

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING  
June 27, 2023 Page 1**

**CONVENE:** 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Planning Commission Chair Elizabeth Robbins and Commissioners Grace Edwards, Meghan Sullivan, Michael Tobias, Anthony Varela, and Kelly Von Holtz.

Excused: Commissioners Terry Kirkpatrick and Brian Schumacher.

Staff: Planning Manager Brad Medrud and Housing and Land Use Planner Erika Smith-Erikson.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 28, 2023:**

**PLANNING COMMISSION MARCH  
14, 2023:**

**JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION - TREE BOARD MAY 9, 2023:**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Tobias moved, seconded by Commissioner Edwards, to approve the minutes of February 28, 2023, March 14, 2023, and May 9, 2023 as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS:** Commissioner Tobias said he is unable to attend the July 25, 2023 meeting because he will be on vacation.

Chair Robbins commented positively on the City's new logo. Manager Medrud said the new logo was approved several months ago. The City is transitioning to the logo. The City is also scheduled to publish its new website within the next month.

Commissioner Edwards referred to upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> of July City activities and fireworks show.

**MANAGER'S REPORT:** Manager Medrud shared that the City is working on some internal matters that will affect the work of the Commission. He anticipates

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**  
**June 27, 2023 Page 2**

sharing some updates with the Commission in the next several days.

New City Administrator Lisa Parks recently joined the City.

**PUBLIC  
COMMENT:**

There were no public comments

**PRELIMINARY  
DOCKET FOR 2023  
ANNUAL  
HOUSEKEEPING  
AMENDMENTS:**

Planner Smith-Erikson reported City staff and the community provided feedback on proposed minor housekeeping amendments to the Tumwater Municipal Code (TMC). The proposed amendments are minor corrections to the City's development regulations and do not require individual ordinances.

TMC 18.60.025(A) establishes a process for the amendments similar to process for annual Comprehensive Plan amendments. The Commission reviews the preliminary docket of proposed amendments and forwards a recommendation to the City Council on amendments to include within the final docket. Following the Council's approval of the final docket, staff prepares an ordinance for consideration by the Commission and the City Council later in the fall.

The four proposed amendments include:

- A. Manufactured Home Parks Required Open Space:** The amendment clarifies open space requirements for mobile home parks that are exempt from divisions of land. The proposed language is not included in current park and open space areas standards for development without divisions of land.
- B. Undergrounding Utilities Requirements:** The amendment clarifies that new and existing utilities shall be installed underground and establishes an appeal process through the Engineering Services Manager
- C. Town Center Mixed Use Subdistrict First Floor Uses:** The amendment clarifies uses allowed on the first floor of commercial and residential development along main streets in the Town Center Mixed Use Subdistrict. The current code is unclear as to the allowed uses.
- D. Building Heights Over Sixty-Five Feet for Specific Industrial Uses:** The amendment establishes a conditional use permit process in the Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial zoning districts for certain uses exceeding 65 feet in height.

Commissioner Tobias asked whether Tumwater has a maximum building height limit in the City. Manager Medrud said the

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**  
**June 27, 2023 Page 3**

maximum building height allowed in the City is in the Brewery District of 85 feet. The airport has imposed height limits in some areas; however, the City has not exceeded the height of 85 feet. Building height will likely be a discussion topic as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Planner Smith-Erikson reported next steps in the process include a worksession on July 25, 2023. The General Government Committee is scheduled to receive a briefing on the preliminary docket on August 9, 2023. The City Council will consider the preliminary docket at its September 5, 2023 meeting.

Manager Medrud added that the Commission has the option of cancelling the worksession and forwarding a recommendation to the General Government Committee on the preliminary docket. Code language for each amendment will be included in the final docket. Dependent upon the timing for determining the final docket, the schedule includes a briefing to the Commission on October 24, 2023 followed by a worksession on November 14, 2023 and a public hearing on November 28, 2023. The Council is scheduled to consider the final docket at its February 6, 2024 meeting.

Commissioners and staff discussed changing the timing of the review process for the proposed amendments.

**MOTION:**

**Commissioner Tobias moved, seconded by Commissioner Varela, to defer a recommendation (worksession) to the General Government Committee on the Preliminary Docket for 2023 Annual Housekeeping Amendments to the July 11, 2023 meeting to enable all Commissioners to have an opportunity to review the docket. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**2025 COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN PERIODIC  
UPDATE PROCESS –  
COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT PLAN:**

Planner Smith-Erickson reported that following meetings with staff, staff selected a slogan for the Comprehensive Plan Update of *Balancing Nature and Community: Tumwater's Path to Sustainable Growth*.

The City is required to conduct a periodic update of its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations to ensure it complies with the Growth Management Act (GMA). The last update was completed in 2016. The Plan and development regulations will be updated to reflect the community's vision and the state's requirements for the Comprehensive Plan and related development regulations. The Legislature passed a new law changing the periodic update from eight years to ten years following this update cycle. The next update is scheduled in 2035 with a progress report required in 2030. The updated Comprehensive Plan

## **TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**

### **MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**

**June 27, 2023 Page 4**

will address diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the plan and incorporate climate mitigation, adaptation, and sustainability goals. The GMA requires jurisdictions to use a 20-year population projection provided by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM). The projections are developed every five years.

Chair Robbins asked about the requirements for submittal of the progress report in 2030. Manager Medrud said staff is reviewing the new requirements; however, staff believes the report will be forwarded to the Department of Commerce, which will likely provide information on the report format and required content.

Planner Smith-Erickson reported state law requires each city and county to establish a public participation program for revisions to comprehensive plans and development regulations. The engagement plan assists the City in establishing efforts to engage the community and stakeholders throughout the update using the IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation) process. The process uses a spectrum of public participation and five levels of engagement of inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower. Based on a preliminary meeting with Communications staff, the public engagement plan will focus on involvement and collaboration through workshops, polling, citizen advisory committees, focus groups, surveys, and public meetings. Community engagement practices create a means for participatory local democracy by giving members of the public an opportunity to become directly involved in guiding policy decisions that will shape the future of their community.

The City's ten Community Engagement Goals are:

1. Provide information to enhance community understanding of issues.
2. Seek early and continuous involvement from people who care about the Plan and the community.
3. Offer opportunities for the community to provide feedback to staff and to appointed and elected officials.
4. Develop an accessible, equitable, and engaging Plan.
5. Make community-driven planning the priority.
6. Highlight projects implemented since the last Comprehensive Plan periodic update.
7. Use a flexible, phased approach.
8. Integrate and consolidate goals from all Elements of the Plan and resource Plans.
9. Develop a Comprehensive Plan that is in an easy to read and in an understandable format.

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**  
**June 27, 2023 Page 5**

10. Rely on multiple communications strategies, tactics, and platforms to share information.

Commissioner Varela asked whether staff has identified specific metrics tied to the engagement goals. Manager Medrud said that primarily, staff will rely on opportunities. Unless the City sponsors a scientific survey that is time-consuming and expensive, it is very difficult to measure outreach efforts. Much of the participation can be contributed to specific topics. Topics can generate both positive and negative responses for participating especially if the issue is sensitive versus topics that typically would be perceived as not affecting the community. The important factor is ensuring the City provides opportunities to ensure the community is aware of the update and the issues.

Planner Smith-Erickson added that the Comprehensive Plan includes 11 different elements and staff will review each element to help inform the public on how each element may affect the community and why the public should become involved.

Chair Robbins asked about the possibility of considering a continuous outreach process because of the lag in time between the periodic updates by utilizing different communication vehicles such as the City's webpage or social media presence. Manager Medrud commented on the importance of tying the update into all other work products completed over the last 10 years. It will be important that the public process incorporates other projects and plans. He agreed to incorporate more frequent contact points or other outreach efforts. The process could also consider the possibility of an annual reporting process recognizing that it would not be a legal requirement.

Planner Smith-Erickson reported the community engagement process will be flexible and may be altered to take advantage of events and opportunities that could arise. Public hearings, worksessions, and briefings will follow state law and Tumwater Municipal Code requirements for public notification. A list of initial proposed stakeholders and stakeholder groups are identified in Appendix A within the staff report. The Commission previously offered suggestions on stakeholders. Staff worked with Communications staff to update the list. Throughout the public process, staff will use the IAP2 process to identify target audiences and stakeholders. Staff will also utilize an email contact list, a personalized Update webpage, social media, surveys, news releases, and open houses.

Planner Smith-Erickson identified the 11 Elements of the Comprehensive Plan:

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**  
**June 27, 2023 Page 6**

- Capital Facilities Plan
- Conservation Plan
- Economic Development Plan
- Housing
- Tumwater-Thurston County Joint Plan
- Land Use
- Lands for Public Purposes
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Shoreline Master Program
- Transportation
- Utilities

Each element might require different levels of public participation based on state law and feedback from the community.

Manager Medrud added that the Housing, Transportation, and Land Use Elements would likely receive the most attention as they serve as the core of the update. The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element will likely be deferred for a future update. Staff plans to update the Economic Development Plan. It is likely the Shoreline Master Program will not be updated as the Program was recently updated.

Planner Smith-Erickson reviewed public outreach tools:

- Staff will maintain an email contact list of interested members of the community and stakeholders to receive notification of key meetings and other information related to the update process. The City's established email list will also be used to communicate with stakeholders. Staff is working with Communications staff to develop a QR code for easy access to the Comprehensive Plan Update webpage.
- Staff will present information on the update process and community engagement effort during City Council and Planning Commission meetings throughout the periodic update. The community will be notified of key meetings and open houses via the periodic update webpage, social media, Tumwater On-Tap e-newsletter, and City email contact list.
- Online surveys will be available on the periodic update webpage during 2023 to assess community priorities. The visions, goals, and policies in the existing Comprehensive Plan will serve as a starting point when developing survey questions. Staff will recreate a survey that was mailed out in 2017. The "Share your vision for Tumwater" will be an online platform with a selective mailing list. City staff will take the lead in its development. Community members will

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**  
**June 27, 2023 Page 7**

be notified of surveys via email, the periodic update webpage, the City's social media platforms, and other means.

Commissioner Edwards asked about other methods of outreach rather than only through electronic venues. Manager Medrud advised that staff is exploring options for those in the community lacking electronic access, such as scheduling some informal meetings throughout the community.

- All materials associated with the periodic update will be posted on the periodic update webpage located on the City's website. The webpage will include a list of frequently asked questions, Comprehensive Plan Update background and summary, and meeting information. New proposals to the update webpage include a staff introduction section, an interactive map of meeting location and times, and visuals.
- Updates and notice of community meetings will be posted on the City social media platforms. Staff will work with community partners to share updates and surveys. The City will issue news releases to advertise surveys, key open houses, and other important information.
- Open houses enable staff to discuss the periodic update with the community prior to the start of and during the legislative process. The goal of the presentations is to meet people where they are, ensuring equity and diversity. Information about open house dates and other key meeting dates will be widely distributed through news releases, social network blog, the periodic update webpage, the City's social media platforms, and the email contact lists. Staff will create interactive tools to engage involvement and interest such as charades, pamphlets, displays, and comment forms.

Commissioner Varela asked about options to interact with other public and private agencies that community members frequently contact, such as for renewing licenses, car rental agencies, moving companies, or the Post Office to identify new residents through change of address requests. In those instances, staff could provide information to community members about the update process. Planner Smith-Erickson said the original draft plan included contacting real estate agents to create an informational pamphlet for distribution to people who are buying or selling homes in the City. Manager Medrud recommended reviewing the suggestions with Communications staff to ensure consolidation of all efforts.

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**  
**June 27, 2023 Page 8**

Planner Smith-Erickson shared information on public participation methods utilized during the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update process. Staff utilized the utility bill insert questionnaire in winter 2016. In January and February 2017, telephone surveys were completed along with school board coffee talks. Staff plans to document and track public engagement efforts throughout the update process.

Chair Robbins recommended using the Manager's Report during meetings to provide updates on public engagement outcomes.

Planner Smith-Erickson said the timeline for Community Engagement Phase I is from summer 2023 through winter 2024. During Phase I, staff will review visions, goals, and policies in the existing Comprehensive Plan and prepare gap analyses of all Comprehensive Plan Elements and Plans. The Department of Commerce continues to work on updated guidance to jurisdictions. The community and stakeholders will be introduced to the periodic update process through a series of communications and asked to prioritize the Comprehensive Plan's vision, goals, and policies through a variety of media engagement methods, including surveys, open houses, informal meetings, presentations, the City periodic update webpage, social media platforms, and email contact list. The Update website will be launched by the end of July. The first public outreach meeting is tentatively scheduled in August 2023.

During Phase II from winter 2024 through spring 2024, focus groups of technical experts will review Comprehensive Plan Elements and Plans that are not represented through the City's boards or commissions. The focus groups will review and provide input into relevant draft Comprehensive Plan Elements and Plans. Feedback gathered through the community engagement process will also be shared with these groups. Contact with the community will continue through a variety of media engagement methods.

Commissioner Tobias asked about the source of focus group technical experts. Manager Medrud said members will be professionals within their respective fields, such as transportation consultants to assist in the development of the Transportation Plan, as well as stakeholders with transportation experience to provide input. For the update of the Economic Development Plan, staff will contact the technical consultant who assisted in identifying and including initial data in the plan.

Planner Smith-Erickson reported Phase III is the legislative process beginning in summer 2024 through June 30, 2025. Staff will complete draft versions of the Comprehensive Plan Elements and



## TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION

### MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING

June 27, 2023 Page 9

Plans during Phase III. Access to drafts of the Plan will be available to the community through the City's periodic update webpage, social media platforms, and email contact list. Relevant City advisory boards and commissions will develop recommendations and forwarded to the Planning Commission. All focus group members will have an opportunity to review the work. The Planning Commission will hold a number of worksessions to review Comprehensive Plan Elements and Plans. Opportunities for a joint worksessions will be considered. The Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing to receive community comment on the draft Comprehensive Plan before developing findings of fact, conclusions, and recommendations that will be forwarded to City Council. Public notice of the hearing will be published in accordance with state law and the TMC at least 30 days prior to the date of the hearing. In addition to the required noticing procedures, notice will also be provided through the City's periodic update webpage, social media platforms, and email contact list.

Manager Medrud reported the periodic update email is [compplan@ci.tumwater.wa.us](mailto:compplan@ci.tumwater.wa.us). At the Commission's July 25, 2023 meeting, information on the schedule will be shared. The proposed public outreach plan is scheduled for review by the City Council in July for approval.

The Commission supported moving the proposed public outreach plan to the City Council for consideration.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting is scheduled as a joint meeting with the Tree Board on July 11, 2023.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Commissioner Varela moved, seconded by Commissioner Sullivan, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

Prepared by Valerie Gow, Recording Secretary/President  
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