

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
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**CONVENE:** 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Chair Elizabeth Robbins and Commissioners Grace Edwards, Terry Kirkpatrick, Meghan Sullivan, Anthony Varela, and Kelly Von Holtz.

Excused: Commissioners Michael Tobias and Brian Schumacher.

Staff: Planning Manager Brad Medrud, Housing and Land Use Planner Erika Smith-Erickson, and Department Assistant Brittaney McClanahan.

**CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:** There were no changes to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES:  
TUMWATER  
PLANNING  
COMMISSION FOR  
JULY 11, 2023**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Varela moved, seconded by Commissioner Edwards, to approve the minutes of July 11, 2023 as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS:** There were no reports.

**MANAGER'S REPORT:** Manager Medrud reported on the status of the update for urban forestry regulations. Staff recently met with staff from the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife to discuss implications of the Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code to animal and vegetation habitat. The City is completing a new map of the City based on the new WWUIC requirements. The mapping exercise should result in a better map depicting less of the City covered by the new requirements. All urban forestry updates are on hold until the mapping process is completed.

The Commission's August 8, 2023 meeting includes the addition of a briefing on the Capital Facilities Plan for Water, Sanitary Sewer, and Storm Water Elements in the plan.

City staff applied to the Department of Commerce for a planning grant for the Comprehensive Plan Update. The City should receive a funding notice in September. The grant will facilitate the hiring of a consultant to assist in updating the Transportation Plan and the Economic

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Development Plan.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There were no public comments.

**HAZARDS  
MITIGATION PLAN  
FOR THE THURSTON  
REGION UPDATE:**

Planner Smith-Erickson reported Tumwater is part of a multi-jurisdictional process to mitigate and reduce the risks of destructive hazards that threaten the region. The Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region addresses three types of mitigation: (1) Preparedness, (2) Response, and (3) Mitigation. The plan includes the City's strategies for preparedness, response, and mitigation. Staff is working with departments within the City to create initiatives addressing all strategies.

Strategies for preparedness include supplies, training, and equipment. Response strategies include actions taken during an emergency, and strategies for mitigation are actions prior to an emergency to reduce impacts, damage, or the severity of the event.

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 assists the state and territorial, tribal, and local governments proactively plan to reduce damage from natural disasters. The City is required to have a federally approved plan to apply for or receive FEMA assistance grants. The current plan was last updated in 2017. Staff is working with the Hazard Mitigation Workgroup and Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) to update the Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region and each individual jurisdictional plan referred to as an "Annex." The City's Annex addresses hazards that are specific to the City.

The update process includes working with over 20 local agencies in Thurston County to update the plan. Workgroup meetings are facilitated by TRPC serving as the lead for creation of the regional plan. The Workgroup meets monthly. Over the last 18 months, the Workgroup has reviewed risk assessments, new federal update requirements, initial prioritization, and benefit costs reviews.

Information on the update can be obtained by visiting the website at <https://trpc.org/160/Hazards-Mitigation-Plan>. The projected adoption date for the plan is December 2023.

Plan update participants include the public and community stakeholders, plan partners (agencies seeking plan adoption: Thurston County, towns, cities, special districts, colleges, and others), the Steering Committee (the Emergency Management Council of Thurston County), the Project Manager (TRPC), the Hazard Mitigation Planning Workgroup (representatives from each plan partner and other interested stakeholders), technical partners (local, state, and federal government

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staff and academic support for development of the risk assessment), and regulatory partners (FEMA, Washington Emergency Management Division, other state agencies).

An online survey format was used to conduct the Thurston County Communities Natural Hazards and Resiliency Survey. The survey was available to the public from June 6, 2022 through July 31, 2022. The survey included 12 questions about perceived risks and preferred mitigation activities. The results are based on 55 responses received from respondents within the City of Tumwater. Citizens are most concerned about earthquakes, climate change, wildfire, and extreme heat.

Chair Robbins asked whether the plan covers an influx of population due to a major disaster in a surrounding area or within the state. Manager Medrud explained that the plan is intended to cover mitigation that can be pursued now to reduce the effects of particular natural hazards occurring within the Thurston region.

Planner Smith-Erickson reported the primary contents of the plan include:

- Community Profile (breakdown of demographics such as housing, employment, income, and development activity) & Capability Assessment (the City's unique set of capabilities and tools that can be leveraged to support hazard mitigation such as the Comprehensive Plan, Capital Facilities Plan, code updates, and specific plans and actions supporting mitigation measures)
- Risk Assessments (severity, impacts, probability, historic occurrences, and summary assessment)
- City of Tumwater mitigation initiatives: (1) Currently Adopted, (2) Completed, (3) New, and (4) Future Land Use Plans, Zoning, and Development Regulations

Planner Smith-Erickson reviewed the City of Tumwater hazards and the level of risk as assessed by consultant, Tetra Tech. The City was ranked high for earthquake hazard with a low risk of flooding except along the banks of the Deschutes River, and medium risk for landslide in the area around the Deschutes River and other areas of mapped unstable soils. Sea level rise was ranked low and severe weather was ranked as a medium hazard. Tumwater was ranked low for Tsunami and volcano/lahar; however, the plan is addressing ash fall. Tumwater was ranked as a medium risk for wildfire.

Commissioner Von Holtz commented on the potential traffic impacts of a bridge failure along the Nisqually River. She asked whether the plan accounts for those types of impacts that could occur in Tumwater

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because of other disasters in nearby locations. Planner Smith-Erickson explained that Tetra Tech evaluated hazards based on impacts to the economy, people, and structures. The evaluations did not consider traffic impacts or the possibility of relocating people to other jurisdictions. The Cities of Yelm, Lacey, and other south county jurisdictions may have addressed those issues within their respective plans. The regional plan addresses the importance of all jurisdictions working together for possible effects from disasters.

Chair Robbins encouraged staff to consider exploring those possibilities as disasters could occur in other locations that could affect Tumwater. Planner Smith-Erickson replied that the regional plan addresses all hazards and all jurisdictions and how hazards might affect other jurisdictions.

Planner Smith-Erickson reviewed draft mitigation initiatives for each identified hazard for the City:

- Earthquake – risk ranking; high: Four initiatives proposed include: conducting a voluntary non-structural earthquake readiness inspection for all critical facilities on an annual basis; have a professional engineer or otherwise qualified person assess infrastructure for earthquake vulnerable ability; include retrofitting/replacement of critical system elements and Capital Improvements Plan (LOTT)/Capital Facilities Plan (City); and install auxiliary generator to power City main well/water supply.
- Wildfire – risk ranking: Medium: Five initiatives proposed include: establish fire breaks and routine maintenance on Tumwater Hill adjacent to City property, the newly created City Park, and the elementary school (2017 HMP); adopt the Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code (WWUIC), International Building Code (IBC) and International Residential Code (IRC) to meet WWUIC requirements (2023 Proposed); update the City of Tumwater map to show wildland urban interface map layers to coincide with the 2023 Building Code Update (2023 Proposed); routinely inspect the functionality of fire hydrants (2023 Proposed); develop a vegetation management plan; and incorporate proper species selection, planting, and maintenance practices into landscape code updates (2023 Proposed). *Chair Robbins asked whether the plan includes any provisions regarding fireworks despite being banned in the City. Manager Medrud said the plan does not address fireworks. Fireworks in the City is an education/enforcement issue.*

*Commissioner Edwards asked whether the City routinely inspects the functionality of fire hydrants. Planner Smith-*

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*Erickson said inspection of fire hydrants was not included in the prior hazard mitigation plan. The Tumwater Fire Department has an established process of inspecting fire hydrants to meet insurance requirements. The updated plan will include routine inspection of fire hydrants.*

*Chair Robbins asked whether any areas in the City lack fire hydrant service. Manager Medrud said he is not aware of any areas that lack fire water service other than some areas lack sufficient water pressure or low water pressure for particular uses.*

- Severe Storm/Weather - risk ranking: Medium: Four initiatives are proposed: inspect all trees within falling distance of the four City-owned critical facilities to determine if they pose a hazard to the facility or operation of the facility during a storm (2017 HMP); reduce heat islands by implementing urban forestry code updates (2023 Proposed); modify land use and environmental regulations to support vegetation management activities and improved reliability in utility corridors (2023 Proposed); and assess feasibility of installing solar power and battery storage at City Hall and Tumwater Library (secondary emergency operations center) (2023 Proposed).

Planner Smith-Erickson reviewed next steps in the development of the plan. The draft Countywide Hazard Profiles/Risk Assessment is due on July 31, 2023. From July 24 through August 25, 2023 the draft action plan will be presented at an open house. A survey will be released. Planner Smith-Erickson reported she is exhibiting at the Thurston County Fair in conjunction with Thurston County Emergency Management at an informational booth to promote the open house and survey and the importance of being prepared. Risk assessments are scheduled for completion by the end of August. The draft core plan is scheduled for completion by September 1, 2023 with draft annexes completed by the end of September. The goal is to send the entire plan to FEMA in November 2023. On September 23, 2023 TRPC is sponsoring an Emergency Preparedness Expo and will present the draft plan at Peter G. Schmidt Elementary School.

Commissioner Varela asked whether it is possible to amend the plan following the adoption by FEMA. Manager Medrud said the City's Annex is part of the larger plan adopted by FEMA. Any amendments to the plan would be difficult; however, if issues should arise that necessitate consideration, the City would likely be able to update its Annex. Planner Smith-Erickson added that FEMA could also send the plan back for required revisions based on the agency's checklist prior to the agency's adoption of the plan.

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Planner Smith-Erickson responded to questions regarding the public participation process. The update includes a public participation plan that incorporates opportunities for public feedback and comments. The final public comment is from September 25 through October 8, 2023.

Manager Medrud indicated the final draft version of the plan will be presented to the City Council with the Commission reviewing hazard mitigation issues as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update as the City is required to incorporate elements from the plan into the larger Land Use Element and other elements within the Comprehensive Plan.

#### **2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE – WORK PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE:**

Manager Medrud presented details of the Commission's review process for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

The work program includes an introduction of the update process and the issues to be addressed, as well as an introduction to state guidance materials. State guidance materials comprise approximately 750 pages containing information that must be addressed as part of the update process. The review will be presented in smaller increments to the extent possible. It is important for Commissioners to advise if some of the information is not understandable as the amount of information is extensive and can be complicated. It is important to receive information from the Commissioners on the amount of time Commissioners have to review materials beyond regular scheduled meetings.

The update timeline has some flexibility based on new requirements passed by the Legislature in 2023 that are not included within any of the guidance materials. The City's schedule is based on state requirements. The goal of the update is to provide a document that is easier for the public to absorb with areas of focus contained in shorter documents. With the advent of the City's new City Administrator, the focus of the update has not changed direction.

The structure of current Comprehensive Plan Elements include:

- **Capital Facilities Plan** - Provides a need assessment and funding strategies for the next six years of City projects to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan
- **Conservation Element** - Identifies critical environmental areas and valuable natural resources as well as policies to protect and conserve them
- **Economic Development Plan** - Identifies techniques to attract new development and business to key areas in the City
- **Housing Element** - Studies the existing housing stock and explores methods of providing sufficient affordable housing for

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all economic segments

- **Tumwater Thurston County Joint Plan** - Aligns City and County policy concerning the Tumwater Urban Growth Areas to ease future annexation transitions (not part of update process)
- **Land Use Element** - Contains goals, policies, and designations for current and future land use throughout the City
- **Lands for Public Purposes Element** - Identifies facilities such as solid waste, sanitary sewer system, water system, fire and emergency services, police protection, school facilities, library services, general City facilities, and outlines the process for siting essential public facilities
- **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan** - Outlines plans to retain open space and develop recreation opportunities and parks (not part of update process)
- **Shoreline Master Program** - Provides a detailed shoreline inventory and master program for managing shoreline development (not part of update process)
- **Transportation Plan** - Determines whether public multimodal transportation systems will adequately serve new development
- **Utilities Element** - Inventories and proposed improvements for private gas, electricity, cable TV, and telecommunications utilities

Structure of current Comprehensive Plan includes:

- Appendices
  - Neighborhoods
  - County-Wide Planning Policies
  - Sustainable Thurston Goals and Actions
  - Land Use and Housing Survey Results
  - Foundational Plans and Documents
  - Glossary
  - Ordinance No. O2016-012
  - 2016 Tumwater Soil Report
- Maps
  - Conservation
  - Land Use
  - Utilities
- Subarea Plans
  - Brewery District Plan
  - Black Hills Subarea Transportation Plan
  - Capitol Boulevard Corridor Plan
  - Littlerock Road Subarea Plan

Individual Elements are organized as follows:

1. Introduction

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- Background on the purpose of the Element
  - Applicable Growth Management Act Goals
  - Applicable County-Wide Planning Policies
  - Applicable Sustainable Thurston Policies
  - Table of Foundational Plans
2. Technical Discussion appropriate for the Element
- For example, the Conservation Element addresses the following:
    - ☐ Agricultural Lands
    - ☐ Forest Lands
    - ☐ Mineral Resource Lands
    - ☐ Wetland Areas
    - ☐ Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas
    - ☐ Frequently Flooded Areas
    - ☐ Geological Hazardous Areas
    - ☐ Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas
3. Goals, Policies, and Actions for each Element

The link to current Comprehensive Plan documents is at <https://www.ci.tumwater.wa.us/departments/communitydevelopment-department/tumwater-comprehensive-plan>. Staff is working on the website page for the Update that will include a library of guidance material for the public and the Commission.

Included in the Commission's meeting packet are the following materials from the Department of Commerce:

- A Guide to the Periodic Update Process Under the Growth Management Act. The Department of Commerce published the Guide to explain the necessary steps in the periodic update process. The Guide supplements Growth Management Act statutes and administrative rules that describe procedures that must be followed and substantive issues that must be addressed in the Update.
- Periodic Update Checklist for Fully-Planning Cities. The Periodic Update Checklist helps cities planning under the Growth Management Act conduct the periodic review and update of comprehensive plans and development regulations required by RCW 36.70A.130(4). The checklist identifies what needs to need be updated to reflect local conditions or to comply with changes in law since the last periodic update.
- Critical Areas Checklist. The Critical Areas Checklist helps cities planning under the Growth Management Act update their development regulations for resource lands and critical areas

Manager Medrud reviewed other state guidance materials pertinent to each Element.



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Manager Medrud reviewed the work scheduled during Phase 1 of the Update:

**Phase I – Community Engagement Summer 2023 – Fall 2023:**

- Community Outreach – Initial actions include Comprehensive Plan Update website with links to all materials and meeting materials, updating email and other contact lists, open houses, coffees, and other meetings.
- Gap Analysis – July 2023 – September 2023: Staff is evaluating the current plan and identifying needed updates.
- Commerce Grant – July 2023 – Fall 2023
- Data Collection – July 2023 – Spring 2024: Data collection will focus on transportation, economic development, housing capacity analysis in conjunction with other jurisdictions to identify the amount of housing to accommodate growth both in the City and the region for all income groups
- Format of the Updated Plan – July 2023 – September 2023: Format drafts will be reviewed by the Commission.

**Phase I – Gap Analysis**

The Gap Analysis will review the following current documents:

**1. Comprehensive Plan Elements**

- ○ Goals, policies, and actions
- ○ Technical information
- ○ Maps
- ○ Subarea Plans

**2. Regulations**

- Municipal Code
  - Title 3 – Revenue and Finance
  - Title 14 – Development Code Administration
  - Title 16 – Environment
  - Title 17 – Land Division
  - Title 18 – Zoning
- Citywide Design Guidelines
  - Adopted by TMC 18.43 Citywide Design Guidelines (state changes to affordable housing adopted during 2023 legislative session includes some limitations on design requirements for housing)
- Development Guide
  - Adopted by TMC 15.02 Public Works Construction Standard

The Gap Analysis reference materials include:

1. Commerce Periodic Update Checklist

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2. Ecology Critical Areas Checklist
3. Commerce Periodic Update Materials
4. 2022-23 State Legislation
5. Plans Adopted by the City since 2016
6. Specific Plans from Agencies Outside the City

Scheduled Planning Commission reviews include:

1. Land Use Element with Appendices, Maps, and Subarea Plans – August 8, 2023 and September 12, 2023
2. Housing Element – August 22, 2023 and September 26, 2023 (includes a presentation from staff with the Department of Commerce on the update of the Housing Element)
3. Initial Development Code Amendments – October 10, 2023
4. Climate Element – October 24, 2023 (new legislation requires a Climate Element in the Comprehensive Plan, staff will review requirements for the element)
5. Conservation Element – October 24, 2023
6. Economic Development Plan – November 14, 2023
7. Lands for Public Purposes Element – November 28, 2023
8. Utilities Element – November 28, 2023
9. Transportation Plan – January 9, 2024

The Department of Commerce published guidance on incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the document for the Housing Element; however, staff proposes to extend the guidance to all Comprehensive Plan Elements.

Phase 2 of the Update begins in January 2024. Community outreach efforts will continue throughout the Update process. The Department of Commerce will review the proposed plan format in spring 2024. Individual Element meetings with the Planning Commission and the General Government Committee about specific changes in each Element will be scheduled. Concurrently, the process for Development Code amendments will be in process. Phase 3 is the adoption process with focused discussions beginning in November 2024 encompassing the entire document. Two draft ordinances will be prepared for the Comprehensive Plan Update and Development Code changes. The SEPA review is scheduled from November 2024 to December 2024. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is due by June 30, 2025.

Manager Medrud addressed questions about the purpose of the funding from the Department of Commerce. Funding of \$125,000 from the Department of Commerce will be earmarked for consultants to assist in updating the Transportation Plan as well as data for the Economic Development Plan. He described additional internal staffing resources assisting in the Update process.

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Chair Robbins asked about opportunities to promote the Commission's worksessions to solicit more public participation and engagement. Manager Medrud said he is working with Communications staff on different notification methods to the public. Next year after proposed changes have been identified, public engagement will of ongoing importance.

### **NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next meeting date is scheduled on August 8, 2023.

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Planner Smith-Erickson noted that the Tumwater Fire Department regularly evaluates fire hydrants in the City for insurance classification.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**Commissioner Edwards moved, seconded by Commissioner Valera, to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President  
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