MEETING MINUTES

TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
October 27, 2026

CONVENE:	7:00 p.m.
PRESENT:	Chair Elizabeth Robbins, Vice Chair Brandon Staff, and Commissioners Sandra Nelson, Terry Kirkpatrick, Matthew Rounsley, and Gina Kotek. Staff: Deputy Community Development Director Sharon Lumbantobing, Associate Planner Dana Bowers, and Economic Development Coordinator Gene Angel.
CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:	Chair Robbins requested to change the order of Items 8 (2027 Long Range Planning Work Program) and Item 9 (Ordinance No. O2026-012 – 2026 Comprehensive Plan Amendments). The Planning Commission agreed with this request.
APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:	**Commissioner Nelson moved, seconded by Commissioner Rounsley, to approve the minutes of October 13, 2026, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**
COMMISSIONERS' REPORT:	No report given.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT:	No report given.
PUBLIC COMMENT:	No public comment.
2026 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS – ADOPTION OF ECONOMIC	Planner Bowers presented Ordinance No. O2026-012, Economic Development Element, providing an overview of the criteria, key findings and recommendations.

DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT UPDATES:

Commissioners discussed the following topics and raised questions about:

- Current regulations for data centers and battery energy storage systems
- Tumwater's reliance on public-sector employment, slowing growth in public-sector jobs, and opportunities to diversify Tumwater's employment base
- Staff capacity to implement the Economic Development Plan
- Redevelopment in established neighborhoods and potential displacement of seniors and young families
- Opportunities to partner with the Port of Olympia to develop an avionics industry and maintain transportation infrastructure to support exports
- Placemaking strategies, including business outreach, a community pride campaign, a creative arts district, greater use of public spaces, and support for local restaurants and mixed-use development
- Redevelopment at the former brewery sites
- Additional strategies to improve housing and childcare affordability, including advocating for state legislation
- The role of the Multifamily Tax Exemption Program in supporting housing development and affordability
- Commuting patterns between Tumwater and surrounding communities, including residents who work outside the city and employees who commute into Tumwater, and opportunities to better align local housing and employment
- The regional economic and housing impacts of Joint Base Lewis McChord, a major employer 30 miles from Tumwater
- Inclusion of the Tribes throughout the Economic Development Plan

MOTION:

Commissioner Rounsley moved, seconded by Commissioner Kotek, to set a public hearing on Ordinance No. O2026-012, Comprehensive Plan Amendments – Economic Development Plan for November 10, 2026. Motion carried unanimously.

2027 WORK PROGRAM:

Deputy Director Lumbantobing presented the proposed 2027 Long Range Planning Work Program, which allocates hours based on 2.5 full-time equivalent staff. The Deputy Director explained the distinction between above-the-line and below-the-line activities in the Work Program. A joint City Council and Planning Commission

work session is scheduled for December 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the proposed 2027 Long Range Planning Work Program.

Planning Commissioners asked questions about:

- Regional Housing Council expected outcomes
- Habitat Conservation Plan status and its relationship to development
- Staff capacity to complete work plan activities within available time and resources

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 27, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT: **With no further business, Chair Robbins adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.**

Prepared by Dana Bowers, Associate Planner