

# Tumwater Strategic Plan

2026 - 2032

FINAL DRAFT

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## Welcome

Dear Reader,

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Debbie Sullivan, Mayor  
Leatta Dahlhoff, Mayor Pro Tem  
Angela Jefferson, Councilmember  
Joan Cathey, Councilmember  
Eileen Swarthout, Councilmember  
Michael Althausen, Councilmember  
Peter Agabi, Councilmember  
Kelly Von Holtz, Councilmember

## Acknowledgements

### City Council

Debbie Sullivan, Mayor  
Leatta Dahlhoff, Mayor Pro Tem  
Angela Jefferson, Councilmember  
Joan Cathey, Councilmember  
Eileen Swarthout, Councilmember  
Michael Althaus, Councilmember  
Peter Agabi, Councilmember  
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Amy Leneker, The Leneker Team

## Introduction

This strategic plan shares guidance and direction from the Council to City staff, as they work to implement and provide services and infrastructure. It helps prioritize efforts, and creates transparency, particularly where there are on-going needs and challenges at the same time there are constraints on city resources. Based on previous priorities and goals, and on community input received through various, recent outreach efforts, the Council has developed this strategic plan.



The strategic plan centers on six focus areas, which are broad topic areas determined by the City Council to be a priority for Tumwater:

- Vibrant, Livable, and Inclusive Community
- Environmental Stewardship
- Community Mobility
- Health and Safety
- Growth and Development
- Tumwater Excellence

Each focus area includes a goal statement as well as a variety of prioritized **action items** to guide staff's development of **annual work plans**. Each action item has an identified lead department or co-lead departments who will be primarily responsible for coordinating and reporting to the City Council on the progress toward accomplishing the goal of the Focus Areas.

## Glossary of Terms

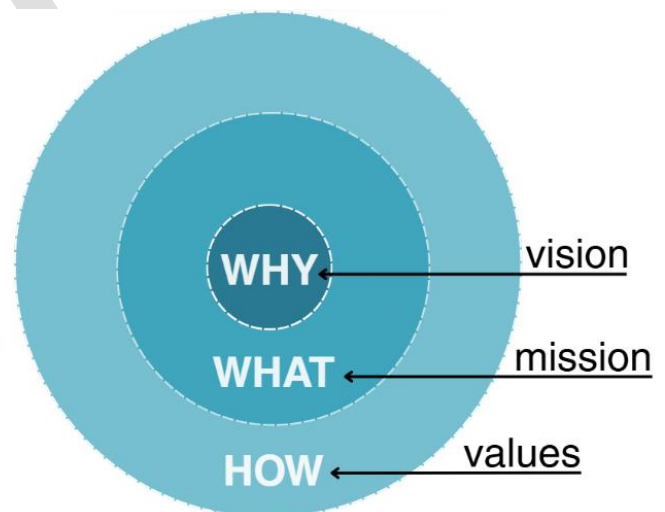
Below are key terms used within the Strategic Plan.

**Vision:** A statement of what we would like the community to be, long-term. This overarching vision articulates a shared community future.

**Mission:** A brief summary of the City's purpose, helping guide our actions and decisions aimed at effectively and responsibly serving our community.

**Values:** The fundamental beliefs and core principles that guide our purpose and direction.

**Focus Area:** Broad subject areas that help to organize and communicate how we concentrate our time, energy and resources to help achieve the City's overall Vision and Mission.



**Focus Area Goal Statement:** A brief, outcome-focused statement of the results the City aims to achieve, over time, for a particular Focus Area.

**Action Items:** The general tasks or activities identified to support progress on the Focus Area Goal Statements.

**Annual Work Plans:** An outline of specific tasks or activities, organized by **Focus Areas**, that will be undertaken and reported to Council on an annual basis to support progress on specific Action Items.

## Vision, Mission, and Values

### Vision

Tumwater is a thriving, inclusive and people-centered city where a resilient economy, vibrant neighborhoods, and a healthy natural environment foster deep community connection, civic pride, and a shared commitment to honoring our history while shaping a dynamic tomorrow.

### Mission

We work in partnership with our community to provide essential services, protect our environment, grow our economy, and to support a connected, inclusive social fabric where everyone belongs.

### Values

#### People

We embrace the diversity of **people** in our community and strive to ensure everyone feels valued and included. We recognize the vital contributions of our staff and foster a supportive environment that promotes growth, celebrates achievements, and retains talent to serve our community with excellence.

#### Environment

We strive to safeguard and enhance our community's natural **environment** and social fabric through sustainable practices and long-term stewardship.

#### Opportunity

We pursue **opportunities** to enhance social, environmental, and economic well-being, and remain committed to achieving positive outcomes—even in challenging times.

#### Partnership

We work in **partnership** with residents, businesses, community organizations, and governments to address challenges and advance shared goals.

## Learning

We **learn** from experience, embrace innovation, and seek new ways to enhance City services and strengthen our community.

## Excellence

With **excellence**, integrity, and efficiency, we deliver timely and responsive City services — empowering staff, stewarding public resources, and fostering civic trust.

# Implementation Framework

## Roles and Responsibilities

One of the City's primary goals in undertaking this strategic planning effort is to identify the Council's priorities, providing guidance for future decision-making, particularly as our community grows and changes. This deliberate, ongoing process for decision-making relies on clearly defined roles and responsibilities:

**Community members** express their level of satisfaction with the community and the City's delivery of outcomes anticipated by the Strategic Plan.

**City Council** sets policy direction and approves the Strategic Plan, including the annually updated Work Plans and the biennial budget.

**City staff** manages implementation by developing and proposing the detailed tasks in the annual Work Plans, within the context of the biennial budget; carrying out the work plan tasks and evaluating and regularly reporting on progress made to implement the Strategic Plan.

## Strategic Plan Prioritization Criteria

While all of the work identified in the Strategic Plan is important, it cannot be completed all at once. These criteria will be used to help prioritize the relative favorability of a particular action item, when the work will occur, and what resources need to be allocated.

## Overall Criteria

1. How does this advance the City's vision, mission, values, Comprehensive Plan?
2. Will this **enhance** an existing program/service and/or will it provide a new benefit not currently available?
3. What are the potential **consequences** – positive or negative – of inaction at this time?
4. What is the total **resource** commitment for this?
5. How is this a Tumwater community **priority**?

## Strategic Plan Schedule

The City develops the Strategic Plan with a six-year, forward-looking perspective that is then coordinated with, and implemented by, the City's biennial budget development process. It is anticipated that modifications to the Strategic Plan during this six-year timeframe will be relatively small and incorporated as needed, and a more comprehensive update of the Strategic Plan will occur on a six-year cycle.

To ensure the Strategic Plan remains nimble and relevant to the community's needs and the Council's priorities, anticipated modifications will be accomplished on a recurring schedule. In even-numbered years, a new biennial budget is drafted and adopted. In odd-numbered years, Council will review and update the Focus Area Action Items. Every year, staff will provide updated Focus Area Work Plans to guide their work and to report to Council on the progress toward implementation and completion of Focus Area Action Items.

## New Opportunity Process

Because new and emergent issues and opportunities are likely to arise, the City Council recognizes there needs to be a process to address more urgent actions that may come up outside of the recurring schedule described above. These new opportunities should be few in number and important to address immediately but must be weighed against the ability to deliver the already identified and prioritized Action Items and Annual Work Plans.



## Focus Areas (Overview)

FOCUS AREA	GOAL STATEMENT
<b>Vibrant, Livable, and Inclusive Community</b>	Build a community recognized for quality, compassion, and humanity.
<b>Environmental Stewardship</b>	Be a leader in environmental health and sustainability.
<b>Community Mobility</b>	Create and maintain a transportation system safe for all modes of travel.
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	Provide and sustain quality public safety services.
<b>Growth &amp; Development</b>	Pursue and support targeted community and economic development.
<b>Tumwater Excellence</b>	Refine and sustain a great organization.

## Focus Area: Vibrant, Livable, and Inclusive Community

GOAL STATEMENT: Build a community recognized for quality, compassion, and humanity.

ACTION ITEMS	LEAD DEPARTMENT
Continue implementation of Tumwater Metropolitan Parks District (TMPD) initiatives.	Parks and Recreation, Transportation and Engineering
Increase affordable housing in Tumwater, including permanent and supportive housing.	Community Development
Develop partnerships and strategies to improve municipal service delivery to people in need.	Executive
Promote equity and inclusion within the Tumwater Community.	Executive

## Focus Area: Environmental Stewardship

GOAL STATEMENT: Be a leader in environmental health and sustainability.

<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>LEAD DEPARTMENT</b>
<b>Conserve and protect Tumwater's water resources.</b>	Water Resources and Sustainability
<b>Implement and promote environmentally sustainable practices in the community.</b>	Water Resources and Sustainability
<b>Implement the Urban Forestry Plan.</b>	Water Resources and Sustainability
<b>Implement the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan.</b>	Water Resources and Sustainability

## Focus Area: Community Mobility

GOAL STATEMENT: Create and maintain a transportation system that is safe for all modes of travel.

ACTION ITEMS	LEAD DEPARTMENT
<b>Provide a safe, efficient, and cost-effective transportation system.</b>	Transportation and Engineering
<b>Continue improving the maintenance of the transportation system.</b>	Transportation and Engineering
<b>Implement Capitol Boulevard plan.</b>	Transportation and Engineering, Community Development
<b>Improve maintenance and interconnectivity of a bicycle and pedestrian system.</b>	Transportation and Engineering
<b>Implement Brewery District plan.</b>	Transportation and Engineering, Community Development
<b>Develop a citywide trail system.</b>	Transportation and Engineering
<b>Explore opportunities to extend multimodal transportation facilities to areas of the City outside the urban core.</b>	Transportation and Engineering

## Focus Area: Health and Safety

GOAL STATEMENT: Provide and sustain quality public safety services.

<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>LEAD DEPARTMENT</b>
<b>Develop initiatives to address growing emergency service demands.</b>	Police, Fire
<b>Build existing law enforcement staff capacity to meet current core service delivery demands.</b>	Police
<b>Evaluate and promote City programs to reduce risk to life and property.</b>	Fire
<b>Explore and implement partnerships to improve efficiency of emergency service delivery.</b>	Fire, Police
<b>Review options for regionalization of fire/emergency services.</b>	Fire
<b>Transition to proactive code enforcement.</b>	Police, Community Development

## Focus Area: Growth and Development

GOAL STATEMENT: Pursue and support targeted community and economic development.

<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>LEAD DEPARTMENT</b>
<b>Complete and implement the Habitat Conservation Plan.</b>	Community Development
<b>Leverage brownfield revitalization opportunities.</b>	Executive
<b>Update and implement the City's Economic Development Plan.</b>	Executive
<b>Attract, retain, and grow Tumwater businesses.</b>	Executive
<b>Promote tourism in Tumwater.</b>	Executive

## Focus Area: Tumwater Excellence

GOAL STATEMENT: Refine and sustain a great organization.

<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>LEAD</b>
<b>Attract, retain, and promote a talented and diverse workforce.</b>	Administrative Services Department
<b>Be good stewards of public funds by following sustainable financial strategies.</b>	Finance
<b>Support an environment of continuous learning and improvement for staff and Council.</b>	Administrative Services Department
<b>Attract, retain, and support volunteer board members and commissioners.</b>	Executive
<b>Create a dynamic organizational culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.</b>	Administrative Services Department

## Appendices

### Prioritization Criteria

#### Legislative/Policy Prioritization Criteria: Focus Area Action Items

##### Overall Criteria:

1. How does this advance the City's vision, mission, values, and Comprehensive Plan?
2. Will this enhance an existing program/service and/or will it provide a new benefit not currently available?
3. What are the potential consequences – positive or negative – of inaction at this time?
4. What is the total resource commitment for this?
5. Why is this a Tumwater community priority?

##### New Opportunity Criteria:

1. Will other City projects/programs/initiatives be delayed or eliminated because of this new item, and if so, is the delay/elimination acceptable?
2. How is this needed to address a threat to public health, safety, and welfare?
3. Does the City have sufficient capacity and/or resources to support this?
4. What should be the City's role in this?

#### Technical Prioritization Criteria: Focus Area Work Plans

1. Is this consistent with the City's vision, mission, and values?
2. Is this consistent with the Comprehensive Plan(s)?
3. Does this advance an adopted plan or policy or an existing objective?
4. Does this protect public health, safety and welfare?
5. Is this required to comply with a legal mandate?
6. Does this contribute to the community's tax base and/or directly generate revenue?
7. Does the City have sufficient staffing resources to support this?
8. Is funding available for implementation/construction?
9. Does this have a clearly identified source of revenue to support ongoing maintenance and operation?
10. Will existing City projects/programs/initiatives be delayed or eliminated because of this new item?
11. What are the consequences of that displacement decision?
12. Are there consequences of inaction?
13. Are there strong benefits of action?
14. How much control or influence over the intended outcome do we have?



15. Will this enhance what is already offered and/or provide a new benefit that is not currently available?
16. Does the City have existing skills/abilities/expertise to address this issue?
17. Is any other entity, private or public, better positioned to undertake this?
18. Does this result in benefits to the natural environment?
19. Does this result in negative impacts to the natural environment?
20. Are there acceptable mitigation measures available to address potential impacts to the natural environment?

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# 2026 Focus Area Work Plans

## **Focus Area:** Vibrant, Livable, and Inclusive Community

***Goal Statement:** Build a community recognized for quality, compassion, and humanity.*

**Action Item:** Continue implementation of Tumwater Metropolitan Parks District (TMPD) initiatives.

- Complete the Community Center design and permitting (Parks and Recreation)
- Expand the Tumwater Arts program to define and form an Arts Commission (Parks and Recreation)
- Expand the Community Garden program at Isabella Bush Park (Parks and Recreation)
- Identify and prioritize deferred parks maintenance projects (Parks and Recreation)
- Complete Trail's End Park design and permitting (Parks and Recreation/Transportation and Engineering)

**Action Item:** Increase affordable housing in Tumwater, including permanent and supportive housing.

- Complete the low-income housing and homelessness programs evaluation (Community Development)
- Complete review/update of Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE) program (Community Development)

**Action Item:** Develop partnerships and strategies to improve municipal service delivery to people in need.

- Review and update water shut-off policies (Water Resources and Sustainability)
- Continue review of available utility lifeline program expansion opportunities (Finance)
- Identify relevant stakeholders who can further sustainable, climate-adapted, and equitable food distribution in Tumwater (Community Development)
- Explore opportunities for the community to provide and engage in local and sustainable food production and consumption (Community Development)
- Identify process improvements to reduce applicant barriers in the Tumwater Community Human Services grant program (Executive)
- Manage 2026 Community Development Block Grant Tumwater allocation process (Community Development)

**Action Item: Promote equity and inclusion within the Tumwater community.**

- Work with the new Equity Commission to develop an initial work plan, including a strong community engagement process (Executive) *new*
- Communicate with Tribal governments to strengthen partnerships, share information, and promote opportunities (Executive)

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## Focus Area: Environmental Stewardship

**Goal Statement:** *Be a leader in environmental health and sustainability.*

**Action Item: Conserve and protect Tumwater's water resources.**

- Develop policies for the Septic to Sewer program to guide the extension of sewer mains and private properties to sewer (Water Resources and Sustainability) **new**
- Create and update the Wellhead protection program report (Water Resources and Sustainability) **new**
- Update the Water Conservation Plan to include support of water reuse opportunities (Water Resources and Sustainability) **new**

**Action Item: Implement and promote environmentally sustainable practices in the community.**

- Lead the regional partnership for watershed improvement under the Floodplains by Design program as the fiscal manager (Water Resources and Sustainability)
- Develop and promote a calendar of community outreach events on environmental sustainability topics (Water Resources and Sustainability)
- Promote a higher level of environmental and community protection through the integration of ecosystem services and environmental justice for City actions, where feasible (Water Resources and Sustainability) **new**

**Action Item: Implement the Urban Forestry Management plan.**

- Develop amendments to the Tree and Vegetation Protection Ordinance for Council review (Community Development)
- Develop and implement an invasive pest management response program (Water Resources and Sustainability) **new**
- Update tree inventory to include additional areas such as Right of Ways (Water Resources and Sustainability)
- Complete maintenance work plan for historic Meeker Davis Garry Oak Tree (Water Resources and Sustainability)

**Action Item: Implement the Climate Element of the Comprehensive Plan, inclusive of the Thurston Climate Mitigation plan.**

- Use results from investment grade audit to pursue grant funding to support City Facility Decarbonization (Water Resources and Sustainability) **new**
- Complete City Facility and Infrastructure Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (Water Resources and Sustainability)

- Work with Civic Spark Program (FTE for 9 months) to develop standard operating procedures to ensure vulnerable populations are contacted pre and post emergency (Water Resources and Sustainability) **new**

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## Focus Area: Health and Safety

**Goal Statement:** *Provide and sustain quality public safety services.*

**Action Item: Develop initiatives to address growing emergency service demands.**

- Continue implementation of Body Worn Camera program (Police)
- Research automatic license plate reader camera systems, present options to Council for directions (Police)
- Continue implementation of the Law Enforcement Records Management System (Police)
- Develop a “Standard of Cover” document for resource deployment to include future fire station location analysis (Fire) **new**

**Action Item: Build existing law enforcement staff capacity to meet current core service delivery demands.**

- Per the TPD Strategic Growth Plan, add seven officers to meet growing demand for new and enhanced services (Police)

**Action Item: Explore and implement partnerships to improve efficiency of emergency service delivery.**

- Implement crisis response program in partnership with Olympic Health and Recovery Services (Fire)
- Explore expanded fire training partnership with Olympia Fire Department and other regional partners (Fire)
- Evaluate TPD participation in a regionalized SWAT program and develop recommendation (Police)
- Expand the FD Cares program (Fire)

**Action Item: Evaluate and promote City programs to reduce risk to life and property.**

- Conduct Community Risk Assessment to identify and prioritize local risks and make recommendations to reduce occurrence and impact (Fire) **new**
- Improve social media presence to inform community (Police)
- Continue School Resource Officer program (Police)
- Complete HB 1400 training standards in 2026 (required by 2028) (Police)

**Action Item: Review options for regionalization of fire/emergency services.**

- Review and update the 2019 Fire Regionalization Study (Fire)

**Action Item: Transition to proactive code enforcement.**

- Prioritize legacy enforcement sites (Police and Community Development) *new*
- Develop work plans and cost estimates for each legacy enforcement site (Police and Community Development) *new*

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## **Focus Area: Community Mobility**

**Goal Statement:** *Create and maintain a transportation system safe for all modes of travel.*

### **Action Item: Provide a safe, efficient, and cost-effective transportation system.**

- Adopt transportation impact fee program (Transportation Engineering)
- Complete design of Mottman Road improvements (Transportation Engineering)
- Begin construction on Tyee Drive Extension, Tumwater Boulevard to Prine Drive (Transportation Engineering)

### **Action Item: Continue improving the maintenance of the transportation system.**

- Complete planning and begin design of 2027 Pavement Maintenance Project (Transportation Engineering)
- Complete planning and design of 2027 Multimodal Improvements project (Transportation Engineering)

### **Action Item: Implement Capitol Boulevard Corridor Plan.**

- Continue acquisition planning for former WSDOT Headquarters site (Executive)
- Continue Right of Way progress on X Street before potential loss of funding (Transportation Engineering)

### **Action Item: Improve maintenance and interconnectivity of a bicycle and pedestrian system.**

- Continue evaluation of new funding sources for the sidewalk program (Transportation Engineering)
- Continue implementation of the ADA Transition Plan (Transportation Engineering)
- Complete construction of 2nd Ave Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements (Transportation Engineering)
- Complete Right of Way for X Street Roundabout (Transportation Engineering)

### **Item: Implement Brewery District Plan.**

- Pursue funding source for design and Right of Way acquisition to support E Street Connection (Executive)

### **Action Items: Develop a citywide trail system.**

- Complete design of the full Deschutes Valley Trail (Transportation Engineering)
- Complete bid and secure contractor to construct portion C of the Deschutes Valley Trail (Transportation Engineering)



**Action Items: Explore opportunities to extend multimodal transportation facilities to areas of the city outside the urban core.**

- Explore opportunity for revised road striping outside the urban core to accommodate multimodal use (Transportation Engineering) *new*

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## Focus Area: Growth and Development

**Goal Statement:** *Pursue and support targeted growth and economic development.*

### **Action Item: Complete and implement the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).**

- Begin the NEPA/SEPA review process for the draft HCP (Community Development) **new**
- Complete implementation planning on the processes that need to be in place when the HCP is adopted (Community Development)
- Identify and prioritize conservation lands for acquisition/easement (Community Development)

### **Action Item: Leverage brownfield revitalization opportunities**

- Identify and pursue funding to begin implementation of the next phase of the Planned Action Environmental Impact Statement process for the brewery area redevelopment (Executive)
- Conduct Phase II environmental site assessments of acquired Deschutes Valley Properties with funding from the Environmental Protection Agency Community Wide Assessment Grant (Executive)
- Publish Opportunity Sites Inventory online to share information about redevelopment opportunities (Executive) **new**

### **Action Item: Update and implement the city's Economic Development Plan.**

- Provide quarterly reports to Council on Economic Development conditions in Tumwater (Executive) **new**

### **Action Item: Attract, retain, and grow Tumwater businesses.**

- Increase engagement in advisory committees, workgroups, speaking opportunities, and business roundtables to strengthen partnerships and initiative planning with local business groups such as the Thurston Chamber of Commerce, the Tumwater Chamber of Commerce and the Thurston Economic Development Council (Executive) **new**
- Publish improved online outreach and resources for business site selectors (Executive) **new**
- Conduct quantitative and qualitative analysis on economic conditions and business sentiment to identify policy barriers and opportunities for business growth and retention (Executive) **new**
- Implement new ERP permitting module to improve permitting processes for development and construction (Community Development)

**Action Item: Promote tourism in Tumwater.**

- Participate in the development and distribution of Visitor and Convention Bureau materials (Executive) *new*
- Develop strategies to promote Tumwater's historic properties with the Olympia Tumwater Foundation (Executive) *new*
- Reduce barriers for applicants to the lodging tax grant program by improving application language and hosting a workshop for applicants (Executive) *new*

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## Focus Area: Tumwater Excellence

*Goal Statement: Refine and sustain a great organization.*

**Action Item: Attract, retain, and promote a talented and diverse workforce.**

- Explore strategies to improve participation in the Employee Wellness Program (Administrative Services)
- Conduct annual compensation and classification audits to identify and address pay disparities and ensure internal equity across demographic groups (Administrative Services) *new*
- Design a welcoming onboarding program that integrates new hires into the organizational culture (Administrative Services) *new*
- Redesign recruitment materials and outreach strategies as an “Employer of Choice” to attract diverse talent to include partnering with community organizations, military transition programs, minority-serving institutions, and professional associations (Administrative Services)
- Continue to implement structured interview protocols and diverse hiring panels to reduce bias, ensure consistency, and align candidate evaluation with core competencies (Administrative Services)

**Action Item: Be good stewards of public funds by following sustainable financial strategies.**

- Plan, present, and publish the biennial budget for 2027-2028 (Finance) *new*
- Present regular financial reports to Budget and Finance Committee (Finance)

**Action Item: Support an environment of continuous learning and improvement, including council.**

- Develop and implement the Niche Academy framework that aligns with organizational goals, workforce competencies, and employee growth pathways, including both mandatory training and aspirational learning (Administrative Services)
- Develop a structured leadership development program for supervisors and emerging leaders focused on emotional intelligence, equity-centered management, and effective coaching practices (Administrative Services) *new*
- Develop competency-based training and development plan frameworks that support continuous learning, leadership readiness, and equitable access to advancement opportunities (Administrative Services) *new*
- Provide training opportunities for elected officials, including onboarding (Executive)

**Action Item: Attract, retain, and support volunteer board members and commissioners.**

- Study stipends for boards and commissions (Executive)
- Update policies, procedures, and charters for all boards and commissions (Executive)
- Schedule regular meetings between Council and Advisory Boards and Commissions to improve communication (Executive) *new*
- Complete onboarding and training program for new appointed Advisory Board and Commission members (Executive) *new*

**Action Item: Create a dynamic culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.**

- Review plans, policies, and documents for potentially racist and biased language (Executive)
- Deliver annual training for all managers and supervisors on equitable decision-making, cultural competence, and psychological safety (Administrative Services)
- Conduct a diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging lens review of personnel and operating policies to identify and remove systemic barriers (Administrative Services)
- Expand outreach to underrepresented groups through community partnerships, inclusive job postings, and implicit bias training for hiring managers (Administrative Services)

## Appendix: New Opportunities Process

Strategic Plan actions will be identified and selected through an annual prioritization process described in the Annual Schedule. Where new opportunities for actions present themselves outside the annual process, their alignment with the Strategic Plan will be considered and evaluated. This evaluation will include the strength of an item's connection to the Strategic Plan's Focus Areas, whether it should be considered as a timely opportunity, and what impact including that action may have on existing priorities. This evaluative process is outlined below.

