. As a result, policies that prevent urban sprawl and reinforce compact development patterns are among most potent tools the region has for managing long-term VMT growth.

In contrast, the cities of Olympia, Tumwater, and Lacey have more ways to influence travel behavior through policies such as minimum density requirements, parking management and pricing, transit-supportive development standards, and investments in active transportation infrastructure. Olympia has several policies that begin to apply these strategies, including parking management strategies, transit-supportive land use policies, and a dedicated funding program for active transportation. However, many of Olympia’s comprehensive plan policies still rely on permissive language and appear to lack clear implementation mechanisms. Tumwater and Lacey similarly include policy direction supporting mixed use centers, multimodal transportation, and active transportation networks; however, many policies remain high-level or lack clarity on how strategies will be implemented, prioritized, or funded.

All jurisdictions participate in Washington State’s Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program. The program focuses on large employers and promotes tools such as telework, flexible schedules, transit incentives, and ridesharing, contributing to reduced commute trips and peak period congestion. While CTR provides measurable benefits, its impact on regional VMT is constrained by its limited scope. It applies only to qualifying employers and primarily affects commute travel, rather than the full range of trip purposes that drive overall VMT. As a result, CTR is most effective as a complementary strategy, reinforcing broader land use, transportation pricing, transit investment, and demand management policies needed to achieve meaningful, long-term VMT reductions.

Policy Gap Analysis

Fehr & Peers identified several areas within the existing policy frameworks that influence how effectively jurisdictions can support VMT reduction in the Thurston region. While all TCMC partner jurisdictions have policies that generally support VMT reduction, these policies vary widely in their level of specificity, strength, and implementation guidance.

One key gap observed across jurisdictions is the presence of policies written in aspirational or non-specific terms. Policies that lack clear implementation pathways or defined actions are less likely to meaningfully influence transportation outcomes and were not included in the inventory of actionable measures. However, language that emphasizes supporting, encouraging, or promoting certain outcomes can be appropriate and valuable in establishing intent, building alignment, and reinforcing broader policy direction. The staff interviews will provide insight into whether aspirational policies nevertheless help guide decision-making or, conversely, limit implementation due to a lack of clarity.

In addition, the review identified instances where multiple policies address similar objectives within the same plan. While overlapping or redundant policies are not inherently problematic (and at times can help reinforce priorities), their redundancy, volume, and potential variations may influence how policies are interpreted, prioritized, and implemented in practice. In some cases, a large number of broadly aligned policies may make it more challenging to identify clear priorities or consistent direction for implementation across departments.

Aspirational and Non-Specific Policy Language

Across jurisdictions, many policies are written in aspirational terms and use language such as “support,” “encourage,” or “promote.” Some examples of these types of policies include:

- **T-1E** Encourage the use of public transportation with the City and support Intercity Transit’s long-range plan. (Lacey)
- **T-3C** Support active transportation investments to encourage healthy living and community interaction. (Lacey)
- **T-5B** Promote increased community understanding of the relationship between land use choices and transportation impacts. Encourage participation and involvement of regional users of the transportation system. (Lacey)
- **T-1.3.1** Encourage employers to adopt transportation demand management strategies, such as subsidized transit passes, flexible work hours, and telecommuting options and adopt similar strategies for Tumwater staff to the extent possible. (Tumwater)
- **T-3.D.5** Ensure safe, easy, and affordable transport for youth, seniors, and those with disabilities or special needs. (Thurston County)
- **T-3.F.4** Encourage community planning to identify pedestrian paths and promote walkability. (Thurston County)
- **PT2.1** Reshape the transportation system so that it’s easier to walk or roll, bike, or take transit than to drive. (Olympia)
- **PH5.3** Encourage new housing on transportation arterials and in areas near public transportation hubs. (Olympia)

While these policies express important goals, they generally lack clear implementation mechanisms or defined actions, potentially limiting their ability to meaningfully influence transportation outcomes.

Furthermore, these policies cannot be used as an effective means or justification for a jurisdiction to specifically block, require change, or otherwise influence a land use or infrastructure project that could increase VMT or transportation GHG emissions.

Overlapping or Redundant Policies

Several jurisdictions include multiple policies within the same plan that address similar themes, particularly related to broad or aspirational statements. For example, Olympia’s Comprehensive Plan includes multiple policies related to building a multimodal transportation network, including:

- **PT3.1** Build and retrofit streets to support walking, rolling, biking, and taking transit.
- **PT17.1** Build a system that encourages walking, rolling, biking, and transit to reduce car trips and help achieve our land use density goals.
- **PT25.3** Build new streets and retrofit existing streets to be more inviting for walking and rolling with sidewalks, enhanced crosswalks, and streetscape improvements.

These policies collectively reflect a consistent objective—developing a multimodal transportation system that supports VMT reduction—and the presence of overlapping strategies is not inherently problematic. In many cases, repetition can emphasize priorities across a plan.

However, where multiple policies address similar outcomes at a high level, their redundancy, volume, and potential variation in emphasis may influence how policies are interpreted, prioritized, and implemented in practice. In some cases, a large number of broadly aligned policies may make it more difficult to distinguish priorities or establish a consistent implementation approach across departments.

Understanding how these policies are applied in practice, including how priorities are set and how actions are coordinated across departments, will be explored further through the jurisdictional staff interviews in Task 4. This will help clarify how overlapping policy direction translates into on-the-ground implementation.

Summary of Identified Gaps

Table 3 summarizes the approach and gaps in VMT reduction policies identified for each jurisdiction across the strategy categories in the TCMP.² The table highlights areas where more substantive policies are present but may still lack specificity or implementation mechanisms, as well as areas where best-practice VMT reduction strategies are not yet reflected in jurisdictional plans.³

² As noted previously, EV adoption reduces GHG emissions but does not directly reduce VMT. Therefore, Strategy T3 is not included in the table.

³ For the purposes of this analysis, Fehr & Peers focused on policies and implementation actions that provide clearer direction or defined steps toward reducing VMT. As previously noted, policies that were primarily aspirational or lacked clear implementation pathways were not included in the inventory of actionable measures and represent additional gaps beyond those identified below.

Table 3: Identified VMT Reduction Policy Approach and Gaps

TCMP Strategy	Region (TRPC)	Thurston County	Olympia	Tumwater	Lacey
Strategy T1. Set land use policies that support increased urban density and efficient transportation networks and reduce urban sprawl.	Regional RTP policies support compact development, preservation of rural areas, and coordination of transportation investments with adopted local land use plans. However, regional policies do not directly influence local development regulations, creating a gap between regional vision and local implementation. Achieving these outcomes will require local jurisdictions to adopt specific zoning changes, minimum densities, and parking reforms.	County policies include limiting housing growth in rural areas, directing development toward UGAs, and encouraging higher densities near transit. These policies provide an important foundation for managing long-term VMT growth, particularly given the County’s role in shaping UGA form and preventing dispersed rural development. However, some policies allow for UGA boundary adjustments near existing cities, which could potentially conflict with compact development goals.	Olympia's policies speak to increasing density in urban corridors and downtown areas, allowing housing in commercial and employment areas, establishing neighborhood centers to reduce travel distances, and reducing parking minimums near transit. These policies have relatively strong land use direction that could support VMT reduction. However, policies provide limited detail on specific zoning amendments, geographic boundaries, or implementation steps needed to achieve these outcomes.	Tumwater policies support concentrating development in multimodal and mixed-use centers and higher densities near frequent transit. However, policies generally rely on incentives or broad policy direction and do not clearly identify how these centers will be defined, created, or implemented through zoning or development regulations. Policies explicitly prioritizing infill or redevelopment within existing urban areas relative to potential future UGA expansion are also absent.	Lacey policies speak to establishing and increasing minimum residential densities and identifies small mixed-use centers intended to support compact development. However, policies remain relatively general and lack clear implementation direction or specific timelines to implement zoning updates. The plan does not include substantial parking reform or strong land use policies explicitly tied to transit. Policies explicitly prioritizing infill or redevelopment within existing urban areas relative to potential future UGA expansion are also absent.
Strategy T2. Increase efficiency of the transportation system.	Regional policies related to transportation system efficiency focus primarily on operational improvements and telework strategies. However, telework strategies have limited impact to further reduce VMT post-COVID-19 shutdowns,* and there are limited regional policies addressing parking pricing, curb management, or other system efficiency tools that directly influence VMT. Many policies focus on reducing emissions from vehicle travel rather than on strategies to reduce driving.	County policies are centered on compliance with the state’s CTR requirements for a small number of affected worksites in urban growth areas. The County CTR plan establishes employer participation, reporting, and performance targets consistent with state law, but its overall VMT reduction impact is limited by the small number of qualifying employers and the predominance of rural, auto-dependent travel patterns. Beyond CTR compliance, policies do not include specific implementable system efficiency measures, such as parking pricing or broader TDM programs that would meaningfully influence VMT across the broader transportation system.	Olympia includes policies related to parking management and transportation demand management, such as daily and hourly parking pricing, commuter incentives, and CTR enforcement mechanisms that apply to qualifying employers, which are also codified in municipal code. However, system efficiency policies are largely focused on City employees and targeted areas such as downtown. Opportunities remain to strengthen VMT impacts by expanding TDM requirements to new development, requiring participation by employers below state CTR thresholds, and implementing policies such as the removal of free parking incentives that more directly discourage drive-alone travel.	Tumwater has limited policies addressing transportation system efficiency. Strategies rely primarily on compliance with state CTR requirements and lack locally codified enforcement mechanisms or complementary TDM policies. The city does not currently include parking pricing or broader employer-based demand management strategies beyond those required by state law. As a result, CTR functions largely as a compliance program rather than a proactive VMT reduction tool. Best practice approaches would include locally adopted CTR enforcement provisions, expanded employer participation, and parking management policies that reduce incentives to drive alone.	Lacey has limited policies addressing transportation system efficiency, although they have adopted their CTR plan by ordinance. The city does not currently deploy parking pricing, parking cashout, or development linked TDM requirements that would meaningfully reduce vehicle trips. As with Tumwater, CTR primarily addresses commute trips at qualifying employers and does not influence non-commute travel or development related travel behavior. Best practice policies would extend TDM requirements to a broader set of employers, integrate CTR with development regulations, and reduce or eliminate free parking in residential and commercial contexts.
Strategy T4. Increase the use of public transit.	The RTP includes strong policy support for transit and backs it with financially constrained capital and operating investments identified in the project list, including expanded service, high-frequency corridors, transit facilities, and express service improvements led by Intercity Transit. The Regional Trails Plan supports transit use by identifying trails as key first and last mile connections. However, transit expansion remains dependent on voter approved funding and partner agency decisions, and regional plans do not include enforceable mechanisms to prioritize transit over roadway capacity expansion across the full project list.	The County includes policies related to transit education but does not include substantive commitments to transit expansion, transit-supportive land use changes, first- and last-mile connections to transit, or development requirements that encourage transit use. Notably, assisting in the identification and funding of park-and-ride and other means to access transit Intercity Transit’s established transit network can be effective ways for the County to expand rural area access to transit that connects with regional destinations.	Olympia policies speak to transit-supportive corridors and include policies supporting transit facilities in development, parking reductions near TOD, and commuter transit incentives. However, many policies depend on Intercity Transit for implementation and focus on bringing transit to new development rather than new development near existing transit.	Tumwater policies include advocating for transit service improvements through partnerships with Intercity Transit and include goals for increasing transit mode share. However, policies primarily rely on advocacy rather than local regulatory actions or funding partnerships. Tumwater lacks policies related to TOD, transit infrastructure improvements, or increased density near transit.	Lacey includes policies supporting better walk and bike connections to transit stops and reducing parking where multimodal options are available. However, there are limited direct policies related to transit service improvements, transit priority, parking reductions, or TOD, and existing policies lack clear implementation guidance.

TCMP Strategy	Region (TRPC)	Thurston County	Olympia	Tumwater	Lacey
Strategy T5. Increase use of active forms of travel.	The Regional Trails Plan, combined with the RTP project list, identifies a connected network of priority regional trails and including funded trail, bicycle, and pedestrian projects in the financially constrained plan. Trails are explicitly positioned as transportation facilities that support short trips and first and last mile access to transit. However, while regional plans identify projects and funding categories, implementation still relies on local jurisdictions, and there are limited regional criteria to ensure active transportation investments are delivered ahead of or in place of roadway expansion.	The County's policies include Safe Routes to School programs, development of the regional trail network through the Regional Trails Plan, and Complete Streets principles. While bike facility requirements exist in the code, the County lacks bike parking policies and does not provide clear prioritization or implementation strategies for expanding active transportation infrastructure as identified in the TIP.	Olympia has several strong bike parking policies and policies supporting reallocation of parking or curb space for active transportation. While policies related to expanding bicycle infrastructure and the sidewalk network are vague, the TMP project list outlines a clear prioritization scoring methodology for active transportation projects. Furthermore, Olympia has one of the more robust funding programs for active transportation in the State of Washington.	Tumwater has policies supporting protected bike lanes, improved crossings, Safe Routes to School, and bicycle parking requirements. However, many policies are long-term and lack clear prioritization or dedicated funding strategies.	Lacey policies speak to sidewalk standards, improved crossings, bike parking updates, bike education and business programs, and right-of-way reallocation for active transportation, as well as building out the active transportation network following the Lacey Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan. However, many policies are long-term and need funding commitments.

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

* Teleworking remains an important factor influencing travel behavior and can reduce commute trips on days it is used. However, compared to peak conditions during the COVID-19 shutdown period (2020–2021), telework levels have stabilized or declined in many sectors, and a significant portion of feasible telework adoption has already occurred. As a result, while telework continues to contribute to reduced VMT relative to pre-pandemic conditions, it is generally no longer considered a primary strategy for achieving additional VMT reductions without new policies or incentives that expand participation beyond current levels.

LOS, Concurrency, and VMT Reduction

Fehr & Peers reviewed municipal code specifically for LOS and concurrency standards because these provisions establish system-level requirements that directly influence how development is evaluated and how transportation capacity investments are triggered. These standards are uniquely tied to jurisdiction-wide transportation outcomes and decision-making. Other elements of code are generally more detailed and regulatory in nature, and on their own, do not provide the same level of insight into broader VMT reduction strategies or system-level priorities.

In Washington, transportation concurrency requirements play an important role in shaping how jurisdictions plan for and respond to growth. These requirements can influence the types of transportation investments that are prioritized and, in some cases, may contradict or constrain strategies intended to reduce VMT.

Table 4 summarizes each jurisdiction's level of service (LOS) standards. Two types of LOS standards are identified:

- **Auto level of service (LOS) standards** reflect performance targets used in planning to evaluate transportation systems across modes, included but not limited to vehicle operations.
- **Concurrency LOS standards** are the regulatory thresholds used to determine whether transportation facilities have sufficient capacity to accommodate new development, consistent with concurrency requirements under the Growth Management Act.

As shown in **Table 4**, Lacey, Tumwater, and Thurston County use auto-based LOS standards for both planning and concurrency evaluation, while Olympia has adopted a person-trip-based mobility framework for concurrency.

Table 4: Summary of Jurisdictional LOS Standards

Jurisdiction	Auto LOS Standard	Concurrency LOS Standard	Code Reference
Lacey	LOS E in urban core area, LOS D everywhere else (except for identified strategy corridors which are exempt from the City's vehicle LOS standards).		LMC 14.21.010
Tumwater	LOS E in urban core area, LOS D everywhere else (except for identified strategy corridors which are exempt from the City's vehicle LOS standards).		TMC 15.48.030
Olympia	N/A	Mobility units, based on person-trip supply and demand	OMC 15.20.020
Thurston County	LOS D (or LOS E/may exceed LOS D on urban strategy corridors)		TCMC 17.10.050

Source: Jurisdiction Transportation Elements and development codes; summarized by Fehr & Peers, 2026.

For reference, **Table 5** outlines the definitions of each LOS grade, as established by the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) 7th Edition and published by the Transportation Research Board in 2022.

Table 5: Auto LOS Definitions

Level of Service	Description	Control Delay (seconds/vehicle)	
		For signalized and roundabout controlled intersections	For unsignalized intersections
A	Free-flowing conditions	≤ 10	≤ 10
B	Stable flow (slight delays)	10–20	10–15
C	Stable flow (acceptable delays)	20–35	15–25
D	Approaching unstable flow (tolerable delay)	35–55	25–35
E	Unstable flow (intolerable delay)	55–80	35–50
F	Forced flow (congested and queues fail to clear)	≥ 80	≥ 50

Source: Highway Capacity Manual, 7th Edition.

Auto LOS standards are commonly used to monitor system performance and can provide useful information about roadway operations for vehicles. However, when used as the basis for concurrency, these standards can create challenges for VMT reduction. Under a traditional auto LOS-based concurrency system, new development that degrades roadway performance below a defined threshold may trigger requirements to add vehicle capacity or mitigate delay. This can result in roadway widening or intersection improvements that increase vehicle capacity, which may induce additional driving and make it more difficult to achieve long-term VMT reduction goals.

In contrast, concurrency frameworks based on person-trip capacity or multimodal system performance (such as Olympia’s mobility unit approach) allow jurisdictions greater flexibility in how they accommodate growth. Rather than requiring improvements that primarily benefit vehicle throughput, these approaches can support investments in transit, walking, bicycling, or other strategies that increase overall system capacity without increasing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles.

It is also important to note that several jurisdictions include exemptions from vehicle LOS standards for designated strategy corridors. These exemptions represent an important step toward aligning transportation system management with broader VMT reduction goals by allowing jurisdictions to prioritize multimodal investments on these corridors without being constrained by vehicle delay standards. However, these exceptions are limited in geographic scope and may not fully address the broader influence of auto LOS-based concurrency requirements on transportation investment decisions within a jurisdiction.

Overall, while LOS standards can serve as useful planning and monitoring tools, reliance on auto-based LOS for concurrency can be at odds with VMT reduction objectives. Aligning concurrency frameworks with VMT reduction goals can provide jurisdictions with greater flexibility to support growth while advancing strategies that reduce driving.

Next Steps

The plan and policy review provides a foundation for understanding how existing jurisdictional plans support regional VMT reduction goals and where additional implementation efforts may be needed.

These findings will inform the next phase of the project, including staff interviews conducted in Task 4, which will explore policy implementation practices, challenges, and opportunities across jurisdictions. The identified policy gaps will help guide discussion topics with staff, including questions related to funding constraints, competing priorities, and other barriers to advancing VMT reduction strategies.

In Task 5, Fehr & Peers will build on this review to evaluate whether existing plans, policies, and implementation practices are sufficient to meet established VMT reduction targets at the countywide level. This inventory of existing policies and implementation actions provides the foundation for that analysis by identifying the measures currently in place across jurisdictions. The Task 5 analysis will then assess how these existing actions contribute toward VMT reduction targets, which actions should be prioritized, and what additional strategies or policy changes may be needed to achieve regional goals.

Memo

Date: June 5, 2026

To: Alyssa Jones Wood and Linsey Fields, Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative (TCMC)

From: Abigail Powell, Marissa Milam, and Chris Breiland, Fehr & Peers

Subject: Staff Interviews for VMT Gap Analysis

Overview

As part of the TCMC VMT Gap Analysis, Fehr & Peers conducted a series of interviews with partner jurisdictions, TRPC, and Intercity Transit to better understand how VMT reduction policies are being implemented in practice. These interviews provided additional context on current approaches, as well as key challenges and opportunities influencing VMT outcomes across the region.

This memorandum summarizes the key takeaways from those interviews and builds on the findings from the Plan and Policy Review. Together, these efforts provide a more comprehensive understanding of the existing approach to VMT reduction in the Thurston Region and will inform the subsequent gap analysis and development of strategies to support regional VMT reduction.

Approach

Fehr & Peers conducted six group interviews with planning and engineering staff from TCMC partner jurisdictions, TRPC, and Intercity Transit. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes to one hour.

Fehr & Peers developed a core set of interview questions for jurisdictions and a separate set for Intercity Transit, which TCMC staff reviewed and approved. These questions guided each discussion, but the team adapted them as needed to reflect the flow of conversation and the perspectives of participating staff.

Appendix A provides a summary of interview participants, dates, core questions, and detailed meeting notes.

Key Takeaways

The following section summarizes key themes identified across the staff interviews, organized by topic area aligned with the interview questions. These themes reflect both shared experiences and differences in how agencies approach VMT reduction.

Organizing findings by urban, suburban, rural, and regional contexts reflects the differing land use patterns, transportation systems, and implementation environments across the region. This framing will help inform later phases of the project by identifying where challenges, opportunities, and potential best practices may differ based on jurisdictional context.

Current Approach to VMT Reduction

Across jurisdictions, VMT reduction is generally addressed as part of broader planning, land use, and transportation efforts rather than as a standalone program or decision-making metric. The degree to which VMT is explicitly integrated into project or program development, investment decisions, and code ordinances varies by context. In all the cities and Thurston County, VMT reduction must be balanced against other transportation priorities. In some cases, VMT reduction is at odds with jurisdiction strategies to reduce congestion through roadway expansion or reduce on-street parking demand through minimum parking requirements. Also important, while most jurisdictions have policies that speak to the benefits of infill development and higher densities, the availability of land, legacy land use, and zoning policies continue to allow development in parts of the county that generate relatively high levels of VMT. These areas are not centrally located and lack strong alternatives to driving when considering the robust roadway and parking infrastructure that continues to be built in these areas. Despite these challenges, all jurisdictions, TRPC, and Intercity Transit acknowledge the benefits of reduced VMT per capita and the types of land use and transportation network investments that facilitate less driving of private vehicles.

Urban

Olympia takes an explicit and integrated approach to VMT reduction, with considerations embedded across policies, development regulations, and transportation planning. The City has built a strong policy foundation over time and views VMT reduction as a guiding outcome that connects land use decisions with transportation investments. This is reflected in how Olympia aligns urban corridor designations with zoning, ties density and development standards to frequent transit routes, and locates commercial and mixed-use areas near residential neighborhoods to support shorter trips. The City has also reduced parking requirements for vehicles while maintaining bicycle parking requirements and expanded downtown parking exemptions for residential development, with the goal of making driving less convenient while improving access for walking, biking, and transit. Olympia also has a multimodal transportation concurrency policy that does not require vehicle capacity expansion if traffic congestion levels grow. While VMT is well integrated into policy and practice, a key remaining gap is the lack of a multimodal transportation impact analysis (TIA) framework, as current TIAs remain primarily vehicle focused.

Suburban

In suburban contexts, VMT is generally not used as a primary organizing framework and is instead addressed indirectly through transportation system design and capital project delivery. In Lacey, the

approach described by engineering staff focuses on complete streets, active transportation facilities, and improving network connectivity, with an emphasis on building a more connected street grid and distributing traffic across multiple routes. Similarly, Tumwater’s approach emphasizes integrating multimodal improvements into roadway projects, with most transportation investments including bike and pedestrian facilities as part of broader maintenance or reconstruction efforts. In both jurisdictions, plans and policies support VMT reduction, but current approaches are primarily reflected through incremental improvements to the transportation system rather than through explicit VMT-based decision-making. Across both jurisdictions, planning and policy frameworks support VMT reduction goals, but implementation is occurring primarily through incremental transportation investments focused on improving connectivity and expanding multimodal travel options, rather than explicit actions to reduce VMT.

Rural

In the rural context, VMT reduction is addressed indirectly through land use planning and growth management policies. Within the County’s planning framework, policies that support VMT reduction are primarily driven by goals related to critical areas, natural resource protection, and limiting rural development, rather than explicitly targeting travel behavior. The County is also responsible for building out the regional trail network, which supports long-term mode shift to bicycles. By directing growth toward UGAs and incorporated cities, the County plays an important role in shaping regional development patterns that can support lower per-capita VMT over the long-term. VMT is not a primary lens used in policy development or decision-making, and when it is considered, it is typically in a qualitative manner, such as recognizing that certain land use changes may reduce trip lengths. The County’s approach also reflects significant variation between Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) and rural areas, with greater opportunity to influence VMT within UGAs and more limited ability to do so in rural areas due to longer travel distances and dispersed development patterns. The County is beginning to engage more directly with VMT through regional efforts, including the Congestion Management Process and coordination with TRPC, but VMT remains a secondary consideration within its overall planning approach.

Regional

TRPC incorporates VMT considerations into regional planning and policy development, with a role focused on setting regional direction, providing data and technical tools, and supporting jurisdictions in advancing VMT-related goals, rather than directly implementing projects or policies. TRPC does not use VMT as a lens to prioritize funding like some other metropolitan planning organizations (e.g., PSRC).

From the transit perspective, Intercity Transit does not organize its work around VMT and instead focuses on service provision and increasing ridership. The agency tracks passenger miles traveled and views increased transit use as an indicator of potential VMT reduction but does not directly measure or manage VMT. Its approach reflects the understanding that transit’s ability to influence VMT is largely dependent on the land use patterns, street network, and development decisions made by local jurisdictions.

From Policy to Implementation

Across jurisdictions, translating VMT-supportive policies into implementation is largely shaped by available funding, staff capacity, and how projects are delivered. While all jurisdictions have policies

in place that support VMT reduction, the project development process is still largely based on multimodal level of service policies (MMLOS) and does not explicitly prioritize VMT reduction as a near-term action. Rather, near-term actions tend to focus on incremental improvements that can be delivered through existing programs and capital projects. While these actions typically include active transportation improvements, VMT is not the driver of the project development process. Olympia is the exception given that the City prioritizes VMT reduction in project list development.

Urban

Olympia has several near-term actions underway that build on its robust policy foundation, including subarea planning in high density neighborhoods, updates to SEPA categorical exemptions to support infill, and development of a long-term sidewalk repair strategy. The Transportation Master Plan (TMP) continues to guide implementation by prioritizing projects that support transit, pedestrian, and bicycle travel. The City is also advancing parking policy changes intended to shift away from long-term permits,¹ though implementation is expected to be complex and constrained by staff capacity and stakeholder coordination.

Suburban

In suburban jurisdictions, implementation is primarily tied to capital project delivery. In Tumwater, VMT-supportive actions focus on closing bike and pedestrian network gaps and adding multimodal elements as part of roadway preservation and reconstruction projects, with standalone VMT-focused programs or projects remaining rare. In Lacey, near-term efforts similarly emphasize corridor-based improvements and integrating active transportation into larger roadway projects, with project selection closely tied to available funding and no identified standalone VMT-focused programs or projects. Across both jurisdictions, implementation tends to be incremental and opportunistic, reflecting how projects are bundled and delivered rather than driven by a primary goal or VMT reduction. VMT isn't integral to anything.

Rural

Thurston County's near-term actions are focused on land use changes intended to shift growth toward UGAs, including a major update to UGA development codes which will align County regulations with city codes within the UGA, as well as rezoning efforts elsewhere in the County. These actions are expected to influence VMT over the long term by increasing density and supporting more urban development patterns, though near-term impacts on travel behavior are limited. Progress on complementary transportation strategies, such as regional trails and active transportation investments, has been constrained by funding, though the County continues to maintain an extensive trail network and has advanced several recent trail extension projects.

Regional

At the regional level, TRPC supports implementation primarily through technical tools and programmatic efforts such as Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) and telework initiatives. Current funding criteria indirectly support VMT reduction through emissions and location-based scoring, with opportunities to more directly incorporate VMT into project evaluation through future updates to MMLOS and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Intercity Transit's near-term actions focus on service improvements, including a system redesign to expand coverage and increase frequency,

¹ Daily pay-as-you-go parking pricing has been shown to reduce driving as compared to long-term permits.

which are intended to increase ridership and provide more viable alternatives to driving. Intercity Transit remains as the largest fare-free transit operator in Washington State, which eliminates a financial burden for transit access.

Project Development & Decision-Making

Across jurisdictions, project development and decision-making are primarily driven by funding availability, feasibility constraints, and program-specific priorities, rather than explicit VMT reduction criteria. While many projects incorporate multimodal elements that support VMT-related outcomes, **VMT is rarely used as a formal metric in project selection or prioritization.**

Urban

Olympia has a more structured and integrated approach to project development, with the TMP guiding multimodal prioritization. Projects are typically bundled during implementation to maximize efficiency, with multimodal improvements incorporated across project types, including pavement preservation. Equity and climate considerations are also embedded in project development through staff reporting and planning processes, and land use policies further reinforce this approach by linking density to frequent transit access.

Suburban

In Lacey and Tumwater, project selection is largely funding-driven, with projects advancing based on eligibility for grants and alignment with funding criteria. In Tumwater, feasibility constraints such as right-of-way acquisition, permitting challenges, stormwater requirements, and project cost often limit which projects can move forward, with incremental improvements to existing infrastructure more likely to advance. Observed needs, such as connectivity gaps and community input, also play a role. In Lacey, a similar funding-driven approach is used, with projects selected and tailored to match available funding opportunities. Safety is addressed through a separate Safety Action Plan, which can elevate certain projects, while active transportation improvements are often constructed incrementally through development and later connected by the City.

Rural

Thurston County prioritizes projects within program categories, such as safety, capacity, and Safe Routes to School, with equity considerations incorporated across programs. These program-level priorities are then combined and reprioritized in the TIP, with input from stakeholders and decision-makers influencing final rankings. While VMT is not explicitly used in prioritization, it could play a larger role if elevated through policy. Some projects support reduced VMT, particularly those that improve walkability and access in more developed areas, though vehicle capacity projects remain part of the program and have not been comprehensively reevaluated for alignment with current goals.

Regional

At the regional level, TRPC supports project development primarily through funding programs and evaluation criteria, with projects receiving points for reducing emissions and for location within designated regional centers and corridors. While these criteria indirectly support VMT reduction, VMT is not currently used as a direct scoring metric. TRPC is exploring opportunities to more explicitly incorporate VMT into project evaluation through future updates to MMLOS and the RTP.

From the transit perspective, Intercity Transit's project development is focused on service planning and routing decisions, with an emphasis on improving coverage, frequency, and access to key destinations. Service is typically concentrated in areas with sufficient density and demand, and decisions about where to expand or enhance service are influenced by land use patterns, corridor characteristics, and coordination with local jurisdictions, rather than by VMT-specific criteria.

Land Use & Development Patterns

Across jurisdictions, land use is widely recognized as the most important long-term lever for reducing per capita VMT, but implementation is shaped by market conditions, infrastructure constraints, community preferences, and evolving state requirements. While most jurisdictions have updated policies and codes to support infill and higher-density development, recent state mandates are also requiring jurisdictions to update local codes and planning frameworks, and achieving these outcomes remains challenging in practice.

Urban

Olympia has made significant updates to its development codes and planning framework to support infill, mixed-use development, and higher densities, and does not see benefits from further land use code refinement. Instead, the main challenges are related to the high cost of development and land, infrastructure limitations, and site-specific constraints such as small parcel sizes and the need for frontage improvements. The City continues to implement subarea plans and has used tools such as planned action ordinances and permit streamlining to facilitate development, though those tools do not substantially outweigh the other market factors described earlier.

Suburban

In suburban jurisdictions, development patterns continue to be influenced by strong market demand for greenfield and single-family housing, which can lead to more dispersed growth and longer trips. In Tumwater, this is reflected in ongoing challenges with achieving true infill development, even within designated growth areas. In Lacey, similar market pressures exist, along with additional challenges related to jobs-housing balance and limited control over development patterns within the UGA. Both jurisdictions have taken steps to support infill through middle housing policies and zoning changes, but outcomes remain dependent on developer preferences and regional growth patterns.

Rural

In the rural context, barriers to infill and higher-density development are concentrated within UGAs, where challenges are primarily related to financial feasibility, outdated development codes, and the cost of extending infrastructure. A major near-term action is the ongoing UGA code update, which will align County regulations with city codes and is expected to increase allowable densities, expand mixed-use opportunities, and streamline permitting within UGAs. The County is also using zoning changes and incentives, such as cluster development, to support more compact growth patterns. However, infill development remains difficult to deliver, and market conditions continue to favor development on vacant land over redevelopment of existing sites. Outside UGAs, the County's approach remains focused on preserving rural character and limiting development intensity.

Regional

At the regional level, TRPC supports land use and VMT reduction through planning, analysis, and technical support to local jurisdictions, including regional plans that promote higher densities in urban centers and along transit corridors. However, TRPC does not have land use authority, and implementation depends on local jurisdictions. Barriers identified at the regional level include parking requirements, market conditions, and limited coordination between land use and transportation planning. The agency highlighted the need for clearer guidance on the land use density thresholds required to support different levels of transit service.

Intercity Transit's perspective reinforces the importance of land use patterns, as transit service effectiveness is closely tied to density, corridor development, and proximity to destinations.

Regulatory, Political, and Institutional Constraints

Across jurisdictions, the ability to advance VMT reduction is constrained by a combination of funding limitations, regulatory requirements, and political considerations. Funding emerged as the most consistent constraint, influencing which projects can be pursued and limiting the ability to implement more transformative changes. At the same time, legacy regulatory frameworks, particularly those tied to vehicle LOS and concurrency, continue to shape project outcomes in ways that can conflict with VMT reduction goals.

Urban

Olympia identified state-level regulatory processes, particularly coordination with WSDOT during Comprehensive Plan and planned action review, as a major constraint to implementing initiatives intended to support VMT reduction. Staff described challenges related to WSDOT expectations for detailed transportation analysis of broader land use and non-project actions, as well as lack of alignment on Olympia's multimodal LOS framework. According to staff, these review processes have created significant time and budget impacts and have delayed key initiatives such as raising SEPA categorical exemptions to support housing and infill development. While the City has strong policy support for VMT reduction and enthusiasm across staff and Council, institutional and stakeholder challenges continue to affect the pace of implementation.

Suburban

In suburban jurisdictions, funding and feasibility constraints are primary drivers of transportation infrastructure investments. In Tumwater, development requirements such as frontage improvements, right-of-way needs, and stormwater regulations can make projects financially infeasible, limiting both development and the ability to build out multimodal infrastructure. LOS and concurrency requirements continue to emphasize vehicle capacity, with limited mechanisms to systematically complete bike and pedestrian networks. In Lacey, funding similarly shapes project delivery, while additional constraints include access management challenges and concurrency requirements that result in adding more vehicle capacity. Political and community preferences, including resistance to growth and change, further limit the feasibility of more assertive VMT reduction strategies.

Rural

In the rural context, regulatory and political constraints are closely tied to community preferences and longstanding development patterns. Concurrency requirements based on vehicle LOS continue to

drive intersection and roadway capacity expansion, with limited integration of multimodal infrastructure in practice. Development regulations within UGAs (currently based on more rural-oriented standards) also constrain flexibility, though ongoing code updates are expected to address this. Politically, there is strong preference for maintaining rural character, with resistance to density, parking reductions, and certain planning concepts, making incremental, project-based approaches more feasible than systemwide changes.

Regional

At the regional level, constraints to more assertive VMT management include limited political support for strategies such as parking pricing, reducing overall parking requirements, as well as inconsistent implementation of active transportation networks across jurisdictions, resulting in gaps that reduce system effectiveness. TRPC also noted challenges in fully integrating multimodal LOS into practice, as jurisdictions have adopted MMLOS concepts but have not yet fully implemented them in development review, with traditional vehicle LOS measures continuing to play a larger role in practice.

Intercity Transit highlighted constraints related to land use patterns, including low-density development and disconnected networks, which limit the effectiveness of transit service and the ability to reduce driving. However, as noted earlier, the Thurston Region has shown exceptional support for funding transit at a level that allows for fare-free operations.

Monitoring, Metrics, and Use of VMT

Across jurisdictions, monitoring and use of VMT as a performance metric is limited, with most agencies lacking consistent data, tools, or processes to track VMT or incorporate it into decision-making. At the same time, jurisdictions are now required by the state to demonstrate progress toward VMT reduction goals, despite many agencies still lacking established methods for tracking and evaluating those outcomes. Where VMT is considered, mostly in urban areas, it is often used qualitatively rather than as a formal metric, and efforts to improve monitoring are constrained by data availability, cost, and methodological challenges.

Urban

Olympia has expressed interest in more directly linking VMT to project evaluation and development review but currently lacks a practical framework for doing so. Past efforts to adapt traditional transportation impact analysis methods to multimodal or VMT-based approaches proved complex and difficult to implement. The City has begun shifting its capital planning policies to support more strategic investments but still faces limitations in connecting infrastructure investment and development review directly to VMT outcomes.

Suburban

In suburban jurisdictions, formal monitoring of VMT does not currently happen. Tumwater does not currently track VMT but is planning to develop monitoring tools to align with future reporting requirements. In Lacey, VMT monitoring is minimal, with the City relying largely on TRPC for any available data and conducting only limited local counts that cannot comprehensively evaluate VMT. In both jurisdictions, VMT is not consistently used in project development or decision-making, with funding availability playing a larger role in guiding investments.

Rural

Thurston County does not currently use VMT as a formal metric in project prioritization or decision-making. VMT is considered qualitatively in land use and zoning decisions, but there is no consistent method to quantify impacts or track progress toward VMT or climate goals. This limits the County's ability to evaluate how individual decisions contribute to broader outcomes.

Regional

At the regional level, TRPC plays a central role in data collection and analysis but faces significant challenges related to data availability and consistency. Existing data sources, including the HPMS dataset and the CTR program, provide some insight into VMT trends and travel behavior, but gaps remain in areas such as household travel, freight movement, and active transportation usage. High costs and infrequent data collection cycles further limit the ability to monitor trends. Intercity Transit tracks ridership and passenger miles traveled, which provide insight into transit usage, but the agency does not directly monitor VMT.

Implementation Needs and Opportunities

Many VMT-related strategies depend on coordination across jurisdictions and agencies, particularly for transit, land use, and regional travel patterns. Across jurisdictions, coordination is occurring through existing partnerships with TRPC, Intercity Transit, and neighboring jurisdictions, particularly for corridor planning, land use coordination, and regional processes. At the same time, agencies identified several key needs to more effectively translate plans into measurable VMT reduction outcomes, including additional funding, improved data and analytical tools, and stronger alignment between regional goals and local implementation.

Urban

Olympia described ongoing coordination with regional partners, including joint corridor planning efforts and collaboration with Intercity Transit on policies related to frequent transit routes. These efforts reflect a high level of coordination on planning and policy development, particularly for key corridors and land use strategies.

Suburban

In suburban jurisdictions, coordination with regional partners is occurring, but the primary constraint identified was funding rather than coordination itself. Both jurisdictions emphasized the need for additional funding, particularly construction funding, to deliver projects that are already planned or shovel ready. Tumwater also highlighted the challenge of influencing travel behavior, noting that infrastructure investments can support VMT reduction but do not directly control it. Across both jurisdictions, the ability to advance VMT reduction is closely tied to how projects align with available funding programs and grant criteria. Overall, there are relatively few funding sources available to build projects or programs that are strongly aligned with VMT reduction.

Rural

Thurston County described strong coordination with regional partners through processes such as the UGA code update, participation in TRPC committees, and the Congestion Management Process. However, similar to other jurisdictions, the County emphasized the need for additional funding, better

implementation tools, and more effective strategies to support infill development. There is also interest in improving coordination with cities on development review to better align land use and transportation outcomes.

Regional

At the regional level, TRPC emphasized its role as a collaborative partner that supports jurisdictions through data, analysis, and regional planning, rather than as a regulatory body. Key needs identified include more consistent VMT data, clearer definitions, and better translation of regional plans into local implementation. TRPC also noted the opportunity to provide clearer guidance on land use decisions that support transit.

While Intercity Transit did not emphasize coordination challenges directly, its responses reinforce the importance of coordination between land use, transportation infrastructure, and transit service. The agency's ability to support VMT reduction depends on alignment with local development patterns and investments, underscoring the need for continued coordination across jurisdictions and regional partners.

Next Steps

The staff interviews build on the plan and policy review by providing highly informative insight into how VMT-related strategies are implemented in practice, including key challenges, constraints, and opportunities across jurisdictions. These findings will help inform the next phase of the project (Task 5), including evaluation of existing implementation efforts, identification of gaps between policy and practice, and development of recommendations to advance regional VMT reduction goals.

Table 1 summarizes key VMT-related strategies and the implementation actions currently being advanced across jurisdictions based on insights gained through the staff interviews, highlighting how existing plans and policies are translating into on-the-ground practice. These strategies fall within broad categories of high-priority actions identified by the Washington Department of Commerce in support of VMT reduction as well as related transportation and development approaches that may influence regional travel behavior and VMT outcomes (e.g., adding vehicle capacity). Some of these strategies are already under consideration in the Thurston County region, while others may require further evaluation to determine if they can be applied within the local context. This summary is intended to provide a high-level overview of the actions currently occurring or planned within each jurisdiction for each strategy area, which will be used as the basis for the Task 5 gaps analysis.

Table 1: Current Implementation of VMT-Related Strategies Across Jurisdictions

Strategy	Olympia	Tumwater	Lacey	Thurston County	TRPC
Land Use Density and Mixed-Use Development	Frequent transit route overlays, subarea planning, and infill-focused mixed-use development	Incremental infill and middle housing updates, with continued pressure for greenfield development	Incremental infill and middle housing updates, with continued pressure for greenfield development	UGA code modernization and limited rural clustering incentives	Regional planning guidance encouraging growth in urban centers and transit corridors
Road Usage Charge/Congestion Pricing/Tolling	No major actions identified	No major actions identified	No major actions identified	No major actions identified	No major actions identified
Increased Parking Costs & Reduced Parking Availability	Reduced parking requirement for new development, downtown parking exemptions, and discussion of parking pricing reforms	No major actions identified	No major actions identified	No major actions identified	No major actions identified
Transportation Demand Management (TDM)	CTR requirements and limited commuter incentive programs focused primarily on downtown and qualifying employers	State-required CTR compliance with limited broader TDM implementation	State-required CTR compliance with limited broader TDM implementation	State-required CTR compliance with limited broader TDM implementation	CTR programs and telework initiatives to support partners

Strategy	Olympia	Tumwater	Lacey	Thurston County	TRPC
Adding Multimodal Infrastructure	Near-term: Extensive integration of bike, pedestrian, and transit improvements into capital projects Long-term: TMP prioritizes a citywide low-stress multimodal network guided by active transportation system targets	Near-term: Incremental active transportation improvements integrated into roadway maintenance and expansion projects Long-term: Comprehensive Plan 20-year active transportation project list outlines buildout of interconnected low-stress bicycle and pedestrian network	Near-term: Incremental active transportation improvements integrated into roadway maintenance and expansion projects Long-term: Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan identifies a connected multimodal network intended to improve access for all ages and abilities	Near-term: Limited active transportation and trail implementation due to funding constraints Long-term: Planned expansion of connected regional trails and bicycle/pedestrian networks through coordinated regional planning efforts	Regional trail planning, bicycle connectivity planning, and upcoming regional MMLOS development
Adding Vehicle infrastructure	Limited roadway or intersection widening in the TMP; MMLOS and mobility-unit concurrency framework to track implementation of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit investments	Vehicle LOS/concurrency framework with identified strategy corridors exempt from vehicle LOS standards; some current roadway expansion projects	Vehicle LOS/concurrency framework with identified strategy corridors exempt from vehicle LOS standards; some current roadway expansion projects	Vehicle LOS/concurrency framework with identified strategy corridors exempt from vehicle LOS standards; some current roadway expansion projects	RTP includes locally submitted roadway capacity projects alongside multimodal projects

Strategy	Olympia	Tumwater	Lacey	Thurston County	TRPC
Increasing Transit Service	Implementing a major system redesign in 2026 that expands service coverage, increases service frequency, and extends service hours across the Lacey–Olympia–Tumwater urban area, including enhanced service on key east–west and north–south corridors. Intercity Transit is also advancing corridor–focused operational improvements through the Smart Corridors program, including transit signal priority (TSP), coordinated signal timing, and pilot deployment of AI- and cloud-based signal optimization technologies to improve transit travel time reliability. Longer-term plans include continued buildout of higher-frequency “BRT-lite” corridors with local and limited-stop express service.				
Supporting Transit Service and Speed & Reliability Infrastructure	Frequent transit route policies tied to land use and development standards	No major actions identified	No major actions identified	No major actions identified	Regional coordination supporting transit-oriented growth patterns
Mobility Hubs	No major actions identified	No major actions identified	No major actions identified	No major actions identified	No major actions identified
Community-wide Education/Outreach	No major actions identified	No major actions identified	Policy support for bicycle and pedestrian education and encouragement efforts, including regional active transportation outreach	Policy support for public education and outreach focused on increasing awareness and use of public transportation options	No major actions identified

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

Fehr&Peers

Appendix A: Staff Interview Notes

Memo

Date: August 6, 2026

To: Alyssa Jones Wood and Linsey Fields, Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative (TCMC)

From: Abigail Powell, Marissa Baxter, and Chris Breiland, Fehr & Peers

Subject: VMT Gap Analysis Methodology and Key Takeaways

Overview

As part of the TCMC VMT Gap Analysis, Fehr & Peers evaluated whether the existing plans, policies, and implementation actions identified in previous tasks are sufficient to achieve the Thurston region's adopted vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita reduction targets.

This memorandum summarizes the methodology and findings of that analysis. The analysis is informed by plan and policy reviews, staff interviews, StreetLight Origin–Destination (OD) data, and published research on the effectiveness of VMT reduction strategies. The memorandum is organized around **three key questions**, the answers of which relate strongly to VMT in the Thurston region:

- How do people travel in Thurston County today?
- How much could planned actions and investments reduce VMT per capita?
- Would those reductions be sufficient to achieve the region's long-term VMT reduction goals?

How do people travel in Thurston County today?

Methodology

Existing Travel Data

There are several accepted methods for measuring and calculating VMT, each serving different planning and reporting purposes. In Washington State, transportation agencies commonly report Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) VMT, which is based on traffic volumes measured on public roadways and is used for statewide performance monitoring and federal reporting. HPMS VMT is also commonly used in greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories because it captures total vehicle activity occurring on the roadway network, making it well suited for estimating transportation-related emissions within a geographic area. However, HPMS VMT reflects all travel occurring on the

transportation network rather than travel generated by specific jurisdictions or residents. The primary difference between HPMS VMT and “generated” VMT include:

- HPMS VMT includes all pass-through VMT, which can be a significant share of VMT when a major regional facility like I-5 travels through a community; generated VMT does not count pass-through VMT.
- HPMS VMT only includes the VMT that is within the jurisdictional boundary of a community; for example, a commute trip by a resident that travels to another community is only partially accounted for with HPMS VMT. Generated VMT captures the entire trip.

Because the purpose of this analysis is to evaluate travel behavior and estimate the effects of local and regional actions on per capita driving, Fehr & Peers used an origin–destination–based approach to estimate the VMT generated by different communities in the Thurston region. This method allocates trips and the associated VMT to the jurisdictions where travel begins and ends. This approach is better aligned with the adopted VMT per capita reduction goals because it focuses on travel demand generated by residents and activities within Thurston County rather than traffic volumes occurring on county roadways, including pass-through travel. Pass-through travel, which neither begins nor ends within Thurston County, is estimated to account for approximately 1.9 million daily VMT and is largely outside of the influence of policies and investments. Excluding pass-through travel from this analysis is also consistent with guidance in the *U.S. Community Protocol for Accounting and Reporting of Greenhouse Gas Emissions*.¹

To understand existing travel patterns across Thurston County, Fehr & Peers purchased and analyzed 2025 StreetLight OD data for five geographic areas: Olympia, Tumwater, Lacey, unincorporated Thurston County, and Thurston County as a whole.² The StreetLight dataset represents passenger and light-duty vehicle travel throughout 2025 that began and/or ended within these geographic areas.³ All estimates of existing vehicle trips, trip lengths, and VMT presented in this memorandum are based on this dataset and reported as average daily values.

Trips were summarized for Olympia, Tumwater, Lacey, and Other Thurston County. Trips beginning or ending outside these three incorporated cities were allocated to the “Other Thurston County” category, which includes unincorporated Thurston County and all other incorporated jurisdictions within the county. This approach simplifies comparisons among the primary TCMC partner jurisdictions while representing travel generated throughout the remainder of Thurston County.

¹ <https://iclei.usa.org/us-community-protocol/>

² StreetLight Data combines Location-Based Services (LBS) and Connected Vehicle Data (CVD) with machine learning algorithms to understand travel behavior across the country. Each month, StreetLight Data processes approximately 40 billion anonymized location records from smart phones and navigation devices in connected cars and trucks and uses machine learning to transform these records into aggregated and normalized route-based travel patterns. Vehicle trips are created from the location records by starting a trip once a device is traveling at a reasonable speed, snapping records to road network data to estimate the trip route, and establishing a trip end once the device stops moving. Data is validated using permanent traffic counters and embedded sensors, and normalized with multiple data sources, including parcel data, digital road network data, and census information to calculate vehicle volume estimates. <https://www.streetlightdata.com/>

³ Passenger vehicles and light-duty vehicles include FHWA Vehicle Classes 1–3: motorcycles (Class 1), passenger cars (Class 2), and four-tire, single-unit vehicles such as pickup trucks, vans, SUVs, and ambulances (Class 3). This definition is generally consistent with the FHWA vehicle classification system and the light-duty vehicle categories used in EPA's MOVES emissions model (<https://www.epa.gov/moves/how-does-moves-define-light-duty-trucks>). Medium- and heavy-duty trucks were not included in this analysis.

Calculating VMT Per Capita

Fehr & Peers calculated **allocated vehicle trips** and **allocated VMT** by assigning each trip to the jurisdictions where it began and ended. Trips that both originated and ended within the same jurisdiction were fully allocated to that jurisdiction. Trips that crossed jurisdictional boundaries were divided equally between the origin and destination, with each jurisdiction assigned one-half of the associated vehicle trips and VMT. For example, a trip from Olympia to Lacey was allocated equally between the two jurisdictions, with each receiving credit for one-half of the trip and one-half of the associated VMT. This allocation approach avoids double counting while recognizing that travel between jurisdictions is jointly associated with both locations.

VMT per capita was used throughout this analysis because it accounts for differences and changes in population over time, providing a consistent basis for comparing travel patterns across jurisdictions and evaluating progress toward adopted VMT reduction goals. Fehr & Peers calculated VMT per capita by combining the allocated VMT estimates with population estimates derived from the 2022 Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) regional travel demand model. The number of households at the traffic analysis zone (TAZ) level were assigned to Olympia, Tumwater, Lacey, or Other Thurston County based on the geographic center of each TAZ. Household totals were then converted to population using the average household size for Thurston County,⁴ providing a consistent estimate of the population associated with each jurisdiction.

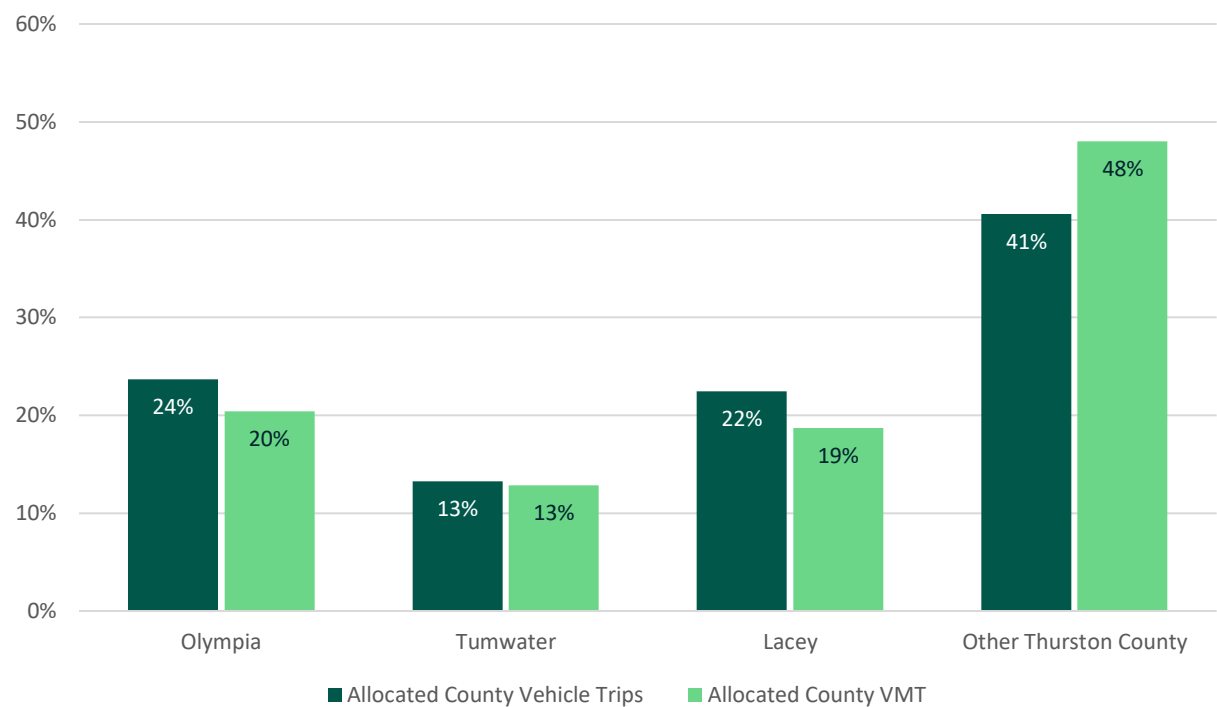
Key Findings

Travel Patterns

Figure 1 and **Table 1** summarize the allocated daily vehicle trips and associated VMT for Olympia, Tumwater, Lacey, and Other Thurston County. **Figure 1** compares each jurisdiction's share of countywide allocated daily vehicle trips with its share of allocated daily VMT, illustrating how trip volumes and travel distances contribute to overall VMT. **Table 1** provides the corresponding allocated vehicle trips and VMT for each jurisdiction, including daily totals and shares of the countywide totals, along with the population and land area of each study area.

⁴ <https://trpc.org/447/Average-Household-Size>

Figure 1: Share of Allocated Daily Vehicle Trips and VMT Associated by Jurisdiction



Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

Table 1: Allocated Daily Vehicle Trips and VMT Associated with Each Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Total Households*	Land Area (square miles)*	Allocated Daily Vehicle Trips	% of Total Allocated County Daily Vehicle Trips	Allocated Daily VMT	% of Total Allocated County Daily VMT
Olympia	24,212	18.1	295,150	24%	2,077,450	20%
Tumwater	11,321	17.5	165,400	13%	1,304,000	13%
Lacey	22,352	18.0	280,250	22%	1,902,250	19%
Other Thurston County	60,111	669.9	506,400	41%	4,885,050	48%
Total Thurston County	117,996	723.5	1,247,200	100%	10,168,750	100%

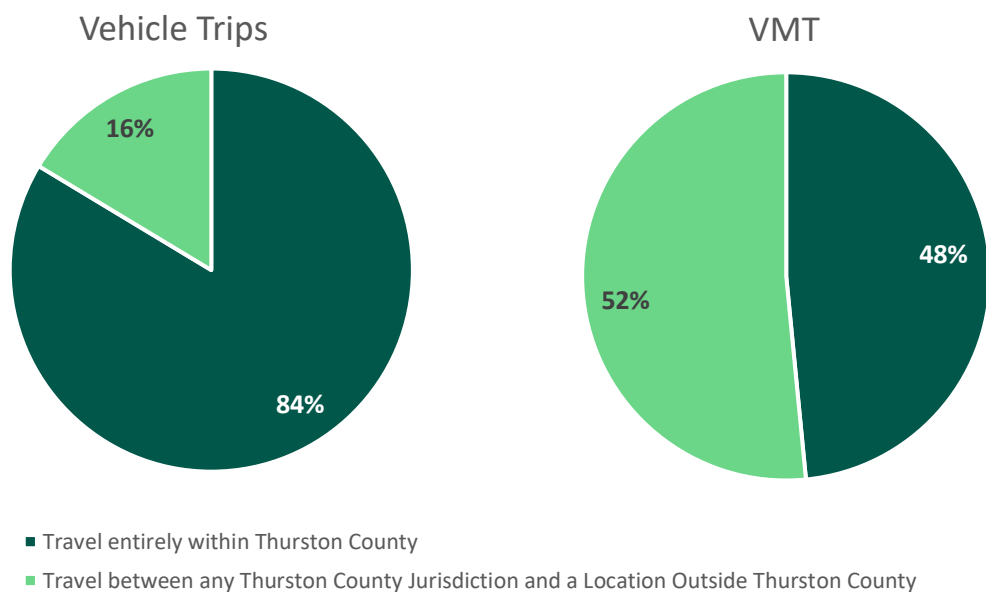
Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

*Household estimates and land area data derived from the 2022 TRPC regional travel demand model.

Other Thurston County generates the greatest number of allocated daily vehicle trips and VMT, reflecting its larger geographic area, larger total population, and generally longer trip lengths. Among the incorporated jurisdictions, Olympia and Lacey generate comparable levels of daily travel activity, while Tumwater generates fewer total trips and VMT overall.

Figure 2 shows the share of daily vehicle trips and VMT associated travel between Thurston County and destinations outside the county (inter-county travel). Approximately 16% of daily vehicle trips have one end outside Thurston County, yet these trips account for more than half of the total VMT because they are substantially longer than trips occurring entirely within the county. This general pattern, in which a relatively small share of inter-county trips accounts for a disproportionately large share of VMT, is consistent across the jurisdictions evaluated. This finding highlights the significant influence of longer-distance regional travel on overall VMT, and these trips may be more difficult to influence through typical travel demand management strategies.

Figure 2: Trips and VMT from Inter-County Travel (Total Thurston County)



Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

Trips between Thurston County and Pierce, Lewis, Mason, King, or Grays Harbor counties account for approximately 95% of all inter-county trips. Pierce County is the most common origin or destination, accounting for about half of all inter-county trips countywide. This countywide share is strongly influenced by Lacey, where Pierce County accounts for 70% of inter-county trips, compared with 35% in Olympia, 29% in Tumwater, and 53% in Other Thurston County.

VMT per Capita

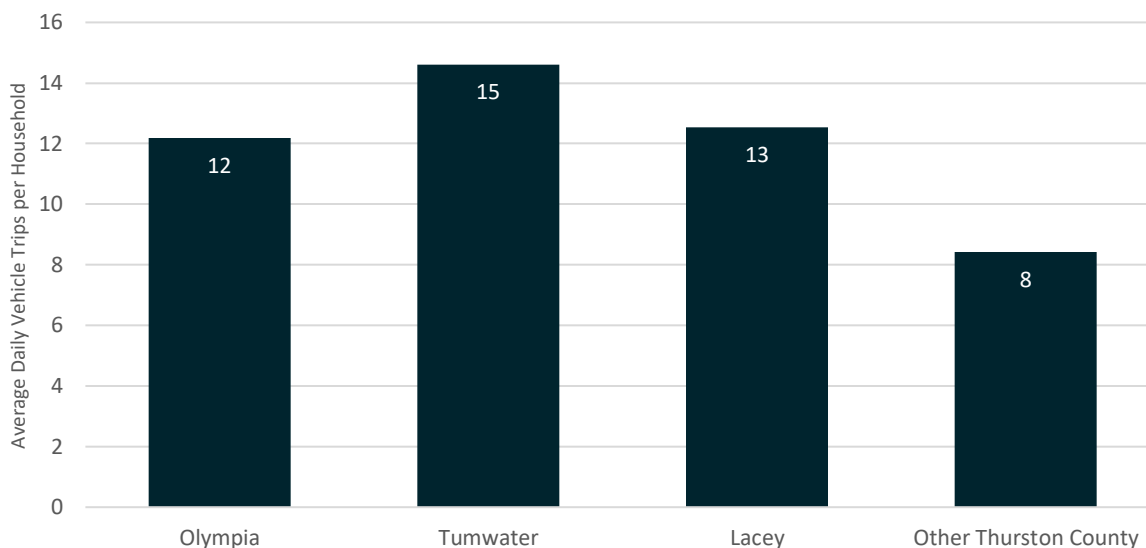
VMT per capita is influenced by two primary factors: the number of vehicle trips associated with a jurisdiction and the distance of that travel. Because allocated vehicle trips include both internal trips and trips made to or from locations outside the jurisdiction, this metric reflects the overall travel activity associated with each jurisdiction rather than only trips made by its residents. As a result, the

travel component of VMT per capita includes trips generated by residents, workers, visitors, and other non-residents, while the per capita denominator is based only on the resident population and households associated with the jurisdiction.

Figure 3 summarizes the average allocated daily vehicle trips per household and **Figure 4** the average vehicle trip length of trips for each jurisdiction.

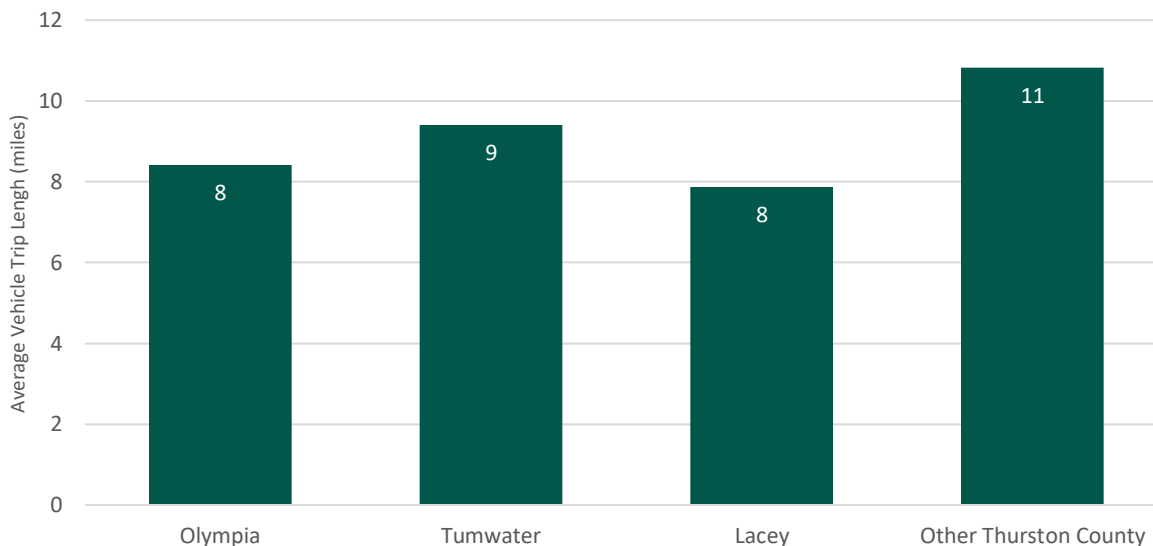
Tumwater is associated with the greatest number of allocated vehicle trips per household, while Other Thurston County is associated with the fewest trips per household but the longest average trip lengths. Olympia and Lacey exhibit similar travel patterns, with comparable allocated trip rates and average trip lengths.

Figure 3: Average Number of Daily Vehicle Trips per Household by Jurisdiction



Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

Figure 4: Average Vehicle Trip Length (miles) by Jurisdiction



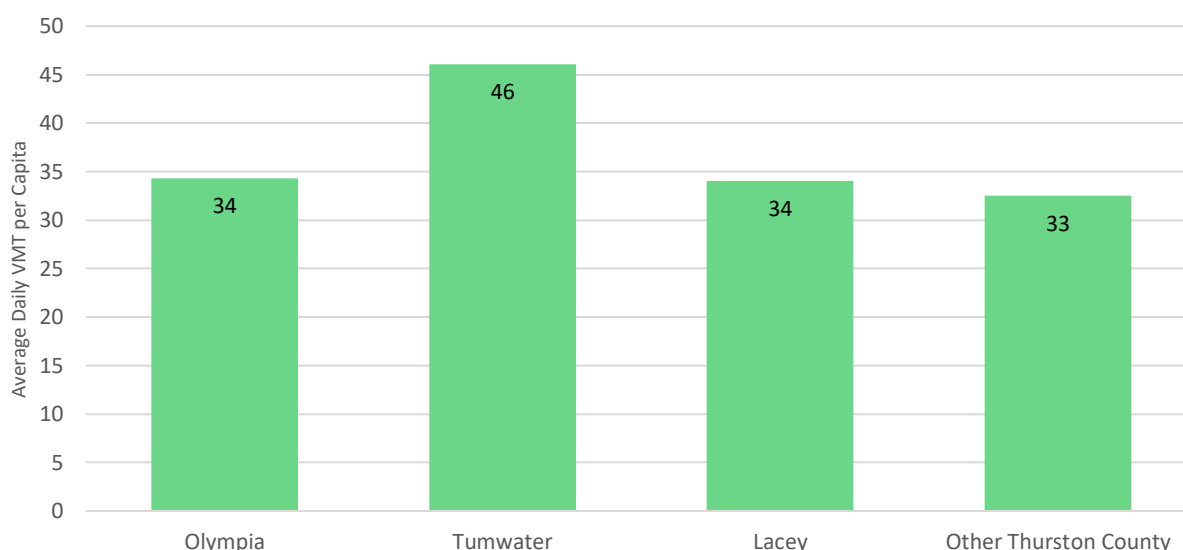
Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

When these two factors are combined, Tumwater has the highest average VMT per capita among the jurisdictions evaluated (**Figure 5**). This reflects the combination of relatively high allocated travel activity per household and slightly longer average trip lengths than Olympia and Lacey. Tumwater's travel patterns are influenced by several factors. Similar to Olympia, Tumwater contains a significant concentration of state government offices that generate substantial commute travel from across the region. However, compared with Olympia, the transit, walking, and bicycling infrastructure is less robust, resulting in a greater reliance on vehicle travel. Tumwater is also located along a key segment of I-5 and has a relatively large number of highway-oriented businesses (fast food, gas stations, etc.) and regional retailers (e.g., Costco, Walmart, Fred Meyer) relative to its population. Together, these factors contribute to higher levels of allocated travel activity and VMT.

Although Other Thurston County is associated with the longest trips, lower allocated trip rates result in a lower VMT per capita than Tumwater. This likely reflects the fact that the county's rural and smaller incorporated communities generally attract fewer trips from outside the area and contain fewer major employment, governmental, commercial, and regional destinations that generate significant travel demand. While residents often travel longer distances to reach jobs, services, and activities, the overall volume of travel associated with these areas is lower than in the county's urban centers.

Olympia and Lacey have nearly identical VMT per capita because they exhibit similar patterns in both allocated travel activity and average trip length. At first glance, Olympia's concentration of state government offices and services might suggest higher VMT per capita than Lacey. However, Olympia also has the county's most connected network of sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and transit service, as well as a more compact mix of housing, employment, and retail. These characteristics provide greater opportunities for walking, bicycling, transit use, and shorter vehicle trips, helping offset the additional travel demand generated by major employment centers and resulting in VMT per capita that is similar to Lacey.

Figure 5: Average Daily VMT per Capita by Jurisdiction



Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

How much could planned actions reduce VMT per capita?

Methodology

Because future travel behavior is influenced by many interacting factors and the regional travel demand model is not calibrated to produce VMT estimates that factor in nuanced policy considerations or programs targeted at VMT reduction, Fehr & Peers developed an **order-of-magnitude** methodology to estimate the VMT per capita reduction associated with planned actions. Rather than predicting future travel demand, the methodology estimates the approximate reduction that could reasonably be expected if planned actions are implemented. The resulting estimates provide the basis for evaluating progress toward the region's long-term VMT per capita reduction goals.

Strategy-Based VMT Reduction Estimates

Fehr & Peers reviewed published research from several widely recognized resources, including *The Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions in Western States*,⁵ *Understanding Transport Demands and Elasticities* published by the Victoria Transport Policy Institute,⁶ and *Assessing the Effectiveness of Potential Vehicle-Miles-Traveled (VMT) Mitigation Measures*.⁷ These resources were used to identify the expected effectiveness of common VMT reduction strategies and inform estimates of the maximum VMT per capita reduction that could reasonably be achieved through comprehensive implementation of each strategy category.

Table 2 summarizes the strategy categories evaluated in this analysis, including their relative effectiveness at reducing VMT, the maximum total VMT reduction values used in this assessment, and the research supporting those estimates. Reported effectiveness varies substantially across studies due to differences in geographic context, implementation scale, and analysis methods. Many published estimates reflect the effects of individual projects or programs, such as a single development project, and therefore measure impacts on a limited subset of trips rather than on community-wide travel. Other studies report reductions for specific travel markets, such as commute trips. To develop planning-level estimates suitable for Thurston County, project-level and travel-market-specific findings were translated, where appropriate, into community-wide VMT reduction potentials by accounting for the portion of total travel reasonably influenced by each strategy. Literature values that already represented community-wide VMT reductions were not further adjusted. The resulting estimates are intended to represent the potential magnitude of community-wide VMT reduction associated with each strategy under local implementation conditions rather than the direct outcomes reported in individual studies.

⁵ <https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/2ktww7up3fddk9e49m570iolusgayhzhf>

⁶ <https://www.vtpi.org/elasticities.pdf>

⁷ <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/lpf307sp#page=9>

Table 2: Maximum Total VMT Reduction Assumptions

Strategy Category	Relative Effectiveness	Maximum Total VMT Reduction	Research Basis
Land Use Density and Mixed-Use Development	High	Estimated separately for each jurisdiction based on planned growth patterns.	Published research consistently identifies land use density and mixed-use development as the strategy with the greatest long-term potential to reduce VMT. The <i>Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions in Western States</i> estimates project-level VMT reductions of up to 30% from increased residential and employment density and up to 34.9% from transit-oriented development. <i>Assessing the Effectiveness of Potential Vehicle-Miles-Traveled (VMT) Mitigation Measures</i> reached similar conclusions, finding that compact, mixed-use development patterns and concentrating growth within existing urban areas are among the most effective approaches for reducing VMT.
Road Usage Charge/Congestion Pricing/Tolling	High	-10%	<i>Understanding Transport Demands and Elasticities</i> identifies road pricing as one of the most effective transportation demand management strategies, estimating a long-run elasticity of vehicle travel with respect to total travel cost of -1.0 to -2.0, meaning that a sustained 10% increase in the total cost of driving could reduce community-wide vehicle travel by approximately 10% to 20%, depending on local context. The report also estimates an elasticity of -0.2 to -0.25 for VMT-based fees specifically, demonstrating that road pricing can meaningfully influence travel behavior. <i>Assessing the Effectiveness of Potential Vehicle-Miles-Traveled (VMT) Mitigation Measures</i> similarly found that road pricing strategies, including pay-as-you-drive insurance and congestion pricing, can substantially reduce VMT. A maximum reduction of 10% reflects the lower end of the long-term response to comprehensive road pricing documented in the literature. These pricing strategies are out of the direct authority of local jurisdictions, and rely on coordination with regional and statewide agencies.
Increased Parking Costs & Reduced Parking Availability	High	-10%	The <i>Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions in Western States</i> estimates project-level VMT reductions of up to 15.9% from reducing residential parking supply and 15.7% from unbundling residential parking costs. Furthermore, it estimates employee commute VMT reductions of up to 20% from implementing priced workplace parking, and total VMT reductions of up to 30% from implementing market-rate on-street parking near central business districts, employment centers, and retail centers. The supporting literature consistently shows that parking pricing and parking management (of both on- and off-street parking) are among the most effective strategies for reducing vehicle travel by encouraging travelers to shift to other modes, consolidate trips, or make fewer trips by car. Because these strategies influence different travel markets (including commute trips, residential travel, and trips to commercial and activity centers), they reinforce one another when implemented as part of a comprehensive parking management program, although their effects overlap and should not be summed. The literature-based maximum was refined to reflect the Thurston region, where on-street parking represents a relatively small share of available parking. A maximum community-wide VMT reduction of 10% reflects the combined potential of complementary parking pricing and parking management strategies under these regional conditions.
Adding Multimodal Infrastructure	Medium	-5%	The <i>Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions in Western States</i> estimates community-wide VMT reductions of up to 6.4% from pedestrian network improvements, 4.2% from expanding the bikeway network, and smaller, corridor-level reductions from individual bicycle facility improvements. While the Handbook also estimates larger reductions from infrastructure supporting active transportation for youth, that measure is targeted to school-related travel and is not representative of community-wide implementation. The supporting literature consistently shows that bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure increases walking and bicycling, replaces automobile trips, and reduces household VMT. Because pedestrian and bicycle improvements are most effective when implemented as connected networks rather than isolated projects, a comprehensive package of sidewalks, bikeways, crossings, and trail connections can reasonably achieve greater reductions than any individual improvement. The literature-based maximum was refined to reflect the highest reduction reasonably achievable under Thurston region conditions while excluding youth-specific strategies, resulting in a maximum community-wide VMT reduction of 5%.
Increasing Transit Service	Medium	-5%	The <i>Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions in Western States</i> estimates community-wide VMT reductions of up to 8.8% from increasing transit service frequency, 3.6% from expanding transit service coverage or hours, and 10.7% from converting existing bus routes to bus rapid transit (BRT). The supporting literature consistently shows that increasing transit frequency, expanding service coverage, extending service hours, and improving transit quality increase transit ridership and reduce vehicle travel. Because these strategies are most effective when implemented together as part of a comprehensive transit network, they reinforce one another and can achieve greater reductions than any individual service improvement. The maximum reduction was refined to 5% to reflect the relatively low transit mode share in the Thurston region and the fact that much of the county is rural, which does not support robust transit service. These factors limit the maximum community-wide VMT reduction that could reasonably be achieved through transit service improvements.

Strategy Category	Relative Effectiveness	Maximum Total VMT Reduction	Research Basis
Transportation Demand Management (TDM)	Medium	-4%	The <i>Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions in Western States</i> estimates employee commute VMT reductions of up to 4% for voluntary Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) programs, 29% for mandatory CTR programs with implementation and monitoring, and 12% for employee parking cash-out programs. <i>Assessing the Effectiveness of Potential Vehicle-Miles-Traveled (VMT) Mitigation Measures</i> similarly found that TDM strategies can reduce VMT, although effectiveness varies considerably by strategy type and implementation. The literature-based maximum of 29% reduction in employee commute trip VMT from mandatory CTR programs was adjusted to reflect that CTR TDM strategies primarily influence home-based work trips, which account for approximately 15% of all trips by purpose (NCHRP 716, 2012), resulting in an estimated maximum community-wide VMT reduction of 4%. <i>Note: Although this maximum is documented here, TDM was not included in the jurisdiction-level reduction estimates because the planned actions identified consisted primarily of existing CTR programs already implemented throughout Thurston County. Given the robust CTR programs already active in the County, the benefits are assumed to be reflected in existing VMT per capita.</i>
Community-wide Education/Outreach	Low	-2%	The <i>Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions in Western States</i> estimates community-wide VMT reductions of up to 2.3% from community-based travel planning. <i>Assessing the Effectiveness of Potential Vehicle-Miles-Traveled (VMT) Mitigation Measures</i> similarly found that community-based travel behavior programs can reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel and increase use of alternative modes, although effectiveness varies by program design. The report also found that school-based programs, including walking school buses and bike trains, can reduce school-related vehicle trips. Across both program types, the strongest evidence suggests these programs are most effective when paired with infrastructure, services, or incentives that reduce barriers to using alternative modes. A maximum reduction of 2% reflects the strongest quantified evidence available for community-wide education and outreach programs. Education and outreach strategies primarily support the effectiveness of other VMT reduction measures rather than producing substantial standalone reductions.
Supporting Transit Service and Speed & Reliability Infrastructure	Low	-1%	The <i>Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions in Western States</i> estimates relatively modest community-wide VMT reductions from individual supportive transit improvements, including 0.5% from transit-supportive roadway treatments, 0.2% from transit shelters, and 0.9% from transit fare reductions. The supporting literature consistently finds that these strategies improve transit travel times, reliability, accessibility, and the overall rider experience, leading to increased transit ridership. However, direct evidence of community-wide VMT reduction is limited, and many of these improvements are most effective when paired with expanded transit service. A maximum reduction of 1% reflects the combined potential of complementary transit-supportive investments while recognizing that, on their own, they generally have a modest influence on travel behavior and that Intercity Transit already operates a fare-free system.
Mobility Hubs	Low	-0.5%	The <i>Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions in Western States</i> estimates employee commute VMT reductions of up to 2% from providing end-of-trip bicycle facilities, with much smaller community-wide reductions associated with bike share and scooter share programs individually. The supporting literature suggests that mobility hubs can reduce vehicle dependence by improving first- and last-mile connections, encouraging use of transit and shared mobility, and supporting lower vehicle ownership. However, direct evidence of community-wide VMT reductions remains limited, and the effectiveness of mobility hubs depends heavily on surrounding land use, transit service, and traveler demand. Because bike share, scooter share, car-share, and other mobility hub elements complement end-of-trip facilities by supporting a broader range of multimodal trips, a maximum reduction of 3% for employee commute VMT reflects the combined potential of a comprehensive mobility hub strategy. This value was adjusted to reflect that the strongest quantified mobility hub strategies primarily influence home-based work trips, which account for approximately 15% of all trips by purpose (NCHRP 716, 2012), resulting in an estimated maximum community-wide VMT reduction of 0.5%.

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

For all strategy categories except Land Use Density and Mixed-Use Development, Fehr & Peers estimated the VMT per capita reduction associated with planned actions by evaluating the extent to which each jurisdiction's planned actions reflect comprehensive implementation of the strategy category. The inventory of planned actions developed through the plan and policy review and staff interviews (Tasks 3 and 4) served as the basis for this evaluation. Jurisdictions were assigned an implementation level corresponding to the share of the maximum VMT per capita reduction that could reasonably be achieved based on the breadth and depth of their planned actions for each strategy category (**Table 3**).

Table 3: Implementation Level Framework for Evaluating Planned VMT Reduction Actions

Extent of Planned Actions	Share of Maximum VMT Per Capita Reduction
None	0%
Very Limited	10%
Some	20%
Moderate	40%
Strong	60%
Extensive	80%
Comprehensive	100%

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

Table 4 presents the implementation level assigned to each jurisdiction for each strategy category, based on the scale shown in **Table 3**. It also summarizes the plans, policies, programs, and investments supporting each assignment. TDM and Land Use Density and Mixed-Use Development are not included because these categories were evaluated differently, as described below.

Table 4: Assigned Implementation Levels and Supporting Rationale by Strategy Category and Jurisdiction

	Olympia	Tumwater	Lacey	Thurston County
Road Usage Charge/Congestion Pricing/Tolling	0%	0%	0%	0%
	No major actions identified for any of the jurisdictions.			
Increased Parking Costs & Reduced Parking Availability	40%	20%	20%	20%
	Olympia has taken meaningful steps by reforming parking requirements and considering parking pricing, but implementation remains relatively limited and does not include many of the comprehensive parking pricing and management strategies associated with the largest VMT reductions in the literature. Lacey , Tumwater , and Thurston County have also adopted development code updates that reduce off-street parking minimums for residential and commercial development, particularly near transit and in areas allowing middle housing. Although these requirements have already been adopted, their effects on VMT will occur gradually as new development and redevelopment take place. Over the long term, reduced parking minimums can support increased transit use and other travel options while also reducing the need for households to own multiple vehicles.			
Adding Multimodal Infrastructure	80%	40%	40%	20%
	The implementation percentages reflect each jurisdiction's long-term multimodal vision as well as progress toward implementation based on adopted plans, policies, capital programs, and completed infrastructure improvements. Higher implementation percentages were assigned where jurisdictions have established connected, low-stress bicycle and pedestrian networks and have demonstrated substantial progress toward implementing those networks. Lower implementation percentages reflect either a less extensive long-term network or more limited implementation to date.			
	Olympia has made multimodal transportation a core part of its capital program, with bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements routinely incorporated into projects. The Transportation Master Plan establishes a connected, citywide low-stress multimodal network, and Olympia has demonstrated substantial progress toward implementing that vision. As a result, Olympia is expected to achieve most of the Thurston-region multimodal infrastructure potential. Tumwater has identified a long-term buildout of an interconnected low-stress bicycle and pedestrian network in its Comprehensive Plan and continues to integrate multimodal improvements into roadway projects. While the long-term vision is well established, implementation to date is more limited, resulting in a moderate share of the Thurston-region multimodal infrastructure potential. Lacey has adopted a Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan that envisions a connected multimodal network for users of all ages and abilities and continues to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian improvements into roadway projects. While the long-term vision is well established, implementation to date is more limited, resulting in a moderate share of the Thurston-region multimodal infrastructure potential. Thurston County has identified long-term plans for expanding regional trails and bicycle and pedestrian networks through coordinated regional planning efforts. However, implementation to date has been relatively limited, and the County's more rural development pattern places greater emphasis on regional connections, resulting in a smaller share of the Thurston-region multimodal infrastructure potential.			
Increasing Transit Service	100%	80%	100%	10%
	Intercity Transit is implementing a major fixed-route system redesign that adds approximately 40,000 annual service hours, a 14% increase over 2024 service levels. The theoretical maximum of 5% VMT reduction represents the highest reduction reasonably achievable through a comprehensive transit service strategy in the Thurston region. Because the planned service expansion represents only a portion of that comprehensive strategy, the theoretical maximum was first scaled to reflect the 14% increase in annual service hours. Jurisdiction-specific implementation percentages were then applied to reflect the relative magnitude of planned service improvements within each jurisdiction. Because the redesign is concentrated in the urbanized Lacey–Olympia–Tumwater service area, implementation levels vary by jurisdiction. Olympia and Lacey receive the greatest improvements, including the new high-frequency east-west corridor and expanded local connections. Tumwater receives meaningful new and restructured service, but less of the highest-frequency corridor investment. Thurston County receives more limited benefits because the planned service expansion remains focused within the urban PTBA, with relatively limited changes to service in unincorporated areas.			
Community-wide Education/Outreach	0%	0%	10%	10%
	Lacey supports bicycle and pedestrian education and encouragement efforts, including participation in regional active transportation outreach. However, no comprehensive community-wide travel behavior change or individualized travel planning programs were identified. Thurston County supports public education and outreach to increase awareness and use of public transportation options. While these efforts encourage alternative travel behavior, no comprehensive community-based travel planning or individualized outreach programs were identified. No major actions identified for the other jurisdictions.			
Supporting Transit Service and Speed & Reliability Infrastructure	60%	40%	40%	0%
	Olympia has the highest level of transit speed and reliability implementation, with policies supporting frequent transit service and participation in the regional Smart Corridors and Transit Signal Priority (TSP) program. Lacey and Tumwater are also participating in the regional Smart Corridors and TSP program, resulting in a moderate level of implementation. There are no major actions identified for Thurston County .			
Mobility Hubs	0%	0%	0%	0%
	No major actions identified for any of the jurisdictions.			

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

The TDM strategy category was excluded from estimated future VMT per capita reductions because the identified planned actions consisted primarily of existing CTR programs that are already implemented throughout Thurston County. The benefits of these programs are assumed to be reflected in existing VMT per capita, and attributing additional future reductions to them would result in double counting. This differs from strategy categories for which no planned actions were identified. For those strategies, the maximum VMT per capita reduction remains a potential future benefit that could be achieved if implemented, but because no planned actions currently exist, no reduction was attributed in this analysis.

The Land Use Density and Mixed-Use Development strategy category was also excluded from **Table 4** because its VMT reduction potential depends heavily on the future distribution of households and employment. Rather than assigning an implementation level, Fehr & Peers estimated the VMT per capita reduction associated with achieving each jurisdiction's planned growth.

Household and employment projections were based on the 2022 TRPC regional travel demand model. Consistent with the growth strategies reflected in the jurisdictions' comprehensive plans, the analysis assumed that planned household and employment growth would be accommodated within designated downtowns, centers, and mixed-use areas rather than through greenfield development or expansion of jurisdiction boundaries or urban growth areas. The estimated reduction for each jurisdiction accounts for the lower VMT per capita expected from new development in these areas. This analysis assumes that new growth does not change the VMT per capita generated by existing development, although existing VMT per capita was reduced separately to account for the effects of other planned actions.

Actual land use-related VMT reductions could be greater if jurisdictions also implement strategies that change existing development patterns, such as establishing neighborhood commercial centers, supporting infill on large, underused parcels, and adding housing or destinations within existing neighborhoods. These strategies could shorten trips and reduce vehicle travel for both existing and future residents. However, their effects are difficult to quantify at this stage. Some development code changes have been adopted around these strategies, but the location, scale, and timing of future development resulting from those changes remain uncertain. These actions nevertheless represent important opportunities for jurisdictions to pursue additional long-term VMT reductions.

Combining Strategy Effects

For each jurisdiction, the estimated VMT per capita reductions from each strategy were combined to estimate the overall reduction associated with planned actions. Because many strategy categories influence the same travel decisions, the reductions were applied sequentially rather than summed, with each strategy reducing the remaining VMT after the previous strategy had been applied. This cumulative approach accounts for overlap in benefits and avoids overstating the combined VMT per capita reduction.

Key Findings

Several principles should be considered when interpreting the estimated VMT per capita reductions. First, **not all strategies have equal potential to reduce VMT per capita**. Research consistently shows that land use and pricing strategies have the greatest long-term influence on travel behavior, while strategies such as transit, multimodal infrastructure, and education generally provide more modest reductions when implemented independently. Second, **these strategies are most effective when**

implemented together. Investments in transit, walking, and bicycling reinforce land use and transportation demand management strategies by providing the multimodal infrastructure necessary to support mode shift away from single occupancy vehicles. This allows the strategies' combined impact to exceed what any single strategy could reasonably achieve on its own. Finally, **reducing VMT per capita is a long-term effort.** While some actions can be implemented relatively quickly, others require gradual changes to development patterns, transportation systems, and travel behavior over many years.

Most published effectiveness values are reported as reductions in total VMT. However, because future VMT forecasts were not available for this analysis, the selected reduction percentages were applied to 2025 VMT per capita values to estimate 2045 VMT per capita under the assumed strategy package. Projected 2045 total VMT was then calculated by applying the resulting VMT per capita values to forecasted 2045 households. This approach assumes that absent implementation of the identified strategies, future per capita travel behavior would remain generally consistent with current conditions and that strategy effects can be represented as proportional reductions in VMT per capita. The resulting estimates are intended as planning-level assumptions for evaluating the relative magnitude of potential VMT reductions between 2025 and 2045 rather than precise forecasts of future travel behavior.

Table 5 summarizes the estimated VMT per capita reduction attributed to the planned actions identified for each strategy category and jurisdiction. These reductions reflect both the research-based maximum VMT per capita reduction for each strategy category (**Table 2**) and the extent of planned implementation described in **Table 4**.

Table 5: Estimated VMT Per Capita Reduction Associated with Planned Actions by Strategy Category

Strategy Category	Total Estimated VMT Per Capita Reduction			
	<i>Olympia</i>	<i>Tumwater</i>	<i>Lacey</i>	<i>Other Thurston County</i>
Land Use Density and Mixed-Use Development	-7%	-5%	-3%	-2%
Road Usage Charge/Congestion Pricing/Tolling	0%	0%	0%	0%
Increased Parking Costs & Reduced Parking Availability	-4%	-2%	-2%	-2%
Adding Multimodal Infrastructure	-4%	-2%	-2%	-1%
Increasing Transit Service	-1%	-1%	-1%	-0.1%
Community-wide Education/Outreach	0%	0%	-0.2%	-0.2%
Supporting Transit Service and Speed & Reliability Infrastructure	-1%	-0.4%	-0.4%	0%
Mobility Hubs	0%	0%	0%	0%

Strategy Category	Total Estimated VMT Per Capita Reduction			
	<i>Olympia</i>	<i>Tumwater</i>	<i>Lacey</i>	<i>Other Thurston County</i>
Total Reduction	-16%	-10%	-9%	-6%

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

The estimated reductions vary across jurisdictions based on differences in planned land use patterns and the extent of planned multimodal, transit, parking, and other VMT reduction actions. Overall, planned actions are estimated to reduce countywide VMT per capita by approximately **8%** between 2025 and 2045.

Table 6 applies these estimated reductions to the 2025 allocated VMT per capita values to illustrate the resulting 2045 VMT per capita for each jurisdiction and Thurston County as a whole.

Table 6: Estimated VMT Per Capita with Planned Actions, 2025–2045

	Olympia	Tumwater	Lacey	Other Thurston County	Total Thurston County
Allocated Total VMT (2025)	2,077,450	1,304,000	1,902,250	4,885,050	10,168,750
Allocated VMT Per Capita (2025)	34	46	34	33	34
Percent Reduction in VMT per Capita (2025 – 2045)	-16%	-10%	-9%	-6%	-8%
Estimated VMT per Capita (2045)	29	42	31	31	32
Allocated Total VMT (2045)	2,523,880	2,002,510	2,179,500	6,970,610	13,676,480

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

Would planned actions be sufficient to achieve the region's long-term VMT per capita reduction goals?

Methodology

The cumulative VMT per capita reduction estimated from planned actions across all jurisdictions was compared with TCMC’s regional VMT per capita reduction targets.⁸ Because this analysis evaluates the 2025–2045 Comprehensive Plans, the cumulative reduction was compared with an estimated 34% regional VMT per capita reduction target for 2045, based on the adopted 2040 (27%) and 2050 (41%) targets. The difference between the estimated reduction and the 2045 target represents the remaining gap to achieving the region's long-term VMT per capita reduction goals.

Key Findings

TCMC set a regional target to reduce VMT per capita by 27% in 2040 and 41% by 2050. The project team compared the cumulative countywide reduction associated with planned actions to the TCMC VMT per capita reduction target. As shown in **Table 7**, planned actions are estimated to reduce countywide VMT per capita by approximately **8%** by 2045, leaving a remaining gap of approximately **26%**. Although the planned actions would make progress toward reducing VMT per capita, they would not achieve the scale of change needed to meet the regional target.

Table 7: Comparison of Estimated VMT Per Capita Reduction from Planned Actions and the 2045 Regional VMT Per Capita Reduction Target

VMT per Capita Reduction Goal	Estimated Reduction from Planned Actions	Remaining Gap
34% by 2045*	~8%	~26%

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.
* Interpolated from the 2040 and 2050 goals, as the estimated reduction is assessed on the Comprehensive Plans 2025 – 2045.

Progress toward the regional VMT per capita reduction goal depends not only on implementing strategies that reduce VMT, but also on considering how other planned investments may influence future travel behavior. To provide additional context, Fehr & Peers reviewed planned changes in roadway capacity using the TRPC regional travel demand model by comparing total lane-miles in 2022 and 2050. As shown in **Table 8**, the planned roadway network includes changes ranging from no net increase in lane-miles in Olympia to a 6% increase in Lacey.

⁸ Tumwater’s VMT reduction targets (established in the City of Tumwater 2025 Comprehensive Plan) is the goal used as the basis for this analysis.

Table 8: Planned Change in Roadway Lane-Miles, 2022–2050

Zone	% change in lane-miles from 2022 to 2050	Actual change in lane-miles from 2022 to 2050
Olympia	0%	0
Tumwater	3%	5
Lacey	6%	13
Other Thurston County	1%	12

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

While many projects included in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) focus on operational improvements, such as roundabouts and interchange modifications, some projects increase roadway capacity by adding travel lanes.⁹ Additional roadway capacity has the potential to increase vehicle travel over time, offsetting some of the VMT reductions achieved through other strategies. As jurisdictions work toward the region's long-term VMT per capita reduction goals, roadway investments should therefore be considered alongside VMT reduction strategies to understand how they collectively influence future travel demand.

The estimated **8% reduction** represents a marginal improvement from today's travel patterns. Achieving substantially larger reductions in VMT per capita is difficult without more transformative strategies that directly influence the relative cost and convenience of driving, such as road usage charges and comprehensive parking management, or substantial changes in land use patterns that bring housing, employment, and destinations closer together. These transformative strategies also require a robust multimodal network to allow for non-drive alone travel options.

This challenge is not unique to Thurston County. For comparison, the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) Regional Transportation Plan estimates approximately a 10% reduction in VMT per capita in Pierce County by 2050.¹⁰ Although the methodologies and regional contexts differ, Pierce County has a similar mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities and a comparable scale of planned VMT reduction actions. Its relatively modest projected reduction similarly illustrates the difficulty of achieving substantial reductions in VMT per capita through currently planned actions alone. Together, these findings reinforce that meeting the region's long-term VMT per capita reduction goals will require additional and more transformative strategies.

What Would a 34% Reduction in VMT Per Capita Look Like?

A 34% reduction in VMT per capita is **comparable to the difference in travel behavior between a typical suburban area of Thurston County and downtown Tacoma today**. Daily travel associated with downtown Tacoma generates approximately 30% less VMT per capita than travel associated with Thurston County, reflecting a community where destinations are closer together, walking, bicycling, and transit are more practical travel options, and driving is less necessary for many trips. This comparison illustrates the scale of change implied by the regional VMT per capita reduction target.

⁹ <https://www.trpc.org/306/Regional-Transportation-Improvement-Prog>

¹⁰ https://www.psrc.org/sites/default/files/2026-05/rtp2026-systemperformance_0.pdf

Next Steps

This analysis demonstrates that achieving the region's long-term VMT per capita reduction targets will require additional and more transformative strategies beyond those currently planned.

The findings presented in this memorandum establish the foundation for Task 6 wherein the project team will identify additional opportunities to reduce VMT per capita, evaluate the strategies that are most effective in urban, suburban, and rural contexts, and distinguish opportunities requiring regional coordination from those that can be advanced by individual jurisdictions. The task will conclude with a practical implementation playbook to help jurisdictions prioritize actions and coordinate future VMT reduction efforts.

Fehr & Peers

TCMC Vehicle-Miles-Traveled Gap Analysis

Executive Committee (EC) Meeting

**Marissa Baxter
Abigail Powell
Chris Breiland, PE**

August 24, 2026

Agenda

- 01** Project Background
- 02** Key Findings
- 03** Preliminary Recommendations
- 04** Discussion

SECTION 01

Project Background

What is Vehicle-Miles-Traveled (VMT)?

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is the total number of miles traveled by motor vehicles over a given period of time.

Home → Grocery Store → Work → Home

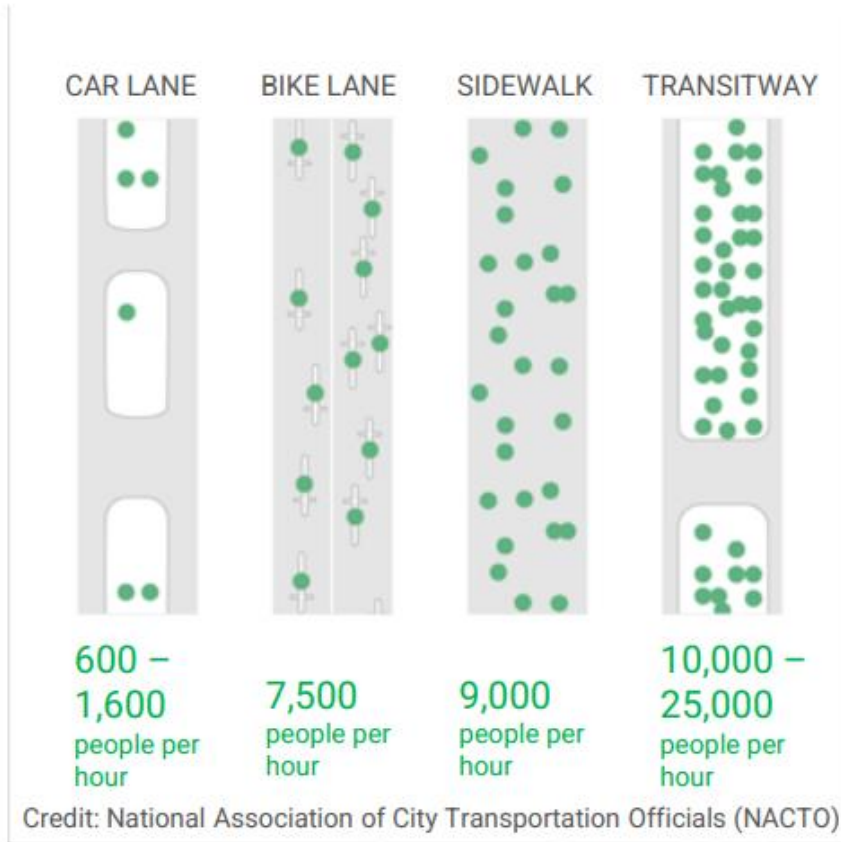
5 miles + 8 miles + 7 miles = 20 vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT)



Per Capita VMT is the average number of vehicle miles traveled per household.

Per Capita VMT = Total VMT ÷ Household

Per capita VMT – Why should we care?



- Accommodating more cars requires space
- Reducing inefficiencies due to congestion
- Addressing greenhouse gas emissions
- Improving safety
- Enhancing health and equity

Study Objectives

This study seeks to answer **four key questions**:

1. How do people travel in Thurston County today?
2. How much could existing plans and policies reduce VMT per capita?
3. Would those reductions be enough to meet long-term VMT reduction goals?
4. If not, what additional opportunities could help close the gap?

Completed Work – Policy Review

What VMT-related policies and actions are currently planned across Thurston County?

Summarized:

- Comprehensive Plan policies
- Transportation Master Plans
- Regional Transportation Plan
- Commute Trip Reduction programs
- Pedestrian & Bicycle Plans

Completed Work – Staff Interviews

How are jurisdictions moving from planning for VMT reduction to implementation?

Interviewed planning and engineering staff from:

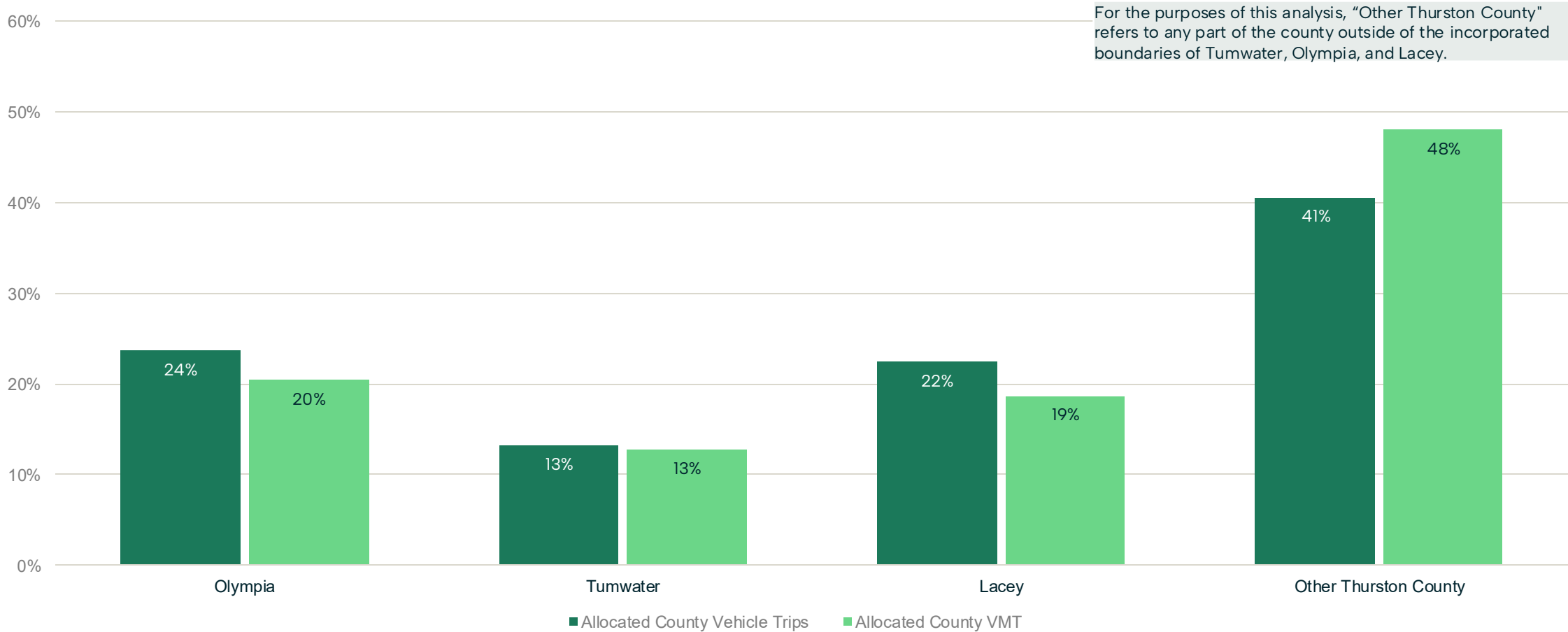
- Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC)
- Thurston County
- Olympia
- Tumwater
- Lacey
- Intercity Transit

SECTION 02

Key Findings

How do people travel in Thurston County today?

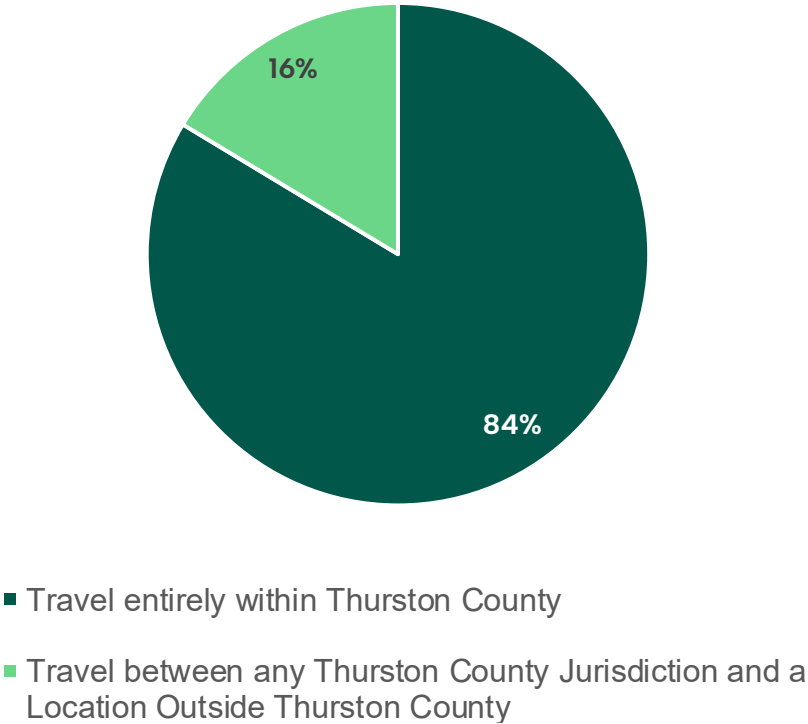
What share of allocated daily vehicle trips and VMT are associated with each jurisdiction?



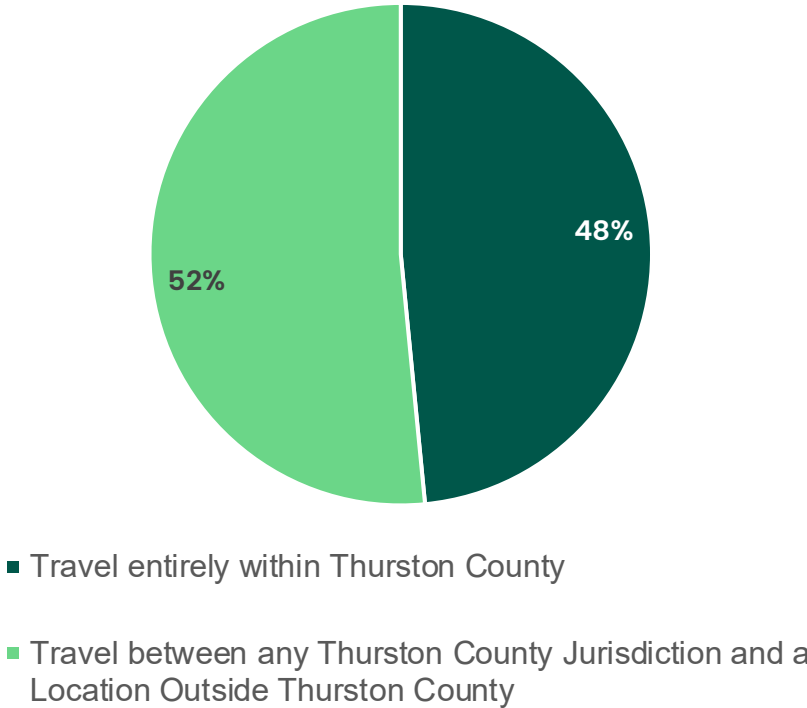
Trips and VMT from Inter-County Travel

“Inter-County” refers to travel with one trip end in Thurston County and the other end outside Thurston County.

Internal and Inter-County Vehicle Trips



Internal and Inter-County VMT



How much could existing plans and policies reduce per capita VMT?

Planned Actions

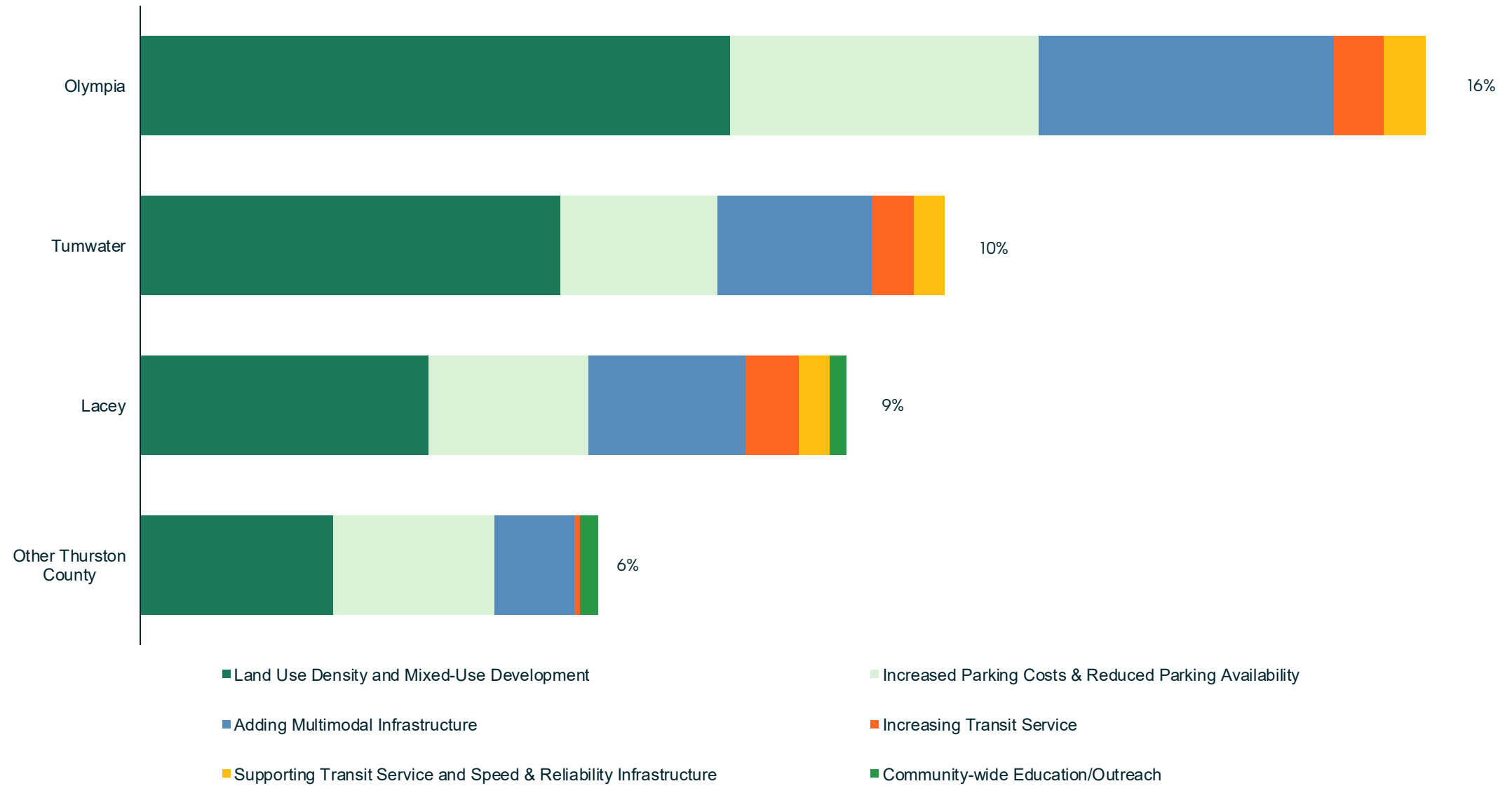
Strategy	Olympia	Tumwater	Lacey	Thurston County	TRPC
Land Use Density and Mixed-Use Development	Frequent transit route overlays, subarea planning, and infill-focused mixed-use development	Incremental infill and middle housing updates, with continued pressure for greenfield development	Incremental infill and middle housing updates, with continued pressure for greenfield development	UGA code modernization and limited rural clustering incentives	Regional planning guidance encouraging growth in urban centers and transit corridors
Increased Parking Costs & Reduced Parking Availability	Reduced parking requirement for new development, downtown parking exemptions, and discussion of parking pricing reforms				
Transportation Demand Management (TDM)	CTR requirements and limited commuter incentive programs focused primarily on downtown and qualifying employers	State-required CTR compliance with limited broader TDM implementation	State-required CTR compliance with limited broader TDM implementation	State-required CTR compliance with limited broader TDM implementation	CTR programs and telework initiatives to support partners
Adding Multimodal Infrastructure	Near-term: Extensive integration of bike, pedestrian, and transit improvements into capital projects Long-term: TMP prioritizes a citywide low-stress multimodal network guided by active transportation system targets	Near-term: Incremental active transportation improvements integrated into roadway maintenance and expansion projects Long-term: Comprehensive Plan 20-year active transportation project list outlines buildout of interconnected low-stress bicycle and pedestrian network	Near-term: Incremental active transportation improvements integrated into roadway maintenance and expansion projects Long-term: Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan identifies a connected multimodal network intended to improve access for all ages and abilities	Near-term: Limited active transportation and trail implementation due to funding constraints Long-term: Planned expansion of connected regional trails and bicycle/pedestrian networks through coordinated regional planning efforts	Regional trail planning, bicycle connectivity planning, and upcoming regional MMLOS development
Adding Vehicle infrastructure	Limited roadway or intersection widening in the TMP; MMLOS and mobility-unit concurrency framework to track implementation of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit investments	Vehicle LOS/concurrency framework with identified strategy corridors exempt from vehicle LOS standards; some current roadway expansion projects	Vehicle LOS/concurrency framework with identified strategy corridors exempt from vehicle LOS standards; some current roadway expansion projects	Vehicle LOS/concurrency framework with identified strategy corridors exempt from vehicle LOS standards; some current roadway expansion projects	RTP includes locally submitted roadway capacity projects alongside multimodal projects
Increasing Transit Service	Implementing a major system redesign in 2026 that expands service coverage, increases service frequency, and extends service hours across the Lacey–Olympia–Tumwater urban area, including enhanced service on key east–west and north–south corridors. Intercity Transit is also advancing corridor–focused operational improvements through the Smart Corridors program, including transit signal priority (TSP), coordinated signal timing, and pilot deployment of AI- and cloud-based signal optimization technologies to improve transit travel time reliability. Longer-term plans include continued buildout of higher-frequency “BRT-lite” corridors with local and limited-stop express service.				
Supporting Transit Service and Speed & Reliability Infrastructure	Frequent transit route policies tied to land use and development standards				Regional coordination supporting transit-oriented growth patterns
Mobility Hubs					
Community-wide Education/Outreach			Policy support for bicycle and pedestrian education and encouragement efforts, including regional active transportation outreach	Policy support for public education and outreach focused on increasing awareness and use of public transportation options	

Strategy Effectiveness

Strategy	VMT Reduction Potential
Land Use Density and Mixed-Use Development	High
Road Usage Charge/Congestion Pricing/Tolling	High
Increased Parking Costs & Reduced Parking Availability	High
Transportation Demand Management (TDM)	Medium
Adding Multimodal Infrastructure	Medium
Increasing Transit Service	Medium
Supporting Transit Service and Speed & Reliability Infrastructure	Low
Mobility Hubs	Low
Community-wide Education/Outreach	Low
Adding Vehicle Capacity (e.g., new lanes and regional roads)	Counterproductive

Draft VMT per Capita Reduction (2025 – 2045)

Olympia	Tumwater	Lacey	Other Thurston County	Total Thurston County
16%	10%	9%	6%	8%



Would those reductions be enough to meet long-term VMT reduction goals?

Summary of Draft Findings

VMT per Capita Reduction Goal	Estimated Reduction from Planned Actions	Remaining Gap
34% by 2045*	~8%	~26%

Meeting long-term VMT reduction targets will require additional and more transformative strategies beyond those currently planned.

*Interpolated from the 2040 and 2050 goals, as the estimated reduction is assessed on the Comprehensive Plans 2025 – 2045.

SECTION 03

Preliminary Recommendations

What additional opportunities could help close the gap?

Guiding Principles for VMT Reduction



Not all strategies have equal impact

Some strategies have substantially greater VMT reduction potential than others.



Strategies work best together

Multimodal investments, land use, pricing, and TDM reinforce one another.



Reducing VMT is a long-term effort

Near-term actions build the foundation for larger long-term reductions.

Preliminary Strategies

Strategy Area	Actions
Land Use	• Focus growth as infill within existing urban areas • Discourage urban growth boundary expansion and greenfield development • Encourage higher-density, mixed-use development in designated centers and corridors with robust transit and active mode infrastructure
Multimodal Transportation	• Complete planned walking and bicycling networks • Continue to advocate for and fund transit frequency, reliability, and access • Strengthen first-/last-mile connections
Transportation Demand & Pricing	• Expand parking management strategies • Build upon CTR programs • Advocate for state and regional travel pricing strategies (road usage charging, congestion pricing, tolling)
Policy & Implementation	• Align concurrency and LOS policies with VMT reduction goals • Continue integrating VMT into planning and funding decisions • Identify funding and implementation mechanisms for high-impact strategies

Next Steps

- Refine and prioritize the preliminary recommendations.
 - Identify the strategies that are most effective in urban, suburban, and rural contexts.
 - Identify jurisdiction-specific gaps and opportunities.
 - Distinguish strategies that require regional coordination from those that can be advanced by individual jurisdictions.
- Develop a practical implementation playbook to help jurisdictions prioritize actions and coordinate efforts.

SECTION 04

Discussion

Discussion

When you think about opportunities to reduce driving, what changes would have the greatest impact in the region?

What actions would you be interested in pursuing regionally rather than individually?

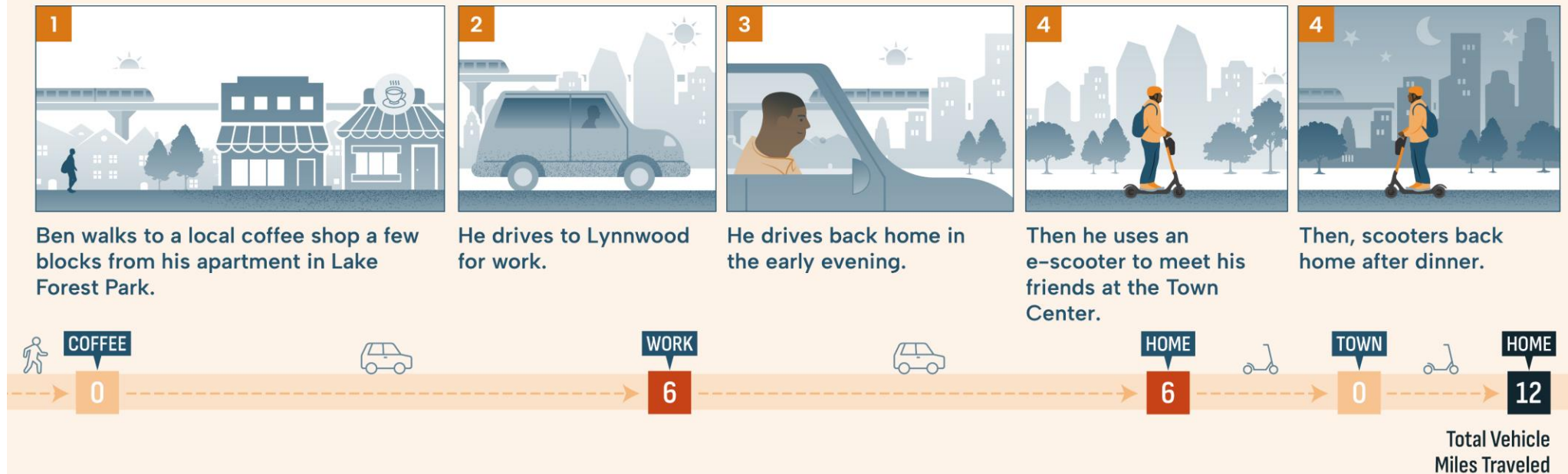
What information would help your Council/Commission take action?

Thank you!

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in a Typical Day in 2025



Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in a Typical Day in 2050



MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Executive Committee

FROM: Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Staff Team:
Rebecca Harvey, Thurston County

DATE: August 24, 2026

SUBJECT: 2027-2028 TCMC Workplan and Budget

Requested Action

Review and approve 2027-2028 TCMC Workplan and Budget, for consideration by the jurisdictions.

Background and Analysis

TCMC ILA Cost-Share Requirements

In 2025, Thurston County and the cities of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater executed a new [Interlocal Agreement](#) (ILA) for Regional Coordination of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative. The ILA established the Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative (TCMC) as a consortium of local government partners working together to significantly reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions; and provides a framework for regionally coordinated implementation of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan (TCMP).

The ILA states that each jurisdiction partner shall contribute an equal share of funds sufficient for regional coordination and administration of the TCMC, which includes tasks such as Regional Initiatives, TCMP Updates, Greenhouse Gas Inventories, and Administrative Support. The Staff Team has the primary responsibility for proposing a biennial budget to implement all activities outlined in the [TCMC Regional Implementation Guidance](#) and other regional initiatives recommended by the TCMC Executive Committee.

Budget Approval Process

In even-numbered years, the Staff Team will provide a proposed biennial budget for review by the jurisdiction partners, for the subsequent two calendar years. As stated in the Regional Implementation Guidance, the Executive Committee approves the proposed TCMC work plan and budget before it is brought to the jurisdictions for consideration. The jurisdictions' approval and adoption of the respective organizational annual budgets will serve as the commitment to fund each partner's share of the agreement for the subsequent two years.

2027-2028 TCMC Budget Proposal

The proposed 2027-2028 budget includes estimated costs for all planned TCMC activities over the two-year period. Please see the attached Budget Table for a full description and allotted costs for each activity listed below.

- Administrative Support
- Energize Thurston
- Home Energy Score (HES) Program Development
- HES Program Implementation
- Potential Plan Update or Regional Initiative – To be determined
- Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory
- TCMP Progress Report
- Regional Climate Program Specialist

The estimated total biennium cost for all 2027-2028 TCMC activities is \$685,333 (\$309,333 in 2027 and \$376,000 in 2028). The total two-year cost to each jurisdiction is \$171,333 (\$77,333 in 2027 and \$94,000 in 2028).

Note: The proposed TCMC budget only includes costs that will be shared across all TCMC partners. It is anticipated that jurisdiction partners will provide additional funding for jurisdiction-specific activities necessary to implement the TCMC regional initiatives and other activities.

Decision Options

1. Recommend approval of the 2027-2028 TCMC Workplan and Budget in order for it to move forward to jurisdiction parties for consideration.
2. Recommend approval of the 2027-2028 TCMC Workplan and Budget, with modifications, in order for it to move forward to jurisdiction parties for consideration.
3. Do not recommend approval of the 2027-2028 TCMC Workplan and Budget.

Attachments

- TCMC 2027-2028 Proposed Budget Table

TCMC 2027-2028 Proposed Budget (updated 8/12/2026)				
Task Title	Description	2027	2028	TOTAL
Administrative Support	Administer the TCMC in close coordination with the Staff Team. Facilitate the Community Advisory Workgroup Meetings, Executive Committee Meetings and Annual Retreat. Includes website hosting and maintenance.	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$160,000
Energize Thurston	Program marketing budget. Jurisdictions to fund program incentives and subsidies separately through grants or other funding.	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$40,000
HES Program Development	Contract for Regional HES Program Support, Phase I – Program Development and Launch. Tasks include PM and implementation plan development, custom HES report and IT system launch, HES assessor onboarding, and real estate agent training.	\$34,000		\$34,000
HES Program Implementation	Contract for Regional HES Program Support, Phase II – Program Implementation. Tasks include PM and reporting, IT system maintenance, HES quality assurance, assessor management, real estate agent training, and compliance monitoring. (Note: 2027 implementation costs are for 8 months, and 2028 costs are for a full year.)	\$38,333	\$55,000	\$93,333
Potential Plan Update or Regional Initiative - TBD	Full Plan update may happen beginning in 2028, up to Executive Committee discretion. Potential for TCMC to determine a new Regional Initiative instead of doing a Plan update.		\$100,000	\$100,000
Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory	Full Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory in 2027 (2025 data) and “Dash Inventory” in 2028 (2026 data). Cost includes annual ICLEI membership of \$4,000, which provides access to the GHGI data repository and climate planning platform, ClearPath 2.0.	\$15,000	\$9,000	\$24,000
TCMP Progress Report	TCMC Progress Report to communicate highlights of climate mitigation activities and outcomes. Scheduled approximately every three years to align with the full GHGI.	\$15,000		\$15,000
Regional Climate Program Specialist	Staffing costs for shared project-funded position to support Energize Thurston and other regional initiatives.	\$107,000	\$112,000	\$219,000
Subtotal		\$309,333	\$376,000	\$685,333
Per Partner		\$77,333	\$94,000	\$171,333