



# THURSTON COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2023**

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# ABOUT PUBLIC WORKS

## MISSION

To provide excellent public services in all areas of our business.

## VISION

The premier public works organization, accountable and transparent in all services we provide to our community.

## VALUES



### ACCOUNTABILITY

We take responsibility for our actions and the resulting outcomes.



### CUSTOMER SERVICE

We provide our customers with the highest level of service and quality.



### INNOVATION

We strive to continuously improve process, performance, and results.



### SAFETY

We demonstrate an uncompromising commitment to safety.



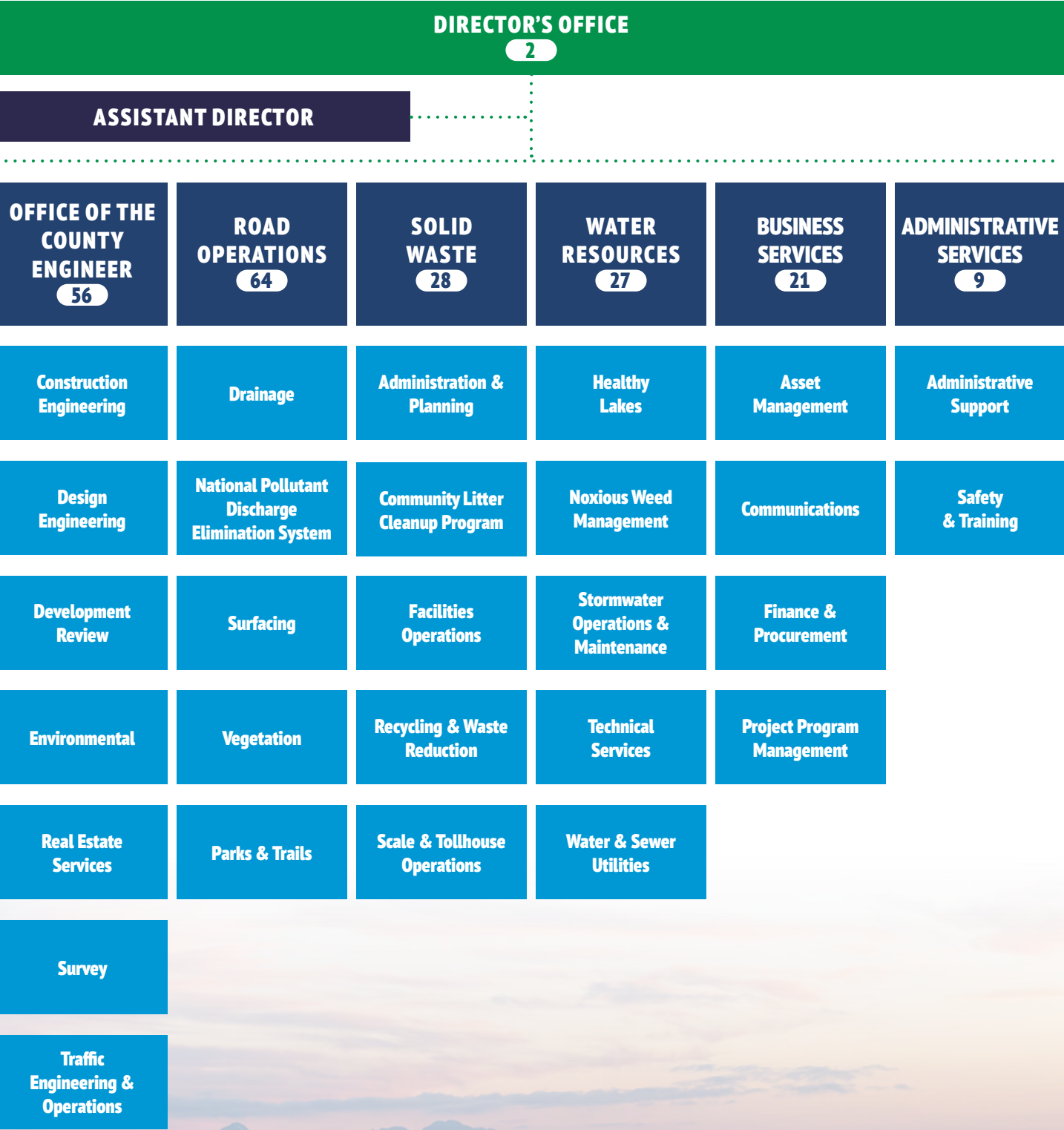
### TEAMWORK

We work together toward achieving a common recognized end.



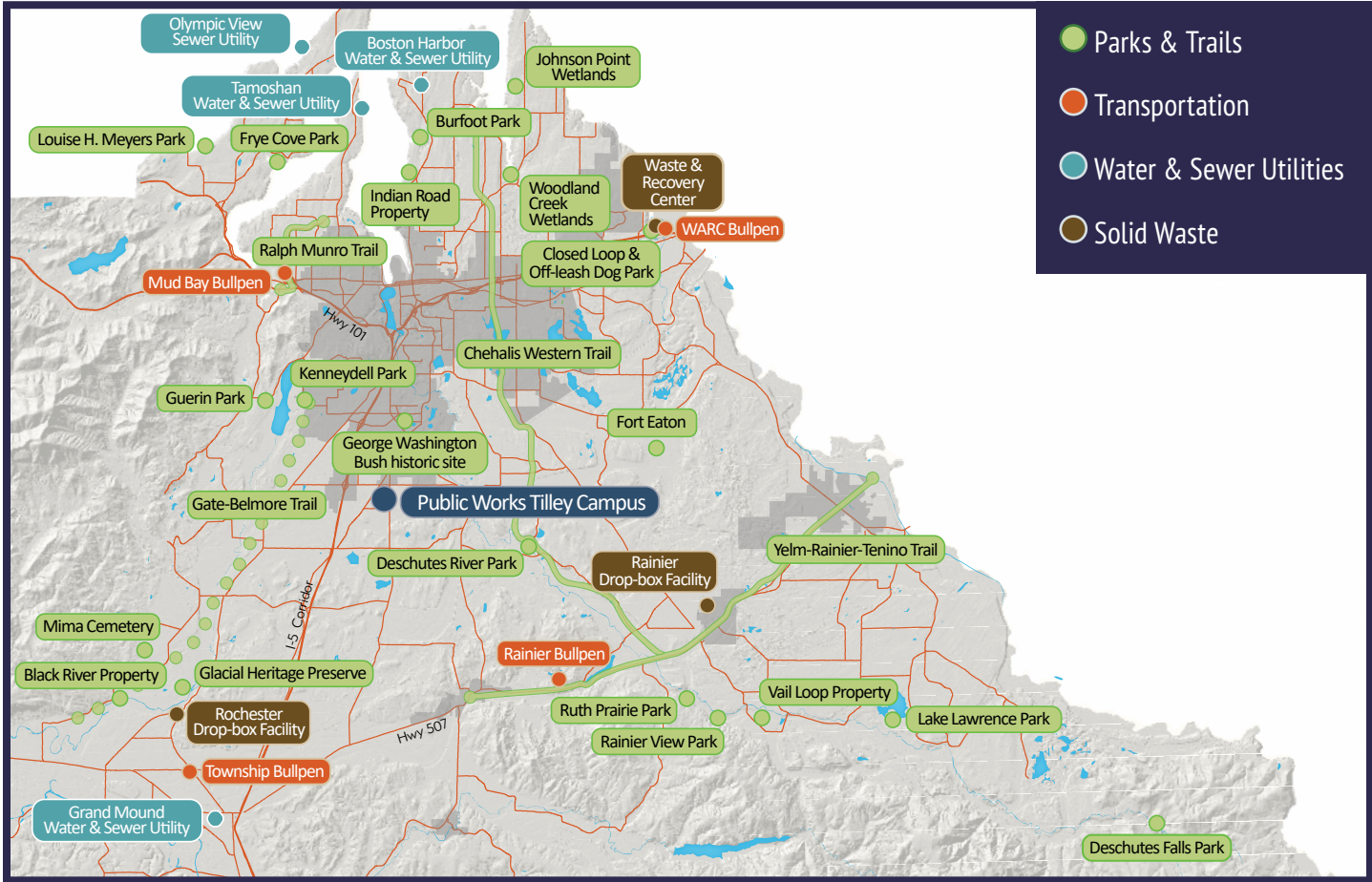
# ORG CHART

Public Works is one of the largest departments in Thurston County. The department budgeted for **207 full-time positions** in 2023. In addition to its full-time employees, the department also employed **21 seasonal workers**. Below is the breakdown of the department's six divisions.



# THURSTON COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining a wide range of infrastructure programs and projects connecting communities throughout Thurston County.



# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This year, as we present the Thurston County Public Works' 2023 Annual Report, we celebrate more than just the completion of projects; we celebrate our commitment to the community. Embracing the American Public Works Association's (APWA) theme, "Connecting the World through Public Works," our teams built, operated, and maintained vital infrastructure like water, sewer, and stormwater systems, roads, bridges, and public spaces to deliver essential services and uplift the lives of our residents.

**Key achievements in 2023 include:**

- **APWA Reaccreditation:** We successfully achieved reaccreditation with APWA, reaffirming our commitment to continual process improvement and excellence in public works.
- **Legislative Appropriation for Country Club Road Culvert Replacement Project:** We secured \$3 million of federal funding for this critical fish passage enhancement project, a significant milestone that will enhance our ability to deliver a project to best meet the needs of the community and the environment.
- **New Solid Waste Contract Implementation:** The successful implementation of the new operations, transport, and disposal services contract has streamlined our operations and service delivery, demonstrating our commitment to efficiency, sustainability, and financial stewardship.
- **Water and Sewer Utility Consolidation:** By consolidating our water and sewer systems, we streamlined operations for the benefit of our utility customers, ensuring a more predictable rate structure and improving system resiliency to support community needs.
- **Ridgeview Neighborhood Traffic Calming Improvements:** This project stands as a prime example of our collaboration with communities to address safety and accessibility issues in our neighborhoods.

**I am incredibly proud of the dedication and caliber demonstrated by our Public Works team this year, evidenced by several notable achievements:**

- **Elena Fernandez's Acceptance into APWA's Emerging Leaders Academy:** Elena, our Public Works Environmental Coordinator, has been recognized for her leadership potential and commitment to professional development. The year-long program is designed to build a strong public works network, educate on leadership and management, and encourage thinking beyond traditional boundaries.
- **ROADeo Competition Success:** Erik Krogness excelled at the APWA WA Fall Conference Equipment ROADeo, winning in the Mini Excavator and Skid Steer events, and earning the right to represent us at national competitions in 2024. His success was bolstered by the strong performances of teammates Chris Lyons, Logan Steffen, and David Orning, who collectively contributed to a remarkable showing for Thurston County Public Works.
- **APWA ROADeo Committee Board:** Nick Bemis, one of our Road Operations supervisors, was selected to serve on the WA APWA ROADeo Committee Board, a role that highlights his leadership skills and professional contributions to public works.

As we look back at these accomplishments, they stand as proof of the positive impact we can create together. Our team remains committed to not only meeting but also anticipating the evolving needs of our residents. We will continue to seek smarter, more effective ways to serve, ensuring that our efforts resonate positively within the community we proudly serve.



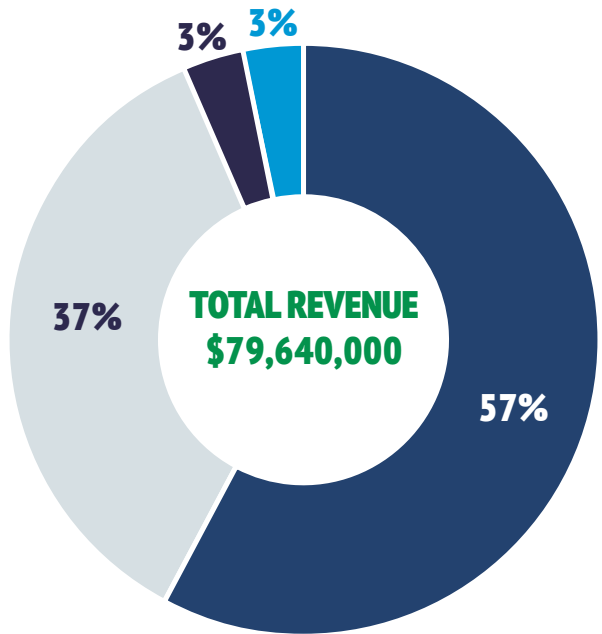
Sincerely,

*Jennifer D. Walker*

**Jennifer D. Walker, PMP**  
Director, Thurston County Public Works

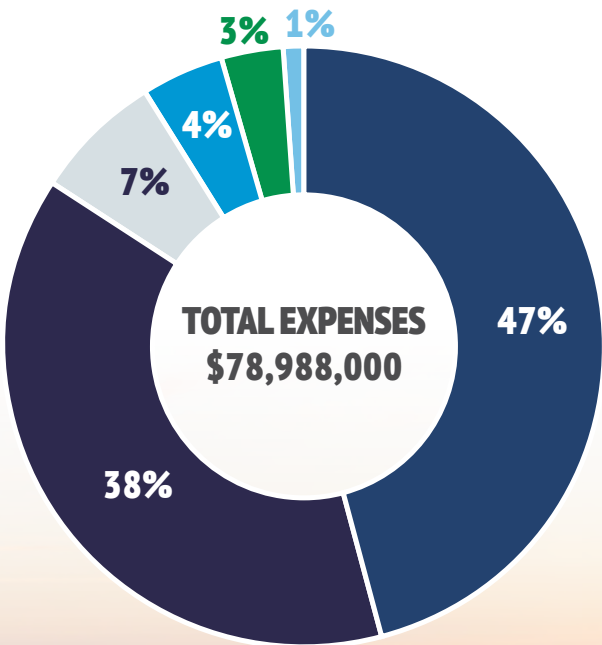
# 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

## TOTAL REVENUE



- 57% **FEES & ASSESSMENTS: \$45,015,000**
- 37% **TAXES & ENTITLEMENTS: \$29,951,000**
- 3% **OTHER: \$2,079,000**
- 3% **GRANTS: \$2,595,000**

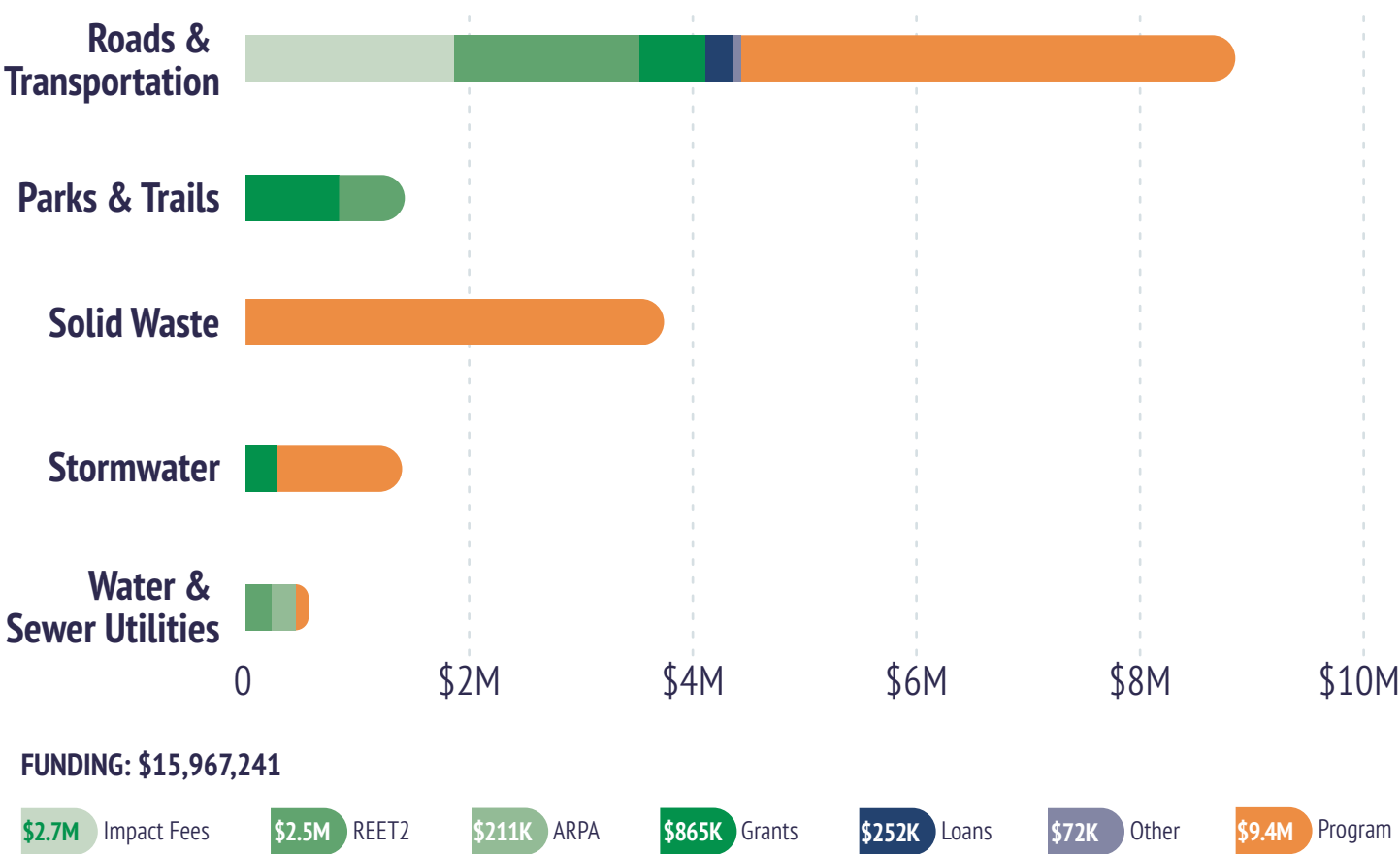
## TOTAL EXPENSES



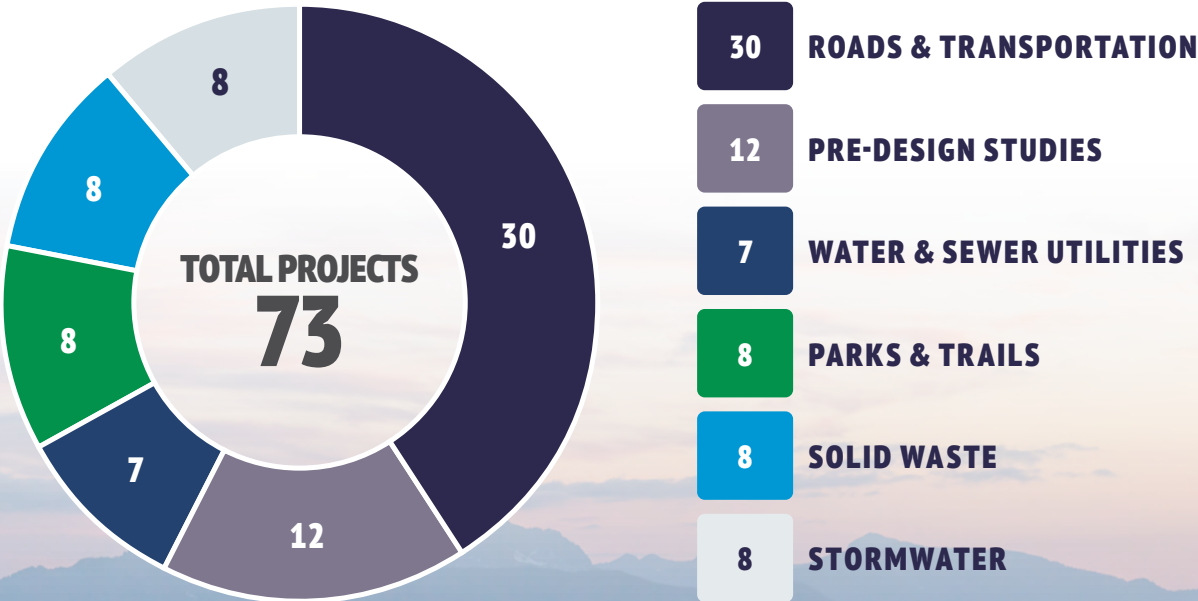
- 47% **ROADS & TRANSPORTATION: \$36,237,000**
- 38% **SOLID WASTE: \$30,381,000**
- 7% **STORMWATER: \$5,514,000**
- 4% **WATER & SEWER UTILITIES: \$3,531,000**
- 3% **PARKS & TRAILS: \$2,462,000**
- 1% **NOXIOUS WEED AND HEALTHY LAKES: \$863,000**



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROJECTS



TOTAL ACTIVE PROJECTS

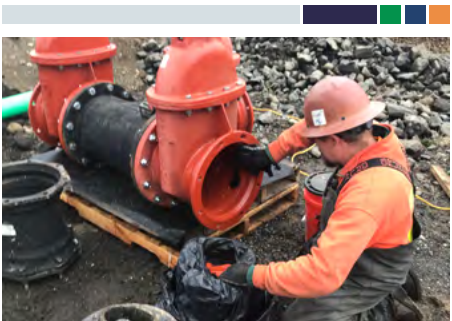


HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS





# YEAR IN REVIEW



## US 12 AND SARGENT ROAD SW

In southwest Thurston County, the US 12 and Sargent Road intersection was transformed with a new roundabout to improve traffic management and safety. This upgrade, crucial for the continued growth of communities like Grand Mound and Rochester, promotes smoother traffic flow and strengthens local connectivity.

The project incorporated critical upgrades such as enhanced street lighting, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, and efficient stormwater management systems. These enhancements are tailored to facilitate seamless traffic movement and provide safe access for pedestrians and vehicles alike.

### Key achievements of the project include:

- **Advanced Roundabout Design:** This new layout significantly reduces congestion and improves navigation across US 12, easing movement and reducing wait times.
- **Infrastructure Resilience:** Upgrades to the roadway's structure help mitigate flood risks and lower the frequency of required maintenance, especially during heavy rains.

Completed in June 2023, this collaborative effort between Thurston County, the Chehalis Tribe, Washington State Department of Transportation, and local developers represents a milestone in infrastructure development for Thurston County, fostering a safer and more efficient environment for its residents.

### Funding Chart



\$6M



Roundabout at US 12 and Sargent Road intersection

## WATER AND SEWER UTILITY CONSOLIDATION

In 2023, Thurston County completed a significant consolidation of its water and sewer utility services, streamlining the previously separate seven utilities—three water and four sewer systems—serving the communities of Grand Mound, Boston Harbor, Tamoshan, and Olympic View communities. This strategic transformation addressed the complexities of managing multiple budgets, operating accounts, capital facility plans, and reserve accounts, which led to widely varying water and sewer rates across the communities due to each utility's distinct size and characteristics.

### The accomplished utility consolidation involved:

- **Merging Funds:** Ten separate water and sewer utility funds have been effectively merged into four consolidated funds: one operating and one capital reserve fund for the water utility, and one operating and one capital reserve fund for the sewer utility.
- **Rate Standardization:** Water and sewer rates will be adjusted over the next few years to establish a uniform base and usage rate for all customers across the served communities, ensuring rate stabilization and sustainability in utility management.
- **Simplifying County Utility Code:** The county's utility code has been revised and simplified, improving clarity for residents and streamlining processes for staff, while maintaining compliance with current regulations and standards.

### The completion of this consolidation results in significant benefits:

- **Stabilized Rates:** Blending rates through consolidation will reduce rate volatility, offering customers more predictable and consistent billing.
- **Financial Stability:** The unified structure enhances the financial robustness of the utility services, minimizing the risk of failures and ensuring reliable service delivery.
- **Enhanced Infrastructure Planning:** Consolidation enables more effective and comprehensive long-term planning and infrastructure investment, supporting the entire county's growth and development.
- **Operational Efficiency:** The consolidation has streamlined accounting, administration, and utility billing processes, leading to cost savings and improved service quality.

The successful completion of the consolidation is a key achievement in Thurston County's commitment to providing resilient, efficient, and equitable water and sewer utility services. This initiative reflects the county's dedication to fostering a community-focused approach, ensuring every resident benefits from reliable and sustainable water and sewer services in the areas we serve.





**APWA REACCREDITATION**

As an American Public Works Association (APWA) accredited agency, Thurston County Public Works stands among only eleven agencies in Washington State recognized for achieving and maintaining the highest standards in public works. Our department proudly received its fourth consecutive APWA accreditation in September 2023, underscoring a commitment that goes beyond mere compliance to embody a relentless pursuit of quality service for the people of Thurston County.

APWA Accreditation is recognized as a mark of efficiency in Public Works, earned through an evaluation process that verifies compliance with the industry's best practices. This accreditation promotes excellence in managing public works agencies, programs, and employees, fostering continuous improvement and objective evaluation of agency services.

After the initial accreditation period, agencies undergo a reaccreditation process every four years, ensuring adherence to the latest best practices and continuous enhancement of services. The reaccreditation process also supports a culture of continuous improvement and operational excellence, enhancing service delivery to the community. It strengthens team building and staff development, preserves institutional knowledge, streamlines documentation, eliminates redundancy, and improves communication within the agency and with the public.

Thurston County Public Works' commitment to excellence is evident in its history and achievements. First awarded APWA Accreditation in 2011, the department has maintained its accredited status and set a benchmark for public works management. We are one of 196 accredited organizations nationwide, and one of only three counties in Washington to achieve this honor.

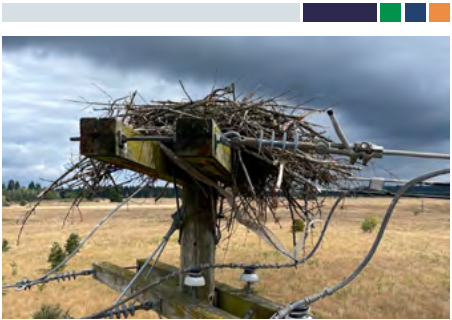


**“Earning our fourth APWA accreditation is a testament to our team’s unwavering commitment and professionalism. This accolade serves as both a validation of our past efforts and a commitment to future excellence in serving the Thurston County community. We are honored by this recognition and remain steadfast in our mission to deliver excellent public services in all areas of our business.”**

Jennifer D. Walker  
Thurston County Public Works Director

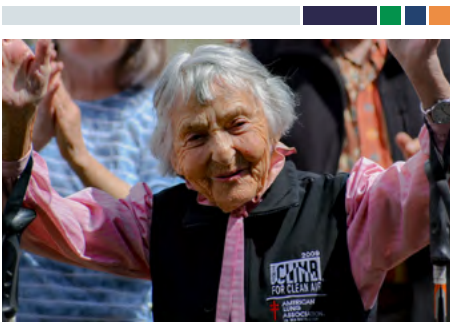


# COMMUNITY IMPACT



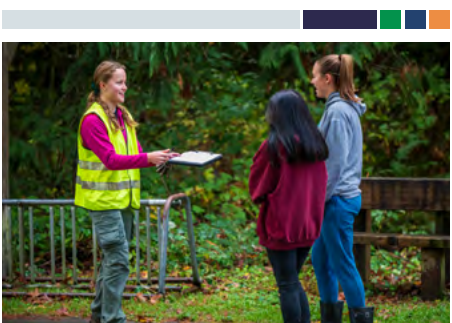
**OSPREY NEST RELOCATION AT GLACIAL HERITAGE PRESERVE**

This project is a shining example of successful collaboration between Thurston County Public Works Parks & Trails and Puget Sound Energy (PSE). Together, we relocated an osprey nest from an active power pole at Glacial Heritage Preserve to a safer location. This joint effort with PSE's Avian Protection Program ensured the safety of the ospreys and addressed potential risks to the electrical infrastructure. Our partnership highlights the power of combined expertise and resources in achieving shared wildlife conservation and community safety goals.



**BENCH DEDICATION AT CHAMBERS LAKE OVERLOOK**

The installation of a tribute bench for Holocaust survivor Bronka Sundstrom at the Chehalis Western Trail's Chambers Lake Overlook was made possible through the cooperative efforts of Thurston County Parks & Trails and community members. This bench serves as a serene spot for reflection, celebrating Sundstrom's extraordinary life and love for nature. It embodies our shared commitment with the community to honor resilience and passion for the outdoors while enhancing the experience of visitors to the trail.



**IVY REMOVAL AT BURFOOT PARK**

The initiative to remove invasive English ivy at Burfoot Park showcases the power of community engagement and collaborative action. Spearheaded by Eagle Scout Lily Morgan, with support from the IvyBeGone team led by Kim Kelley, this project was a concerted effort involving Thurston County Public Works, community service organizations, and local volunteers. Our role in supporting and facilitating this environmental conservation effort highlights the importance of nurturing community-led initiatives for sustainable ecological practices.



**RIDGEVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING IMPROVEMENTS**

An example of community collaboration and effective planning, the Ridgeview Neighborhood Traffic Calming Improvements Project saw Thurston County Public Works working closely with local residents to enhance road safety. The design and implementation of the project were influenced by resident feedback, ensuring that the traffic calming measures directly addressed the specific concerns and needs of the community. This approach improved road safety and fostered a sense of community ownership and involvement in the project. The Ridgeview Neighborhood Homeowners Association's contribution of \$20,000 toward the project's total cost further exemplifies the shared commitment to creating safer, more livable neighborhoods. This partnership between Thurston County Public Works and the Ridgeview HOA is a testament to the power of collaboration in achieving meaningful improvements in our neighborhoods.



# OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ENGINEER

Under the direction of the legislative authority, the Office of the County Engineer (OCE) supervises the establishment, laying out, construction, alteration, improvement, repair, and maintenance of all county roads. Work groups include Design Engineering, Construction Engineering, Environmental, Traffic Engineering & Operations, Survey, Development Review, and Real Estate Services.

Pavement Preservation Program: Overlay - Completed intersection at Martin Way E and Hensley Street NE/Ranger Drive SE

## WORK GROUPS

### DESIGN ENGINEERING

Designs critical infrastructure projects for transportation, parks and trails, and stormwater systems. A staff of engineers uses a mix of in-house expertise and consultants to plan and deliver capital programs and projects.

### CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING

Administers and inspects capital construction projects and the pavement preservation program. The team ensures projects are constructed using the appropriate design standards and safety procedures while maintaining compliance with federal, state, and local labor and engineering requirements.

### ENVIRONMENTAL

Provides management and oversight of environmental issues related to Public Works construction and maintenance activities. The team is the lead technical contact for addressing environmental and biological issues related to all necessary permits. Tasked with ensuring compliance and promoting sustainable practices, the team advises department management by presenting environmentally safe alternatives and recommending informed courses of action for each project.

### TRAFFIC ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS

Designs, operates, and maintains traffic control devices on public roads in the unincorporated areas of Thurston County. Responsibilities include traffic signs, street lighting, road striping, speed studies, traffic engineering, Americans with Disabilities Act planning, traffic planning, outreach to neighborhood associations, and driver safety and awareness program coordination. Engineers on this team are also responsible for implementing the grant-funded Safe Routes to Schools projects.

### SURVEY

Creates topographical maps of roads, trails, bridges, culverts, parking areas, and rivers to support project designs and public works teams, along with maintaining survey monument markers and references. The team also leads the department's drone program.

### DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Answers permitting questions from the public and reviews and inspects private developments to be in compliance with Public Works codes and standards to protect the overall public interest. Development Review is the permitting arm of Public Works and is located in the Building Development Center at 3000 Pacific Ave.

### REAL ESTATE SERVICES

Ensures compliance with federal law by acquiring necessary land and property rights for the county before any construction or rehabilitation project is undertaken. The team processes applications for utility companies to use county right-of-way, along with maintaining files, deeds, plans, and titles for county-owned properties. Real Estate Services manages all Public Works controlled properties related to real estate activities – including permits, leases, and disposal when applicable.



# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



**BLACK LAKE-BELMORE BRIDGE APPROACH REPAIR PROJECT** **\$3.7M**

Addressing critical safety concerns, this project focuses on reconstructing both approaches to the bridge crossing over Percival Creek at the north end of Black Lake. Due to poor soil conditions, both approaches have settled by more than 2 feet, posing risks to vehicles and bicyclists. To **stabilize the soils and rebuild the approaches** securely, the project involves driving 540 piles, spaced approximately 5 feet apart, into the ground. Additionally, the construction includes installing retaining walls and concrete barriers, further reinforcing the structural integrity of the bridge approaches. In 2023, the project experienced delays in its construction timeline due to challenges in procuring the necessary piles, highlighting the broader supply chain issues affecting our operations. Currently in the construction phase, this project is a **significant step towards ensuring the safety and durability of this crucial infrastructure**.



**MARVIN ROAD UPGRADE PROJECT—PHASE 1** **\$9.7M**

This project, a collaborative effort involving Thurston County, the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board, the City of Lacey, and local developers, focuses on improving safety and mobility along Marvin Road, from 22nd Avenue to Union Mills Road. It features the installation of a single-lane roundabout at the intersection of Marvin Road and 19th Avenue and introduces 10-foot-wide shared-use paths on both sides of Marvin Road. The project **enhances roadway infrastructure and incorporates street lighting, protected flashing pedestrian crosswalks, and advanced stormwater collection and treatment systems, ensuring comprehensive safety, accessibility, and environmental sustainability**. In 2023, project design and bid documents reached 90% completion, setting the stage for bid advertisement and construction in 2024.



**PAVEMENT PRESERVATION PROGRAM: OVERLAY** **\$3.5M**

The 2023 pavement preservation project enhanced the county's transportation infrastructure and extended road life for 13 lane miles on crucial arterials and collectors. It also improved commute conditions, impacting the daily travel of approximately 61,000 vehicles through portions of Martin Way, Carpenter Road, Meridian Road, Dutterow Road, 93rd Avenue, and Vail Road. Partially funded by Real Estate Excise Tax 2 provided by the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC), the project's successful completion not only delivered **immediate improvements to road quality but also ensured extended road durability for another 15 years**, marking another substantial investment in the county's critical infrastructure.

# BY THE NUMBERS



**13**  
**LANE MILES OF ROADWAY REPAVED**



**13**  
**CAPITAL PROJECTS COMPLETED**



**9**  
**PARCELS ACQUIRED FOR COUNTY PROJECTS**



**4,000**  
**TRAFFIC DEVICES INSPECTED**



**600**  
**MILES OF ROADWAY CENTERLINE AND FOG LINES PAINTED**



**909**  
**DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED**



**917**  
**DEVELOPMENT INSPECTIONS COMPLETED**



# ROAD OPERATIONS

The largest division in Public Works, Road Operations is responsible for numerous maintenance activities, including the year-round preservation and rehabilitation of county roadways, removal of fallen debris and hazardous trees, mowing along county roadways, and snow/ice removal during significant weather events. Road crews are also responsible for repairing, rehabilitating, and cleaning the county's drainage system. Road Operations maintains 1,026 miles of roadway, 150 bridges, and 107 miles of sidewalks annually.



Intersection/Bridge Approach Pavement Rehabilitation Project

## WORK GROUPS

### DRAINAGE

Maintains drainage ditches and repairs and installs catch basins and culverts. Teams remove sediment, rubbish, and debris from and make repairs to drainage structures to preserve the condition and capacity of storm drainage facilities. The work of this group is largely focused on maintaining compliance with the Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit.

### NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM

Maintains stormwater conveyance systems along roadways. This involves cleaning catch basins and culverts and sweeping roadways to reduce flooding and pollutants entering waterways. The work of this group is largely focused on maintaining compliance with the Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit.

### SURFACING

Maintains and preserves the pavement on roadways. The work associated with this program includes repairing potholes, cracked pavement, and sub-grade deficiencies.. Additionally, teams prepare road surfaces for preservation projects and ensure paved county roads are passable for drivers.

### VEGETATION

Manages the vegetation along county roadways, bridges, and stormwater facilities. The work includes shoulder mowing, slope mowing, and brushing, ensuring roads and sidewalks are passable and drivers have adequate sight distance for safe travel.

### PARKS & TRAILS

Maintains facilities and grounds to ensure parks and trails are safe, clean, and usable for residents and visitors. The team also works with community organizations and individuals to promote environmental education, restoration, and preservation. The team is responsible for stewardship of the county's 2,578 acres of park lands and 56 miles of trails.

## BY THE NUMBERS



**2,300**  
MILES OF  
ROADWAY SWEEP



**1,486**  
NUMBER OF CATCH  
BASINS CLEANED



**23,994**  
FEET OF DRAINAGE  
SYSTEM CLEANED



**2,110**  
FEET OF CULVERT  
PIPE INSTALLED



**7,220**  
TONS OF  
ASPHALT PLACED



**145,165**  
GALLONS OF  
BRINE APPLIED



**3,338**  
LANE MILES OF  
SHOULDER MOWED



# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## CASE ROAD FISH PASSAGE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

\$6K

In cooperation with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the project restored the stream channel under I-5 and Case Road SW to its natural state. A large alder tree had created a barrier, causing erosion along the bank and road crown outside the structure. Maintenance crews completed the stream restoration in two days, incorporating the alder root mass into the outer bank. This approach provided **erosion control, significantly improved fish habitat, and diversified the stream channel.**

## INTERSECTION/BRIDGE APPROACH PAVEMENT REHABILITATION PROJECT

\$197K

In August 2023, Public Works launched an intensive **pavement preservation effort, focusing on road safety and infrastructure longevity.** This project involved re-paving two intersections, one bridge approach, and a high-volume road segment adjacent to I-5 in the southern part of the county. Road Operations worked closely with the Traffic Engineering & Operations and Design Engineering work groups and outside agencies, including the Thurston County Sheriff's Office and WSDOT, to ensure the project's success. Together, they efficiently planned and executed operations at multiple sites, addressing compromised pavement sections, abutment settlement, and damaged road segments.



## UNDERGROUND INJECTION CONTROL (UIC) WELL REPLACEMENT PROJECT

\$60K

This project, conducted in partnership with our Water Resources Division, focused on the replacement of UIC wells, commonly known as drywells, that had ceased to function at their intended capacity. These wells play a crucial role in **safeguarding underground drinking water sources by efficiently managing stormwater and preventing the infiltration of pollutants.** In 2023, Road Operations maintenance crews successfully replaced six drywells, each costing an average of \$10,000 per well. By addressing these vital components of our stormwater infrastructure, we ensured the continued protection of our underground water sources and maintained the integrity of our road network.

# PARKS & TRAILS

Thurston County Parks & Trails is responsible for stewardship of the county's 2,578 acres of park lands and 56 miles of trails. Thurston County Parks include Burfoot, Frye Cove, Kenneydell, and Deschutes Falls. Trails managed in Thurston County include the Chehalis Western and Yelm-Rainier-Tenino Trails, the Gate-Belmore Trail, and the Ralph Munro Trail.

# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## BURFOOT PARK RESTROOM REPLACEMENT PROJECT

\$1.01M

This project addressed crucial infrastructural and accessibility challenges at one of the county's most popular parks by replacing an outdated restroom with two site-built units, doubling the facility's capacity and ensuring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. It also tackled environmental concerns by enhancing drainage to prevent flooding and improved the park's environment by constructing new sidewalks and seamlessly connecting the restrooms with the main pathways. These upgrades have significantly **enhanced the facilities, provided improved, ADA-compliant restrooms, and fostered a more accessible and welcoming environment** for the community.



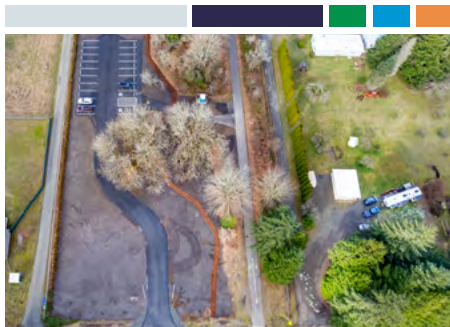
Burfoot Park Restroom Replacement





**KENNEYDELL PARK RESTROOM REPLACEMENT PROJECT** \$900K

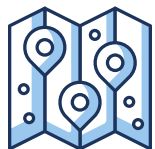
This project was a significant upgrade for Kenneydell Park, introducing our first use of a prefabricated facility to address infrastructural and accessibility issues at an existing restroom. The 6-stall, commercial-grade, vandal-resistant structure replaced an outdated facility that did not meet ADA standards and was vulnerable to vandalism. Along with the restroom upgrade, the project included constructing an ADA parking stall, installing additional LED lighting, and replacing 306 square feet of sidewalk, aligning with the county’s strategy to increase park capacity and reduce maintenance. **The adoption of a prefabricated model expedited the installation process and reduced construction costs, significantly improving the overall accessibility and safety of Kenneydell Park.**



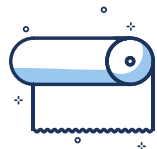
**CHEHALIS WESTERN TRAIL (CWT) 41ST AVENUE NW TRAILHEAD PROJECT** \$405K

This project improved access to the CWT by installing a paved parking lot with 19 parking stalls, a stormwater retention pond, and informative signage. It successfully achieved its goals and demonstrated efficient use of resources by coming in at approximately \$140,000 under budget. In addition to **providing a safe and convenient parking solution for CWT users**, it contributes to road safety by **reducing the number of vehicles parked on the shoulders of local roads.**

## BY THE NUMBERS



**914,500**  
TOTAL PARKS AND  
TRAILS VISITS



**82,000**  
DOG WASTE BAGS  
DISTRIBUTED TO PARK  
AND TRAIL USERS



**2,578**  
ACRES  
MANAGED



**56**  
MILES OF TRAIL  
CORRIDOR  
MAINTAINED

# SOLID WASTE

The Solid Waste Division is responsible for operating and maintaining the county’s primary solid waste transfer station—the former landfill in Lacey known as the Waste and Recovery Center (WARC), and two drop-box facilities near Rainier and Rochester. These facilities provide essential garbage, organics, and recycling services to support Thurston County’s population of more than 300,000. In addition to the operation and maintenance of the facilities, the division is responsible for solid waste planning, recycling, and waste reduction. The Solid Waste Division collaborates with Thurston County’s Public Health and Social Services Department to provide county residents with information regarding the correct disposal of hazardous wastes and other materials. Additionally, the division partners with the Washington State University Thurston County Extension Master Recycler Composter Program to educate residents about waste reduction and best recycling practices.



Dismantling the old flare system at the WARC



# WORK GROUPS

## ADMINISTRATION & PLANNING

Oversees the administration and planning of solid waste facilities, programs and services for Thurston County. The team is responsible for creating and maintaining solid waste and recycling vendor contracts, developing the Solid Waste Management Plan, and coordinating with the Thurston County Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

## FACILITIES OPERATIONS

Manages the operations and maintenance of the WARC, Rainier and Rochester Drop-box Facilities, the Off-Leash Dog Park, and HazoHouse. This team is comprised of several smaller teams, which include:

- **Moderate Risk Waste Operations**—processes hazardous materials for residential (at no cost) and small-quantity generating commercial (for a fee) customers at HazoHouse
- **Environmental Operations**—manages the closed landfill
- **Building and Ground Maintenance**—maintains 128 acres of county land and all solid waste facilities

## RECYCLING & WASTE REDUCTION EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Develops and implements programs in alignment with the county’s and partner municipalities’ adopted Solid Waste Management Plan. The team also provides information and resources to internal customers and the public on diverting materials from the county’s waste stream through methods focused on waste reduction, reuse, recycling, sustainability, and proper management of solid waste.

## SCALE & TOLLHOUSE OPERATIONS

Provides front-line customer service at the WARC and the two drop-box facilities, collects tipping fees, operates scales, and schedules trailer transfers. The Solid Waste Scale & Tollhouse Operations staff are available seven days a week at the WARC, and three days a week at each drop-box facility.

## COMMUNITY LITTER CLEANUP PROGRAM

Collects litter from roadsides, parks, trails, and illegal dump sites in the county. The program is a collaborative effort with the Road Operations Division, volunteers, court-assigned crew members, and in-custody workers from the Washington State Department of Corrections Cedar Creek facility. The program’s primary objective is to support the community’s environmental health by removing hazardous materials from areas where residents work and play.

# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## WARC PUMPS SYSTEM UPGRADES AND IMPROVEMENTS

Currently in its final stages, this project focuses on replacing and installing crucial infrastructure components, including pumps, manholes, and other equipment necessary to effectively manage landfill leachate, landfill gas condensate, and stormwater. The project, slated for completion by April 2024, addresses systems initially installed over two decades ago and now requiring updates due to wear and tear. Enhancements are not only being made in pump accessibility but also in integrating these systems into the recently upgraded Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system. This strategic upgrade significantly **bolsters the ability to maintain the old, closed landfill site, ensuring adherence to environmental regulations and reinforcing the commitment to protect the local ecosystem.**

\$5M

## RAINIER AND ROCHESTER DROP-BOX FACILITIES BREAK BUILDINGS

The project addresses the need for designated break areas at two drop-box locations in Rainier and Rochester, where there was previously no sheltered space for Public Works and contractor staff to take breaks and eat lunch away from the elements. To resolve this, small break buildings measuring 8 feet by 20 feet are being installed at each site, with construction expected to be completed by March 2024. This development is set to significantly **enhance working conditions at both locations by providing staff with a comfortable and weather-protected area for breaks**, marking a positive step towards improving workplace welfare and operational efficiency at these sites.

\$200K

## LITTER CONTROL VEHICLE UPGRADE

In 2023, the Solid Waste Division purchased a new vehicle, with over \$100K in grant funding provided from the Washington State Department of Ecology, to improve litter control operations. This specialized truck, equipped with advanced features for efficient litter removal and transport, will **enhance the operational capabilities of the Community Litter Cleanup Program, expediting the cleanup process and contributing to a cleaner, healthier environment for the community.**

\$116K

# BY THE NUMBERS





# WATER RESOURCES

Charged with providing clean drinking water, flood reduction, and the protection of the county’s water resources, the Water Resources Division is made up of Technical Services, Stormwater Operations & Maintenance, Water & Sewer Utility Operations, Noxious Weed Management, and the Healthy Lakes Program.

## WORK GROUPS

### NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT

Implements the work plan of the Thurston County Noxious Weed Control Board. The team works with owners throughout the county to manage noxious weeds while protecting water quality, human health, native plants, habitat, agriculture, and recreation.

### STORMWATER OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

Maintains the public network of storm drains, ditches, pipes, ponds, and other related systems across the county by providing inspections, making recommendations for maintenance, and managing inventory. The team also inspects private stormwater systems to ensure developers, homeowners’ associations, and others with stormwater infrastructure are building and maintaining their systems in compliance with county laws and regulations.

### TECHNICAL SERVICES

Identifies, designs, manages, and provides operational support for Thurston County water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure projects. The team also provides stormwater management technical assistance to public and private organizations. In addition, the team spearheads policy development and code updates for utilities and supports the implementation of and adherence to the Drainage Manual, Water and Sewer Development Standards, and the utility provisions of the Thurston County Code.

### WATER & SEWER UTILITY OPERATIONS

Supplies drinking water and wastewater services for approximately 820 county residential and business customers. The team manages three drinking water systems, including five wells, three wastewater treatment facilities, and one large on-site septic system. These systems operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Utility locations served by Thurston County Public Works include Grand Mound near Rochester, and Boston Harbor, Olympic View, and Tamoshan north of Olympia near Totten, Eld and Budd Inlets.

### HEALTHY LAKES PROGRAM

Safeguards the water quality of Thurston County’s numerous lakes. Aquatic resources specialists educate lakefront residents and provide technical assistance to help them become stewards of their lakes and surrounding environment. The team collaborates with lake groups to develop management strategies to maintain ecosystem integrity and improve water quality.



Noxious weed specialists survey a lake for noxious weeds

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



### MADRONA BEACH ROAD NW STORMWATER RETROFITS

This collaborative project, undertaken in partnership with our Road Operations Division, addressed critical drainage issues caused by water flow from State Highway 8 into our stormwater system. The project involved replacing deteriorating culverts at three locations along Madrona Beach Road and implementing ditch work to efficiently channel the water towards the newly installed culverts. These improvements were crucial to **prevent flooding, damage to the roadway and driveways, and erosion**, which had been causing sediment runoff into Mud Bay and Eld Inlet.

\$170K

### WOODARD CREEK STORMWATER RETROFIT—SITE 1

Located within the Woodard Creek Basin of the Henderson Inlet Watershed, this project is in an area that has undergone extensive environmental studies and conservation efforts. Its primary objective was to enhance stormwater quality, a potential source of bacteria, in the Woodard Creek, Woodard Bay, and Henderson Inlet areas. This initiative involved the installation of a bioretention swale and two filter vaults within the right-of-way, effectively **improving stormwater quality before its direct discharge into Woodard Creek**. This significantly contributes to our environmental conservation and compliance efforts in the Henderson Creek Watershed.

\$1.56M

## BY THE NUMBERS



**114.15M**  
GALLONS OF WATER  
DELIVERED TO CUSTOMERS



**81.21M**  
GALLONS OF WASTEWATER  
TREATED



**14,552**  
PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE  
STORMWATER ASSETS INSPECTED



**4,286**  
NOXIOUS WEED SITES  
MONITORED



**3**  
AQUATIC NOXIOUS WEEDS  
PROJECTS



**13,986**  
PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT  
INFRASTRUCTURE STORMWATER  
ASSETS INSPECTED



# BUSINESS SERVICES

Charged with ensuring the efficient and strategic support of operations, the Business Services Division provides financial analysis and procurement support, manages assets, fosters effective communication, and guides project planning for all Public Works divisions. The division is comprised of the Finance & Procurement, Asset Management, Communications, and Project Program Management work groups.

## WORK GROUPS

### ASSET MANAGEMENT

Responsible for the implementation and strategic oversight of the Public Works asset management program, this team ensures the longevity and functionality of the physical infrastructure. They help divisions develop a framework and implement processes to inventory and map assets, provide information on ongoing maintenance and operations costs, create work planning efficiencies, sustain the level of service at the desired level, and provide reliable data for budgeting, financial planning, and strategic decision-making.

### COMMUNICATIONS

Develops and executes communication strategies to disseminate information to the public and internal stakeholders. This team manages public relations, media interactions, and digital communications, ensuring transparency and fostering community engagement. They also produce informational materials, manage crisis communications, and support departments in conveying their initiatives and achievements to a wider audience.

### FINANCE & PROCUREMENT

Manages all aspects of the Public Works financial system, including department budgeting, financial management, water and sewer utilities and solid waste billing, grant reimbursements, vendor payments, and payroll services. The team also provides procurement and contracting assistance to make sure external resources and services are in place to meet community needs and ensure Public Works' compliance with federal, state, and county policies and requirements.

### PROJECT PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Provides strategic direction and guidance on projects, programs, and processes to ensure the use of best management standards in the delivery of projects, and prioritizes project resources department-wide. The team liaisons with other county departments and outside agencies to coordinate long-range planning efforts. In addition, the team manages Solid Waste construction projects.



## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

### 2024-2025 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

The Public Works Finance team, in collaboration with managers from all work groups, meticulously developed the 2024-2025 Public Works budget. Initiated in May, the process extended throughout the year, involving the input of over 140 budget change requests into the Qwestica budget system, encompassing 2500 lines of budget data and more than 3500 personnel line item allocations—a testament to the team's commitment and detailed approach.

In 2023, the Board of County Commissioners faced a challenging environment for reviewing, decision-making, and adopting the biennial budget, contending with stagnant or declining General Fund revenues amidst rising costs. Most General Fund-supported offices and departments were tasked with reducing expenditures from previous years. Public Works contributed to addressing the budget constraints by **optimizing alternative funding sources for our capital program**. While this strategy allowed some flexibility in the Road Fund, enabling the Board to augment the General Fund shift, it is not a sustainable approach. Should Road Fund dollars continue to be shifted to the General Fund at the current level, a reduction in the level of service or development of alternative long-term funding solutions for roads and transportation operational and capital needs will be necessary.

Despite these fiscal challenges, and because Parks & Trails is the only General Fund-supported program in the department, Public Works **secured approval for over 90% of our final budget requests**, including the addition of 15 new staff positions. This achievement addresses the obligation we have to our rate-payers, positioning us strongly for sustained operations and service excellence in 2024 and 2025, underscoring our commitment to serving the community effectively.

### ASSET MANAGEMENT

In 2023, our Water and Sewer Utilities completed an operational transformation, implementing asset management practices in VUEWorks. This transition established a new standard for how the team initiates, manages, records, and completes work and is an important step forward in the Public Works Asset Management journey as we evolve from work management to asset management. Over the last two years, the Water Resources technical team meticulously inventoried assets, integrated them into VUEWorks, and conducted extensive system design and comprehensive training. This transition **enables a more mobile work environment, streamlining data capture processes and enhancing operational efficiency**. Our ongoing focus remains on optimizing asset management systems for seamless integration into work planning processes for the entire department.

## BY THE NUMBERS



**40**  
CONTRACTS  
EXECUTED



**10.55M**  
TOTAL CONTRACTS  
VALUE



**238,000**  
WEBSITE PAGE  
VIEWS



**66,000**  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
IMPRESSIONS



# ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The Administrative Services Division manages essential administrative tasks and upholds rigorous safety standards within the department through the Administrative Staff and Safety work groups.

## WORK GROUPS

### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Responsible for a broad range of administrative duties, including managing records and ensuring that all divisions have the resources and support they need to operate efficiently. They also handle scheduling, coordinate meetings, facilitate employee onboarding, and assist with implementing policies and procedures to maintain the smooth operation of Public Works services.

### SAFETY & TRAINING

Develops and implements safety policies and procedures, conducts regular inspections and risk assessments, and provides training and resources to prevent accidents and ensure compliance with health and safety regulations. They are also responsible for emergency preparedness, ensuring the department is ready to respond effectively to any situation that may arise.



Public Works staff at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord job fair

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

### NEW EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING

This project was a comprehensive initiative aimed at enhancing the onboarding experience for new employees. It included the creation of a SharePoint site for centralized resources, an onboarding checklist, a welcome kit, a personalized welcome video from the director, division-specific resources, and the introduction of an onboarding partner program to facilitate the seamless integration of new team members. By providing a structured and welcoming onboarding process, we **improved efficiency, boosted employee satisfaction, and fostered a sense of belonging within our organization.**

### ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT

This project involved a thorough process of reviewing, cleaning, and organizing more than 600 document boxes. Of these, 46 boxes were transferred to the state archivist, and 81 were relocated to the records center. Additionally, we responsibly disposed of over 300 boxes of documents that had fulfilled their retention period. We also reviewed and revised the retention value of approximately 100 boxes of Solid Waste records, identifying 25 for proper disposal. As we move into the next project phase, our focus will be on digitization, which includes the development of naming conventions, file structures, and a comprehensive network cleanup. This project underscores **our commitment to enhancing records management practices to improve efficiency and accessibility to critical information resources.**

## BY THE NUMBERS



**300+**  
INTERVIEWS  
CONDUCTED



**60**  
JOB  
POSTINGS



**200+**  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
RECORD REQUESTS  
MANAGED



**600+**  
HARD COPY RECORDS  
REVIEWED



**300+**  
HARD COPY RECORDS  
DESTROYED



**150+**  
HARD COPY RECORDS TRANSFERRED TO  
STATE ARCHIVES OR RECORDS CENTER



# CELEBRATING SERVICE

## ANNIVERSARIES

### 5 YEARS

Amanda Landon • Chris Lyons • Rob Pudner • Amanda Romero • Jackie Schramm

### 10 YEARS

Mike Ireland • Kevin Patching • Teresa Wollan

### 15 YEARS

Kyle Cline • Jack Danridge • Ron Knox • Crysta Matthews  
Autumn Norbeck • Shannon Peterson • Kelli Root • Chris Scheel

### 20 YEARS

Nick Bemis • Larry Cline • Mike Copenhefer • Doug Curler  
Preston Golleher • Steve Powell • Jace Swartwout • Marcie Taylor

### 25 YEARS

Aaron Norquist • Chuck Yoerger

### 30 YEARS

Bruce Longmire • Ron Gosser • Brian Nurmi

## NEW HIRES

Samuel Badgley • Sean Bullock • Cory Bushell • Tuki Cintron • Justein Coffelt • Curtis Dunn  
Ben Enfield • Kelly Fujimoto • Matthew Gant • Ryan Guscott • Leticia Hellebore • Scot Keith  
Jessica Kelley • Bailee Kelty • Crissy Kennedy • Calum Larkin • Sean Lopez • Mark Meiterman  
Mekiah Moore • Ron Moore • Marisa Moysiuk • Cole Mullenix • Brent Murphy • David Orning  
Juan Ortiz • Wyatt Pannkuk • Shari Parsons • Chance Petrich • Brycen Poston • Donny Scheidt  
Rick Siegel • Xavier Soto • Hope Springer • Brandon Tyler • Cole Webster • John Williams  
Tre Winchester • Danielle Winski

## PROMOTIONS

Spencer Baier • Cory Bushell • Shanna Case • Kathi Clarke • Justein Coffelt • Becky Conn  
Keevan Forbes-Kashani • Ryan Guscott • Nick Knittle • Brian Meier • Cole Mullenix  
Amanda Romero • Rachael Soumis • Logan Steffen • Ayla Turnquist • Matt Unzelman

## RETIREMENTS

Gordon Coleman • Cameron Eaton • Preston Golleher • Theresa Parsons • Kelli Root



# HOW TO STAY ENGAGED WITH PUBLIC WORKS

**PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

Jennifer D. Walker, PMP

**PUBLIC WORKS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

Karen Weiss

**COUNTY ENGINEER**

Matt Unzelman, P.E.

**COUNTY MANAGER**

Ramiro Chavez, P.E., PgMP

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Carolina Mejia, District 1

Gary Edwards, District 2

Tye Menser, District 3

Wayne Fournier, District 4

Emily Clouse, District 5



**WEB:**

[THURSTONCOUNTYWA.GOV/PW](http://THURSTONCOUNTYWA.GOV/PW)



**X:**

[X.COM/THURSTON\\_PW](https://X.COM/THURSTON_PW)



**FACEBOOK:**

[FACEBOOK.COM/THURSTONCO](https://FACEBOOK.COM/THURSTONCO)

**TILLEY ROAD MAIN CAMPUS**

9605 Tilley Road S

Olympia, WA 98512

Phone: 360-867-2300

**DEVELOPMENT REVIEW**

3000 Pacific Ave. SE

Olympia, WA 98501

360-867-2050

**WASTE & RECOVERY CENTER**

2420 Hogum Bay Rd. NE

Lacey, WA 98516

360-867-2491

# 2023 THURSTON COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS WEEK ROADEO







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