

Plan Introduction

City of Tumwater 2025 Comprehensive Plan

Balancing Nature and Community: Tumwater's Path to Sustainable Growth

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Abbreviations Used in Document

CDD – Community Development Department

RCW – Revised Code of Washington

1. Foundation of the Plan

A. Background

The Plan Introduction is part of Tumwater's Comprehensive Plan, which was prepared in response to the state Growth Management Act

(Chapter 36.70A RCW). It is intended to provide the foundation for the Comprehensive Plan and its overarching goals.

B. Purpose and Scope of the Comprehensive Plan

The Plan serves as Tumwater's road map for accommodating growth in the City and its urban growth area from 2026 to 2045. The Tumwater Comprehensive Plan was prepared in

accordance with the requirements of the Growth Management Act (Chapter 36.70A RCW) and adopted Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies.

C. Vision, Mission, and Values

The following vision, mission, and values provide the overarching direction for the future of Tumwater and were developed by the City Council through Tumwater's Strategic Planning Process in 2025.

1) Vision – The Why

Tumwater of the future will be people-oriented and highly livable, with a strong economy, dynamic places, vibrant neighborhoods, a healthy natural environment, diverse and engaged residents, and a living connection to its history.

2) Mission – The What

In active partnership with our community, we provide courageous leadership and essential municipal services to cultivate a prosperous economy, a healthy natural environment, vibrant neighborhoods, and supportive social fabric.

3) Values

a) People

We respect the diverse people that make up the social fabric of our community and strive to be inclusive of all people. We value and seek to strengthen our vibrant neighborhoods, which are cornerstones of civic life and community identity. As we pursue our goals and the long-term sustainability of Tumwater organization, we value the contributions and diversity of our staff, support their continued personal and professional growth, and act to retain their expertise for the good of the community.

b) Environment

We act to preserve and enhance the natural environment and the social fabric of our community.

c) Opportunity

We seize opportunities to improve our community's social, environmental, and economic well-being. We endeavor to realize

positive opportunities in adverse situations and periods of change.

d) *Partnership*

We work collaboratively with residents, businesses, and community organizations. We also actively partner with other jurisdictions to address regional, state, and even broader issues.

e) *Learning*

We are a learning organization which strives to benefit from past experience, foresight, and innovation to seek new ways to enhance the community and improve City operations and services.

f) *Excellence*

We strive for excellence and integrity in providing City services. By providing quality services, being responsible and efficient stewards of public resources, and empowering employees to achieve excellence, we continue to build public trust and encourage civic involvement. We know that excellence does not have to come at the price of our sense of community or our small city character.

D. Growth Management Act Goals

The State of Washington requires Tumwater to plan under the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.040).

The following fifteen Growth Management Act goals guide the development and adoption of Tumwater's Comprehensive Plan and development regulations and are not listed in order of priority. Each Element of the Comprehensive Plan describes how it meets the goals applicable to its topic area.

4) Strategic Focus Areas – The How

The following Tumwater strategic focus areas guide the realization of Tumwater's vision.

The City's Strategic Priorities and Goals 2025 – 2026 include the following focus areas:

- **Vibrant, Livable, and Inclusive Community** – Build a community recognized for quality, compassion, and humanity.
- **Environmental Stewardship** – Be a leader in environmental health and sustainability.
- **Community Mobility** – Create and maintain a transportation system safe for all modes of travel.
- **Health and Safety** – Provide and sustain quality public safety services.
- **Growth and Development** – Pursue and support targeted community and economic development.
- **Tumwater Excellence** – Refine and sustain a great organization.

1. **Urban growth.** *Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.*
2. **Reduce sprawl.** *Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.*
3. **Transportation.** *Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that*

will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled, and are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.

4. **Housing.** *Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.*
5. **Economic development.** *Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.*
6. **Property rights.** *Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.*
7. **Permits.** *Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.*
8. **Natural resource industries.** *Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.*
9. **Open space and recreation.** *Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.*
10. **Environment.** *Protect and enhance the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.*
11. **Citizen participation and coordination.** *Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.*
12. **Public facilities and services.** *Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.*
13. **Historic preservation.** *Identify and encourage the preservation of lands,*

sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance.

- 14. Climate change and resiliency.** *Ensure that the City's Comprehensive Plans and development regulations adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate; support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled; prepare for climate impact scenarios; foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural*

hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and advance environmental justice.

- 15. Shorelines of the state.** *For shorelines of the state, the goals and policies of the shoreline management act as set forth in RCW 90.58.020 shall be considered an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan.*

E. County-Wide Planning Policies

The Growth Management Act requires that Tumwater's Comprehensive Plan be consistent with the Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies, as amended in 2025.

The adopted County-Wide Planning Policies are included in this document in their entirety in Appendix A. Relevant policies are also included in the introduction section of each Element.

F. Amendments and Updates

The Comprehensive Plan is subject to amendment to ensure internal and interjurisdictional consistency of the Comprehensive Plan and with the development regulations implementing the Comprehensive Plan. An evaluation of new conditions will be an integral part of the amendment process.

State law allows amendment of the Comprehensive Plan once annually, except in cases of emergency as determined by the City Council. The process Tumwater uses to amend the plan and development regulations implementing the plan is set forth in Chapter 18.60 Tumwater Municipal Code.

The Planning Commission and City Council will individually consider concurrently all proposed changes to the document accumulated over time since the last amendment, to ascertain the cumulative impact of the proposed changes.

The Comprehensive Plan may be amended outside of the normal annual amendment cycle if findings are adopted by the City Council demonstrating that the emergency meets all the following criteria:

1. The circumstances of the emergency request, if processed within the normal amendment cycle, will result in delays that contribute to significant imminent impact on the community in general, or a specific neighborhood; and
2. The emergency request relates to an issue or issues of a community or neighborhood-wide significance beyond the interests of a particular property owner, provided that an issue pertaining to an individual property may be considered if findings reveal that impacts to the community or specific

neighborhood would result from the individual property.

The nature of the emergency and the proposed amendment shall be presented to the City

Council, which shall decide if the proposal qualifies as an emergency. Any proposal deemed an emergency should proceed ahead of the normal amendment schedule.

G. Ongoing Plan Review Program

The Comprehensive Plan is meant to be a flexible and easily used document. As Tumwater grows and changes, the Comprehensive Plan will need to be revised and amended to reflect new circumstances.

Tumwater will undertake a program of ongoing review to monitor the performance of its Comprehensive Plan goals, policies, and implementation actions. This will be done principally through the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process.

H. Public Participation

Public participation in comprehensive planning is required both as a matter of law and policy. The public participation program affirms Tumwater's commitment to public involvement in the planning process.

The intent of the public participation program is to ensure that citywide and neighborhood planning is done with the contribution of all interested parties, including residents, property owners, business owners, neighborhood associations, and other community members. Tumwater will make every effort to involve the community in the processes to develop and update the Comprehensive Plan, subarea plans, zoning, and other development regulations.

Public participation and intergovernmental coordination procedures are set forth below to ensure conformance with the Growth Management Act. Specifically, these procedures are set forth to establish policy providing for early and continuous public participation in Tumwater's development and amendment of the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations implementing the plan.

Errors in exact compliance with the established procedures do not invalidate the Comprehensive Plan or development regulations.

1. Before the due date for submitting requests for Comprehensive Plan amendments, Tumwater will publish an article on Tumwater's media platforms and distribute it to local news media inviting amendment requests and informing the public of the deadline.
2. Proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations that affect the unincorporated urban growth area will be subject to public hearings by the Tumwater and Thurston County Planning Commissions, the Tumwater City Council, and the Thurston County Board of Commissioners.
3. Tumwater publications, mail, email, broadcast and print media, and the City's website and social media should be

utilized by Tumwater to inform affected parties about current or proposed plans or regulations, as well as opportunities for participation in City decision processes.

4. Procedures for providing notice of public hearings are set forth in Chapter 18.60 Tumwater Municipal Code. The City should have proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations available to the

public for inspection at City Hall during regular business hours beginning on the first business day following the date the public hearing notice is published.

5. In addition to hearings and other formal opportunities for oral and written public comment, Tumwater should use various outreach techniques such as opinion surveys, speakers' programs, forums, workshops, open houses, hands-on events, and task forces.

I. Intergovernmental Coordination

Adjacent local jurisdictions, fire districts, school districts, public transit agencies, appropriate state agencies, Port of Olympia, The Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and the Squaxin Island Tribe will be mailed notices of draft Comprehensive Plan and development regulation amendment proposals prior to final adoption by the City Council.

The notice will contain a description of the amendments and methods for obtaining the draft proposal. Methods for providing input will also be included. Whenever possible, this notification process will be accomplished prior to Planning Commission consideration and in conjunction with the state agency notification requirements set forth in RCW 36.70A.106.

2. Overall Plan Goals

A. How to Read These Tables

The Plan Introduction's goals are not in priority order.

1) Department Leads

While the implementation of the Plan Introduction's goals are associated primarily with the Community Development Department

all the other Tumwater departments will be part of the comprehensive planning process to varying degrees.

2) Period

Each of the Plan Introduction's goals are for the term of the Comprehensive Plan.

A. Engagement

Goal PI-1 Continuously engage with the community and the region.

Community engagement and participation in the comprehensive planning process are both a Tumwater policy and a state requirement, ensuring that all members of the community have a voice in Tumwater's growth and development. Tumwater will engage all

members of the public in planning for Tumwater, so decisions made regarding the growth and development of Tumwater engage all parts of the community, reflect general community goals, and are sensitive to special interests of effected parties.

B. Coordination

Goal PI-2 Ensure coordination between Elements, Plans, and Subarea Plans of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Elements, Plans, and Subarea Plans that make up Tumwater's Comprehensive Plan are interconnected, so changes in one component could affect many other parts of the Plan.

As the Comprehensive Plan is updated and amended, Tumwater will make certain that all Elements, Plans, and Subarea Plans are reviewed and amended as needed when the Comprehensive Plan is updated and amended

C. Community Vibrancy

Goal PI-3 Foster livability by evoking a sense of identity through arts, culture, and history and attracting and sustaining desired economic activity that supports the community by making investments that emphasize Tumwater as a welcoming place and enhance community building.

Building community through the Comprehensive Plan is more than buildings and infrastructure. It is important to recognize the role played the arts, culture, history, and economic development in the creation and maintenance of Tumwater's history and what makes the City unique.

The Comprehensive Plan's Economic Development Plan, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan , and Land Use Element all play important roles in supporting this goal.

D. Equity

Goal PI-4 Ensure that all members of the community, especially those whose needs have been systematically neglected, are well served by making decisions and investments through an inclusive process which results in equitable outcomes.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended serve to all members of the Tumwater community. It is important that the Plan strive to create opportunities for members of the community regardless of age, race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, ethnic background, source of income use of federal housing assistance,

disability, veteran status, protected classes, or other arbitrary factors.

The Comprehensive Plan's Climate Element, Economic Development Plan and Housing Element play important roles in supporting this goal.

E. Climate Resilience

Goal PI-5 Increase climate resiliency by promoting sustainability, reducing pollution, promoting healthy habitats, and supporting clean air and water.

The Comprehensive Plan provides the goal and policy basis for how Tumwater will develop work programs over the next 20 years to address greenhouse gas reduction and climate resilience. While the goals and policies of each

of the Element of the Plan support this goal, the Climate, Conservation, and Land Use Elements will be the primary guides for how Tumwater will meet this goal.

F. Fiscal Stewardship

Goal PI-6 Make wise investments of public and private funds in community infrastructure and projects.

The Comprehensive Plan provides the goal and policy basis for how Tumwater will address development and redevelopment of the community over the next 20 years. The Plans goals and policies are used in turn to guide Tumwater's investments during this period through the City's budget, Capital Facilities Plan,

Transportation Improvement Plan, and project identified in system plans.

Public resources are finite and wise investment of such resources is essential for the financial health and the City's ability to serve its community.

G. Environmental Protection and Enhancement

Goal PI-7 Protect and enhance the environment.

Protecting and enhancing the environment and improving Tumwater's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water, while accommodating state required growth and development is a

fundamental component of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan's Climate, Conservation, and Land Use Elements play important roles in supporting this goal.

Appendix A Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies

The Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies as amended March 18, 2025, are attached as a separate document.

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Appendix B Ordinance No. O2025-010

Ordinance No. O2025-010, approved by the City Council on XXXX, 2026, is attached as a separate document.

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