



Technical Memo

To: Dave Watterson, City of Tenino Mayor
City of Tenino Planning Commission

From: SCJ Alliance

Date: September 12, 2025

Project: City of Tenino Periodic Comprehensive Plan Update including Climate Element

Subject: Public Hearing on September 17, 2025

Purpose

The Planning Commission is asked to hold a public hearing on the draft 2025–2045 Comprehensive Plan and provide a recommendation to City Council regarding adoption. This public hearing is part of the periodic update required by the Washington State Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A), ensuring Tenino’s plan remains compliant with state law, reflects updated population projections, and integrates community priorities for land use, housing, transportation, capital facilities, utilities, natural resources, and climate resilience.

1 Background

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires jurisdictions such as Tenino to periodically review and update comprehensive plans and development regulations to maintain compliance with state requirements and reflect current conditions. Tenino last completed a major update in 2016.

The draft 2025 Plan:

- Extends the planning horizon to 2045.
- Incorporates updated population projections from the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and Thurston Regional Planning Council.
- Integrates the 2023 Housing Action Plan, adopted as Appendix B.
- Updates land capacity analysis to reflect environmental constraints and current zoning.
- Incorporates a new Climate Element, consistent with Department of Commerce guidance.

- Revises Capital Facilities and Utilities Elements to reflect current infrastructure needs and financial planning.
- Expands on Countywide Planning Policy coordination and Urban Growth Area (UGA) discussions, including potential UGA expansion in the Mima Acres area

Public engagement has included:

- Adoption of a Public Participation Plan (Appendix C).
- A communitywide survey with 83 responses.
- Online engagement, Climate Action Team meetings, and Planning Commission workshops.
- Coordination with Thurston County, Department of Commerce, Department of Ecology, and other stakeholders.

2 Key Elements of the Draft Plan

1.1. Land Use

- Reinforces Tenino’s small-town historic and natural character.
- Provides for West Tenino master planning while addressing Mazama pocket gopher and Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly habitat constraints.
- Proposes exploration of a UGA expansion into Mima Acres to address housing capacity deficits.

1.2. Housing

- Builds on the 2023 Housing Action Plan.
- Identifies a need for approximately 396 additional units by 2045.
- Expands allowances for ADUs, middle housing, and multifamily near downtown.
- Establishes affordability and anti-displacement goals.

1.3. Transportation

- Includes 12 goals for multimodal improvements, including walkability, trail connectivity, and safety.
- Aligns capital project priorities with concurrency requirements.

1.4. Capital Facilities & Utilities

- Updates facility inventories for parks, stormwater, water, and wastewater systems.
- Identifies funding sources and capital improvement programming.

1.5. Natural Resources & Climate

- Protects critical areas and aquifer recharge zones.
- Introduces a Climate Element with 20 goals: 9 focused on greenhouse gas reduction and 11 on resilience.

1.6. Economic Development

- Emphasizes strengthening downtown, supporting local businesses, and leveraging the Agricultural Business & Innovation Park.

3 Staff Analysis

Staff finds the draft Comprehensive Plan:

- **Complies with RCW 36.70A** by addressing required elements, including land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, transportation, and climate.
- **Reflects Best Available Science** in updating the Critical Areas, Shoreline, and Natural Resources policies.
 - Critical Areas Ordinance Regulations will be updated within 12 months of adoption
- **Aligns with Countywide Planning Policies**, particularly in relation to growth management, housing, and urban services.
- **Responds to community input**, particularly priorities around small-town character, housing affordability, and infrastructure investment.

The proposed UGA expansion into Mima Acres warrants continued coordination with Thurston County and Commerce, but inclusion of the concept in the draft plan positions the City to address long-term capacity needs.

4 Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Planning Commission **forward a recommendation of approval to City Council** for adoption of the 2025–2045 Comprehensive Plan, subject to any modifications the Commission deems necessary following the public hearing.

5 Next Steps

- Planning Commission recommendation forwarded to City Council.
- City Council holds public hearing and considers adoption.
- Final adopted plan submitted to Washington State Department of Commerce.

Conclusion

The Draft 2025–2045 Comprehensive Plan represents a significant milestone for the City of Tenino. It updates and modernizes the community’s vision, policies, and strategies to remain compliant with the Growth Management Act while reflecting the unique character, needs, and aspirations of Tenino residents. The plan balances growth with preservation—supporting new housing and economic opportunities while safeguarding critical resources, small-town character, and long-term resilience.

Through community engagement and coordination with regional partners, the draft plan positions Tenino to manage growth responsibly, address pressing infrastructure and housing challenges, and proactively plan for climate adaptation. Adoption of this plan will provide a clear framework for City decision-making, investments, and partnerships over the next 20 years.

Staff concludes that the draft Comprehensive Plan is consistent with state requirements, countywide planning policies, and community priorities. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward the draft plan to City Council with a recommendation of approval, with any adjustments the Commission deems appropriate following the public hearing.