

STAFF REPORT



Date: November 10, 2025
To: Planning Commission
From: Brad Medrud, Community Development Director, and Sharon Lumbantobing, Deputy Community Development Director

2026 Long Range Planning Work Program

The City Council approves an annual long range planning work program at the beginning of every year. The annual work program will guide all Tumwater long range planning projects during 2026. The Planning Commission will be briefed on the proposed annual Long Range Planning Work Program at their November 10, 2025, meeting and, if necessary, can continue the discussion at their November 25, 2025, work session.

The City Council and Planning Commission will discuss the proposed 2026 work program at a joint work session on December 9, 2025. **The joint work session will also be an opportunity for the City Council and Planning Commission to discuss general topics related to their roles on a range of community development issues.**

The City Council, Planning Commission, community members, and City staff can propose projects for the annual work program. The proposed 2026 work program consists of projects budgeted for 3.30 full time employees (FTEs). With the exception of some grant funding from the state for the Habitat Conservation Plan, all long range planning work is paid for by the City’s General Fund. The majority of staff hours in 2026 will focus on the Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan, Thurston County Joint Plan update and urban growth area swap, Urban Forestry Management Plan development code amendments, the housing work program, and Food System Plan implementation.

The City Council is expected to approve the 2026 Long Range Planning Work Program on January 20, 2026.

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Role of the Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is an advisory body to the City Council with a wide remit. TMC 2.56.030 establishes the powers of the Planning Commission as set forth in Chapter 35.63 RCW.

The Planning Commission proposes and develops policy recommendations for consideration by the City Council, which includes work on the Comprehensive Plan and subarea plans, as well as special plans such as the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan, Tumwater Housing Action Plan, and Urban Forestry Management Plan.

In addition, the Planning Commission is involved in developing recommendations for amendments to regulations related to development, which includes the development code (TMC Title 16 *Environment*, Title 17 *Land Division*, and Title 18 *Zoning*). In the recent past, the Planning Commission has also reviewed amendments to sections of TMC Title 2 *Administration and Personnel*, Title 8 *Health and Safety*, Title 11 *Telecommunications and Telecommunications Facilities*, Title 12 *Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places*, Title 14 *Development Code Administration*, and Title 15 *Buildings and Construction* in support of the development code.

Role of the City Council and Mayor

The City Council serves as the City’s legislative body. This separation of powers is based on the traditional federal and state models in the United States. The City Council has the authority to formulate and adopt city policies, and the Mayor is responsible for carrying them out. The City Council also has the authority to adopt budgets, approve contracts, and amend the Tumwater Municipal Code. The City Council relies on several advisory commissions and boards for support in making decisions. The General Government Committee considers recommendations from the Planning Commission before they go to the full City Council.

Tumwater Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan establishes the outline for managing the City’s policymaking and investment decisions for the next 20 years from 2025 to 2045.

The Comprehensive Plan addresses where development will occur, at what intensities, and concurrent with required infrastructure improvements.

The Comprehensive Plan’s goals, policies, and implementation actions are the foundation for how the City addresses future public and private development, directs spending for capital

facilities improvements, and how development impact fees and other development charges are collected.

Tumwater Development Regulations

The City's development regulations translate the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan into the zoning, land division, and environmental codes that private and public landowners must follow to build on and develop property in the City. Zoning is a planning practice of classifying land as regulated zones for designated purposes to create suitable land use patterns, by various types of similar uses, or by design standards, e.g., form-based codes, to meet the goals and vision identified in the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The City's development regulations adopt the City's Zoning Map which establishes the location and boundaries of the zoning districts that allow for specific uses and intensities. The City's Zoning Map is based in turn on the land uses and intensities identified in the Citywide Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan.

Suggested Joint Work Session Discussion Topics

A short list of suggested discussion topics to consider during December 9, 2025, joint work session with the City Council for the Planning Commission to discuss:

- How has coordination between the City Council and Planning Commission gone in 2025 and what can be improved in 2026?
- What went well with the 2025 Long Range Work Program and what could be improved?
- What additional opportunities for collaboration between the City Council and the Planning Commission should be considered?
- What are the City Council's main priorities for long range planning in 2026?
- Are there additional projects in 2026 to be considered? If so, what projects currently proposed can be delayed?
- If adjustments to the 2026 Long Range Work Program are needed, what projects have less priority?

If the Planning Commission has additional questions to consider, please let staff know.

2025 Accomplishments

In June 2025, Brad Medrud was promoted to Community Development Director, and Sharon Lumbantobing started as Deputy Community Development Director in October 2025.

The Planning Commission, City Council, and staff completed the following items from the 2025 Long Range Work Program:

- General Commercial Mixed Use Residential Amendments (Ordinance No. O2024-008) – January 2025
- Food System Plan (Resolution No. R2025-015) – November 2025
- 2025 Comprehensive Plan Amendments (Capital Facilities Plan) (Ordinance No. O2025-009) – December 2025
- 2025 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update (Ordinance No. O2025-010) – December 2025
- 2025 Development Code Periodic Update (Ordinance No. O2025-011) – December 2025

Over half of the long range planning staff's time was spent this year on the completing the City's 2025 Comprehensive Plan and Development Code periodic update.

The following items are the major items that are still ongoing from the 2025 Long Range Work Program and will continue in 2026:

- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Update
- Economic Development Plan Update
- Thurston County Joint Plan Update and County Urban Growth Area Swap Amendment
- 2026 Development Code Periodic Update
- Thurston County Code Title 22 - Tumwater Urban Growth Area Zoning
- Urban Forestry Management Plan – Tree and Vegetation Preservation Regulation Update
- Annexations
- Brewery Redevelopment/Planned Action EIS and Ordinance
- Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan
- Managing Multifamily Tax Exemption Program
- Regional Housing Council

Proposed 2026 Long Range Work Program

Attachment C is the proposed 2026 Long Range Planning Work Program. The 2026 work program is divided into five parts:

1. Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket
2. Development Regulation Amendment Docket
3. Other Planning Projects
4. General Management and Coordination
5. Below the Line Projects

New for 2026, separate Housing and Food System Work Programs have been included as subsets of Part 3 Other Planning Projects to gather all the projects related to those items in one place. The total number of anticipated staff hours for those items has been linked back to Part 3 of the main work program.

Under each of the five parts, individual projects are identified with an estimate of staff time needed to complete, who proposed the project, how they address City Council strategic priorities, and detail on the work required. For more details on individual projects, please see Attachment C *2026 Long Range Planning Work Program*.

Projects are not listed in order of priority. Numbering is to allow for ease of reference.

1. Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket

Approximately 15% of all budgeted staff time.

- a. 2025 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update – Post-Adoption Tasks (Continued from 2025)
- b. Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Update (Continued from 2025)
- c. Economic Development Plan Update (Continued from 2025)
- d. Thurston County Joint Plan Update and County Urban Growth Area Swap Amendment (Continued from 2025)

2. Development Regulation Amendment Docket

Approximately 22% of all budgeted staff time.

- a. 2026 Development Code Periodic Update (Continued from 2025, 2026 Development Code Amendments related to the 2025 Update that are due June 30, 2025)
- b. Other Amendments
 - 1) General Development Code Housekeeping Amendments (New in 2026)
 - 2) Multifamily Tax Exemption Evaluation and Update (Below the line in 2025)
 - 3) Thurston County Code Title 22 – Tumwater Urban Growth Area Zoning (Continued from 2025)
- c. Urban Forestry Management Plan Amendments (Restarted from 2022-2023)
 - 1) Landscaping and Buffering Requirements (Below the line in 2025)
 - 2) Street Tree Standards Update (Below the line in 2025)
 - 3) Tree and Vegetation Preservation Update (Continued from 2025)

3. Other Planning Projects

Approximately 47% of all budgeted staff time. The Habitat Conservation Plan is approximately 10% of all budgeted staff time. Regional Housing Council is approximately 9% of all budgeted staff time.

- a. Annexations (Continued from 2025)
- b. Brewery Redevelopment/Planned Action EIS and Ordinance (Continued from 2025)
- c. Code Enforcement Process (Continued from 2025)
- d. Current Planning Projects (Continued from 2025)
- e. Food System Plan Implementation (New in 2026)
 - 1) Community Garden and Neighborhood Matching Grants and Local Grants
 - 2) Internal Collaboration
 - 3) Code Amendments
 - 4) GIS Map
 - 5) Partnership Building
- f. Grant Funding (Continued from 2025)
- g. Habitat Conservation Plan (Continued from 2016)
- h. Hazard Mitigation Plan Implementation (Continued from 2025)
- i. Housing Element Implementation (New in 2026)
 - 1) Regional Housing Council (minimum 0.25 FTE per Memorandum of Understanding) (Continued from 2025)
 - 2) Affordable Housing Project Coordinator (New in 2026)
 - 3) Black Home Initiative Partnership (Continued from 2025)
 - 4) Homeless Shelter, Emergency, and Transitional Housing Assessment and Feasibility Study (Below the line in 2025)
 - 5) Managing Multifamily Tax Exemption Program (Continued from 2025)
 - 6) Manufactured Home Parks Support (New in 2026)
 - 7) Point in Time Count Support (Continued from 2025)
 - 8) Rental Housing and Registration Program (Continued from 2025)
 - 9) Tumwater Housing Stakeholder Workgroup (New in 2026)
- j. Long Range Planning Website Updates (Continued from 2025)
- k. Permit System Transition (New in 2026)
- l. Public Engagement (Continued from 2025)

- m. Public Inquiries and General City Council and Interdepartmental Support
(Continued from 2025)

4. General Management and Coordination

Approximately 16% of all budgeted staff time.

- a. General Coordination with Other Departments – Traffic Team, Green Team, Stormwater Team, GIS Team, and other items (Continued from 2025)
- b. General Coordination with Other Jurisdictions (Continued from 2025)
- c. Department Management includes Planning Commission support (Continued from 2025)
- d. Training (Continued from 2025)

5. Below the Line Projects

These are projects that would be considered if the projects in the first four parts are completed, and staff time is available.

- a. Annexation Policy Development
 - b. AP Airport Overlay Amendments
 - c. Aquifer Protection Standards Amendments
 - d. Basin Plans – Deschutes and Black Lake (Subdivision Code/Housing Types)
 - e. Cityside Design Guidelines Update
 - f. Essential Public Facilities
 - g. Food System Plan Implementation (New in 2026)
 - 1) Current City Facilities Composting System Audit
 - 2) Food Waste Reduction and Local Food Benefits Programs Research
 - 3) Food System Plan Intern
 - 4) Food System Plan Code Amendments
 - 5) Communications Campaign
 - h. Housing Element Implementation
 - 1) Affordable Housing Demonstration Projects, Grants, and Funding Opportunities
 - 2) Housing Action Plan - Infrastructure (Housing Affordability Fee Work Plan Ordinance #9/Housing Action Plan Action 1.m.)
 - 3) Middle Housing Project Coordinator
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- 4) Networking, Outreach, Training, and Conferences
- 5) Thurston Thrives – Housing Action Team
 - i. Pipeline – Land Use Review