

**TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
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**CONVENE:** 6:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Debbie Sullivan and Councilmembers Peter Agabi, Michael Althausen, Joan Cathey, Leatta Dahlhoff, Angela Jefferson, Charlie Schneider, and Eileen Swarthout.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Community Development Director Michael Matlock, Finance Director Troy Niemeyer, Police Chief Jon Weiks, Water Resources and Sustainability Director Dan Smith, Planning Manager Brad Medrud, Economic Development Program Manager Austin Ramirez, and Communications Manager Ann Cook.

**TUMWATER  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN AND THE 2025  
PERIODIC UPDATE:**

For the benefit of newer members of the Council, Manager Medrud reviewed the requirements for the periodic update of the Tumwater Comprehensive Plan as required by the Growth Management Act (GMA). The last periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan was in 2016. The periodic update schedule is based on a 10-year cycle. The GMA includes goals and specific instructions covering a range of topics to be addressed by comprehensive plans. Comprehensive plans address state requirements and create the policies of cities in the development of regulations and the development code. Essentially, comprehensive plans articulate the goals, policies, and implementation actions that guide day-to-day decisions by the Mayor, Council, and staff for managing the City's policymaking and investment decisions for the next 20 years.

The periodic update of the Tumwater Comprehensive plan covers the period from 2025 to 2045 and addresses diversity, inclusion, and equity throughout the plan. The updated plan will incorporate many changes in state law since the last update.

Projections of the City's population by 2045 indicate a growth in population of 37,380 people from the current population of 27,100 people. The projections are based on calculations completed by Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) in 2018. It is likely the City will need more multi-family housing in the future based on housing goals established by the state and outcomes from the periodic update process. Additionally, the annual update process of the Comprehensive Plan enables the City to introduce new information not part of the periodic update. State law also affords a five-year check-in process for the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan requiring some reporting and analysis by the City to review the status of goals and objectives prior to the next periodic update.

New state requirements include the addition of a Climate Element within the Comprehensive Plan. Council and staff previously discussed the inclusion of information from the Climate Mitigation Plan throughout all comprehensive plan elements. However, a separate Climate

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Element is also required.

Household size has increased from 2.2 people per each dwelling unit to 2.38 people per dwelling unit since the last update. As of 2020, the City was estimated to have 11,064 housing units based on the US Census. The projected total by 2045 is 17,740 housing units reflective of a 60% increase in the inventory in 2020. Since 2020, the City has added 600 new housing units and 200 housing units by annexation through April 2023. Today, the City is not achieving its 2025 forecast for housing units; however, large development proposals are in process totaling 3,000 multi-family units and 400 single-family units.

The State Department of Commerce has indicated statewide, 1.1 million new homes will be required over the next 20 years. Based on new state requirements, each jurisdiction must plan for different income groups within the spectrum of various requirements. Statewide, a substantial gap exists of housing that is affordable to most people. Each jurisdiction is also required to plan for emergency shelter projections.

Manager Medrud reviewed a table of state-required housing allocations for all jurisdictions in Thurston County based on average median incomes. The City, through its policies and zoning is required to create the conditions to enable people to develop and build housing meeting the needs of all income levels.

Manager Medrud reviewed information from 2020 on the types of jobs and respective income levels within Thurston County.

The City's Housing Action Plan approved in 2021 will inform how the City develops its Comprehensive Plan. The Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan will be of focus during the periodic update in terms of what the City will need to provide, where, and how. The Capital Facilities Element outlines how the City pays for infrastructure to support growth. The Land Use Element addresses land use density and mixture of uses, etc. The Housing Action Plan also guides all implementation strategies.

Based on figures provided by TRPC in 2017, approximately 27,000 jobs existed in the City.

The periodic update is a five-step process. Currently, the City is at the first step of engaging the community, which continues throughout the duration of the update process. Staff is gathering and analyzing data as part of the second step. In early 2024, staff will begin evaluating policies and the process for any revisions to policies. At the end of 2024, staff anticipates reviewing and updating regulations.

Manager Medrud reviewed different levels of public engagement available

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to the community and stakeholders to include during the plan code adoption process, legislative action by the City Council, processing of discretionary permits and Hearing Examiner hearings, and administrative processes by staff. Engagement with the community is intended to provide the community and stakeholders with meaningful opportunities to participate throughout the entire update process. The final Community Engagement Plan identifies tactics, strategies, and platforms to inform and consult the community and stakeholders throughout the periodic update. The intent of the community engagement process for flexibility and accommodating changes created through events and opportunities. The Community Engagement Plan is included on the periodic update webpage. Emails can be forwarded to [compplan@ci.tumwater.wa.us](mailto:compplan@ci.tumwater.wa.us) within the Long Range Planning Department to provide input and ask questions. All documents, schedules, and meeting notifications related to the periodic update are available on the City's periodic update webpage at [www.ci.tumwater.wa.us/2025CompPlan](http://www.ci.tumwater.wa.us/2025CompPlan) with a link to the current Comprehensive Plan. Written comments are welcome at any time during the periodic update process. Staff will address and publish all formal comments. Updates to the Council during the periodic update will primarily be through the General Government Committee as the committee receives updates throughout the process. The Planning Commission is briefed on all aspects and elements of the plan throughout the update process.

Manager Medrud reviewed timing of the major components of the three phases of the periodic update of: Community Engagement and Review; Plan Development; and Legislative Process. Staff applied for several state grants to provide funding for some components of the update. The City was recently notified of a grant award of \$75,000 for middle housing. A climate funding grant will support the development of the Climate Element.

Manager Medrud reviewed a list of available Department of Commerce guidance materials. Immediate next steps through the end of the year include the General Government Committee review of the Climate and Conservation Elements and an outline of required housing needs allocation within Thurston County. A joint worksession with the Council and the Planning Commission is scheduled on December 12, 2023. In December, the General Government Committee is scheduled to review the Economic Development Plan and Lands for Public Purposes and Utilities Elements.

Manager Medrud responded to comments and questions. Current reviews by the General Government Committee and the Planning Commission include existing elements with a focus on goals, policies, and actions, as well as changes in state law and required issues to be addressed as part of the update process. The process entails updating 24 individual elements. Staff is seeking guidance from General Government Committee members on the timing and issues to review with the Council, as the schedule at this

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time does not include meetings with the Council to review progress on the update. However, the Housing Element will likely require discussions with the Council for input as part of the update process. The joint meeting with the Planning Commission would likely be a good opportunity to review timing of briefings with the Council.

Councilmember Dahlhoff commented on how she plans to rely on Councilmembers to provide input and feedback on the different elements that are represented through their respective intergovernmental assignments.

Councilmember Cathey agreed and stressed the importance of everyone contributing to the joint effort. She thanked and acknowledged Manager Medrud for his efforts and for the development of thorough materials.

**TOGETHER!**  
**TUMWATER**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**SCHOOLS PROGRAM**  
**FINAL REPORT:**

City Administrator Parks reported the briefing is in response to a City agreement with TOGETHER to support the Community Schools Program. The program provides support to students in the Tumwater School District to be successful in school and to assist with housing, food, and other needs. Funds provided by the City totaled \$100,000 from federal ARPA funds.

Sierra Abrams, Community Schools Director, presented the Final Report for the Tumwater Community Schools Program for school year 2022-2023. The Community Schools strategy transforms a school into a place where educators, local community members, families, and students work together to strengthen conditions for student learning and healthy development. Through a school-based resource center, program managers align and leverage needed resources so students can focus on learning.

Ms. Abrams identified six staff members of TOGETHER! Service sites include resources centers and managers working with students and families. Cascadia High School was added in February 2023. The alternative school has approximately 100 enrolled students.

The 10-year old program in Tumwater began with a budget of \$115,000, which has expanded to \$600,000 reflective of the growth and investment from the City, Tumwater School District, and the community. The Tumwater School District contributes 50% with TOGETHER raising the remaining 50% with the City contributing, as well as private foundations and other grants from the state. The model is used nationwide.

For school year 2022-2023, the program case-managed 237 students and their families, distributed \$110,000 in client assistance funds (rental assistance, utilities, food, car repairs, clothes, and other basic needs), and raised \$20,000 during the annual golf tournament. Community-wide events included the distribution of 198 turkey boxes serving 1,053 family members, 81 sports physicals in partnership with Providence, and 50 students receiving immunizations through Thurston County Public Health

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and Social Services during a health clinic. The events featured resource fairs with community partners to connect families to various services and resources.

Some success stories include Cascadia High School experiencing its largest graduating class this year. Many graduates credited the efforts of the Community Schools program in helping them graduate. This year, the program was also able to provide a family with a much-needed vehicle to meet medical needs.

Ms. Abrams shared information on the program publicized through various social media platforms. She encouraged the community and the Council to connect. The sites include stories and sharing of information on partnerships.

Ms. Abrams shared information on how schools are selected to receive service. Over the last 10 years, the program has shifted with recent efforts to place a manager in each school in the Tumwater School District. At the current time, Bush Middle School and Littlerock and Black Lake Elementary Schools lack service. Schools were selected based on need as documented by data. Over time, community partnerships have increased.

Councilmember Cathey asked about other services provided by TOGETHER and supported by the City. Ms. Abrams said another program in Tumwater is the Host Homes program. Host Homes place unaccompanied and homeless youth with families in the community. The program is in its pilot phase and has housed several Tumwater students. She anticipates the program expanding to serve more youths. Providing service at Cascadia High School was important as many youth enrolled in the school are homeless and can be outreached by the program.

Ms. Abrams addressed questions on how the program identifies and attracts youths who may need assistance but experience stigma when seeking support. Resource centers are located in all participating schools where students can request assistance. The resource centers serve the school with a goal of forming relationships with the student body through one-on-one relationships with program managers and through social events. Resource centers serve as a place for students to gather without necessarily seeking or receiving services to reduce the stigma often associated with social service programs. Often it is about building relationships and creating connections over time. The goal is to provide low barrier opportunities to youths without the centers perceived as a place students seek help when needed. A major component of the program is working closely with school staff, counselors, and teachers to refer students to the program. The program's food sources are provided by the Thurston County Food Bank for elementary schools. For high schools and middle schools, food sources are provided through All Kids Win, which distributes food bags during the

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school year and summer. The need for food is increasing especially in the last several months when benefits were reduced in the EBT Program. The program was able to provide support through grocery and gas cards.

Ms. Abrams provided information on ways the community can contribute to support the Community Schools program. A campaign is launching on November 3, 2022 as part of the Give Local Campaign for the Community Foundation of South Sound for contributions to the organization's Swift Fund named after the founding executive director, Earlyse Swift.

Mayor Sullivan thanked Ms. Abrams for the update and acknowledged the importance of the program to the community.

**2024 DRAFT  
LEGISLATIVE  
AGENDA:**

Manager Ramirez briefed the Council on the proposed City of Tumwater's 2024 Legislative Agenda:

- **Bush Prairie Carbon Sequestration - \$2 million** to purchase 20 to 30 acres of gopher prairie habitat to preserve in perpetuity. *Kelsey Hulse with Strategies 360 provided information on the state's Climate Commitment Act and revenues generated through greenhouse gas auctions. The state has generated approximately \$1.3 billion with a fourth auction scheduled in December. The City is seeking funding to fund a habitat conservation program providing additional benefits of carbon sequestration. The project would sequester carbon as well as provide additional benefits of habitat creation for the purposes of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).*

*Councilmember Althausen inquired as to whether staff has explored whether the City would be able to sell credits of lands that would be sequestered permanently as a source of revenue to fund future land acquisition for habitat protection. Manager Ramirez affirmed that staff has initiated some research on the option and that it is included on the list of long-term funding strategies. Based on examples from across the country, the scale of prairie lands are much larger than the City's, which increases the ability to monetize sequestration. Additional research is necessary to determine the feasibility of pursuing that option. Acquisition of prairie land by the City could also afford the City with credits that could be sold to the development community as gopher credits or for other benefits.*

- **E Street Connection Engineering and Permitting - \$6.6 million.** *Any redevelopment opportunity within the existing brewery or the Capitol Boulevard corridor will be critical. The volume of traffic diverted from Capitol Boulevard with a new E Street connection would assist the City in converting the area to a walkable and retail-friendly corridor as identified in the Capitol Boulevard Corridor Plan and the Brewery District Development Plan.*

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- **Tumwater Boulevard/I-5 Interchange - \$5 million.** *The request supports new development and adds the first of two roundabouts at both ends of the interchange. The improvements are needed to reduce congestion, facilitate freight movement, avoid back-ups onto I-5 during peak travel hours, improve safety, promote economic development, and support significant additional housing.*
- **WSDOT Regional Offices Redevelopment - \$2.8 million.** *The request is a carryover from last year for continued engagement and education of legislators. The City is working with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) on the opportunity to purchase the site. WSDOT continues work on the site to prepare the site for surplus. The City also received a grant from the Department of Ecology for site planning. The City is seeking a developer to collaborate with the City to pursue the community's vision for redevelopment of the site.*

Manager Ramirez reported the City continues to participate with Shared Legislative Agenda partners, which will convene a meeting later in the month. A list of regional legislative priorities will be finalized later in the year as participating agencies submit their proposals. The City's proposal for the Shared Legislative Agenda is the Bush Prairie Carbon Sequestration request.

Policy and statewide issues the City continues to pursue include the 1% property tax cap and the extension of Transportation Benefit Districts.

The City's Legislative Agenda also includes four Association of Washington Cities (AWC) legislative priorities:

1. Help recruit and retain police officers for public safety by providing additional funding tools and resources for officer recruitment and retention to improve public safety.
2. Revise the arbitrary 1% property tax cap.
3. Continue strong state investments in infrastructure funding.
4. Provide behavioral health resources.

Manager Ramirez invited questions and comments.

Councilmember Dahlhoff questioned the feasibility of the requests given the 2024 legislative session is only 30 days. Ms. Hulse advised that the legislative session will span 60 days. The City has both short- and long-term ambitious goals and will need legislative support for accomplishing those goals. The core objective of the legislative agenda is to socialize the projects with as many legislators as possible to ensure more familiarity of the specific funding requests requested during the next session.

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Councilmember Cathey inquired as to the status of communications with the owner of the brewery. Manager Ramirez said staff often meets several times a year with the owner and is engaged in active discussions with the owner and staff. The owner is aware the E Street Connection project will be important for any redevelopment opportunity on the brewery site.

City Administrator Parks added that staff continues to work with the owner to promote redevelopment of the brewery site. The federal Environmental Protection Agency grant received by the City will assist the City in completing Phase 1 and 2 environmental assessments as well as the Department of Ecology integrated planning grant for the WSDOT site by affording more of the EPA grant to focus on the brewery property. Staff continues to meet, communicate, and encourage the facilitation of redevelopment of the brewery property.

**MAYOR/CITY  
ADMINISTRATOR'S  
REPORT:**

City Administrator Parks invited the Council to contact her with any questions about projects.

Mayor Sullivan advised of the availability of the support letter for the Nisqually Indian Tribe for signature by Councilmembers.

The next regular Council meeting is scheduled on Monday, November 6, 2023.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Councilmember Cathey referred to an email received by the Council concerning mobile home parks. She asked whether a discussion would be scheduled by the Council for a possible resolution. Mayor Sullivan responded that there have been discussions on what the City is able to pursue through a regional and statewide scale as the issue affects the entire state. The City is prohibited from enacting any type of rent control; however, the City could promote a change in state statutes.

Councilmember Althaus mentioned that the Regional Housing Council has scheduled a discussion on the shared regional agenda for housing. One topic is supporting two legislative bills that would provide for rent stabilization that would also apply to mobile home parks.

Councilmember Cathey inquired about the status of prior discussions regarding the City transitioning grounds maintenance equipment from gas-power to electrical power. City Administrator Parks advised that staff through the fleet management system is exploring those types of opportunities.

Director Smith said the City's Green Team is working on the issue. Staff is also evaluating a fleet assessment for a replacement schedule of equipment and fleet vehicles based on feasibility. Staff is also evaluating options as part of the next budget cycle for equipment replacement.



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Councilmember Cathey recommended promoting the issue in importance and replacing existing equipment with electrical equipment to the extent possible as the amount of pollution generated by gas-powered equipment and vehicles is substantial.

Mayor Sullivan recommended scheduling an update on the efforts by the City's Green Team at the beginning of the year. Director Smith confirmed the request.

Councilmember Dahlhoff mentioned her recommendation to staff to incorporate the Department of Enterprise Services Green Purchasing Guide when purchasing goods and services. The guide identifies third party certifications and green specifications for over 80 products.

**ADJOURNMENT:**      **With there being no further business, Mayor Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President  
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