

TO: City Council
FROM: Brad Medrud, Planning Manager
DATE: November 21, 2023
SUBJECT: Interlocal Agreement between the City of Tumwater and the Port of Olympia for the Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Amendment No. 3

1) Recommended Action:

Approve the Interlocal Agreement between the City of Tumwater and the Port of Olympia for the Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Amendment No. 3.

2) Background:

The streaked horned lark, the Olympia pocket gopher, and the Oregon spotted frog were listed for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 2013, 2014, and 2016, respectively. The Oregon vesper sparrow is not federally listed under the ESA yet, but it is anticipated to be listed in the future. All four species occur within the City.

Under the ESA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) may issue an incidental take permit to private and public landowners to allow for limited “take” of these species. One of the requirements for an incidental take permit to be issued is that USFWS approve a habitat conservation plan.

Working together with the Port of Olympia, a large group of stakeholders, and consultants, the City is preparing the Bush Prairie HCP to identify appropriate mitigation for impacts to the three endangered prairie species, as well as the Oregon spotted frog. The HCP will allow City and Port operations and maintenance, as well as public and private development to occur in some areas frequented by endangered species, in exchange for the development of contiguous mitigation sites that offset any impacts.

The goal of the HCP is to allow responsible growth to occur in the City, as required under the state Growth Management Act, while providing superior species protection over what the ad-hoc, case-by-case federal permitting approach currently provides. It is the intent of the HCP to cover all development actions by private and public landowners that require municipal approvals.

The City and Port approved an Interlocal Agreement in 2016 to prepare the Bush Prairie HCP.

The proposed Interlocal Agreement between the City of Tumwater and the Port of Olympia for the Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Amendment No. 3 would extend the term of the Interlocal Agreement two years from the current expiration date of December 31, 2023 to December 31, 2025.

All other terms and conditions of the Interlocal Agreement modified by Amendment No. 3 would remain in full force and effect.

The General Government Committee was briefed on the proposed amendment on November 8, 2023 and recommended that it go forward to the City Council on the consent calendar at their November 21, 2023 meeting.

3) Policy Support:

Comprehensive Plan Conservation Element Goal C-1: Recognize the significant role played by natural features and systems in determining the overall environmental quality and livability of Tumwater.

Comprehensive Plan Conservation Element Policy C-2.16: Protect and preserve habitats for species, which have been identified as endangered, threatened, or sensitive by the state or federal government, giving "special consideration: to conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries.

4) Alternatives:

☐ None.

5) Fiscal Notes:

Work on this project is funded by federal grants and City general government funds.

6) Attachments:

A. Interlocal Agreement between the City of Tumwater and the Port of Olympia for the Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Amendment No. 3