

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION

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CONVENE: 5:31 p.m.

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

Excused: Councilmember Charlie Schneider.

Staff: City Administrator John Doan, Planning Manager Brad Medrud, and Communications Manager Ann Cook.

HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN FOR THE THURSTON REGION UPDATE:

Manager Medrud briefed the Council on the Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region. The update process includes a public engagement component with the worksession affording an opportunity to update the community and the Council on the status of the update. Because of the likelihood for many natural disasters in the region, the community could be severely impacted and disrupted. The planning identifies and implements actions to relieve long-term risks to life and property prior to a natural disaster.

The plan addresses emergency preparedness, response, and mitigation. For example, to mitigate flooding, the City would ensure the codes do not allow new development in a floodplain. The current plan was adopted in 2017. The multi-jurisdictional update process includes all jurisdictions within Thurston County and incorporates broader strategies to reduce risks for the most destructive hazards threatening the region.

Manager Medrud identified the agencies involved in the update, the steering committee overseen by the Thurston County Emergency Management Council, and Thurston Regional Planning Council's (TRPC) role serving as the project manager and lead for the update. Jurisdictional staff participates in the hazard mitigation planning workgroups and will continue to meet through spring 2023.

The primary plan contents include community profile & capacity assessment; risk assessments (severity, impacts, probability, historic occurrences, and summary assessment); earthquakes; storms; floods; mudslides; wildfire fire hazard; and volcanic hazards. The City of Tumwater's mitigation strategies focus on currently adopted strategies; completed strategies, new strategies; and future land use plans, zoning, and development regulations.

In response to questions about potential impacts to the City's new biennium budget, Manager Medrud explained that the areas likely to be

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covered are included in the 2017 plan, such as additional training on emergency services or the City's Comprehensive Plan update focusing on the climate mitigation component of the plan.

Manager Medrud reported the workgroup will help identify potential mitigation stakeholders, share ideas and resources, and review the draft plan. Workgroup meetings will be held via Zoom and are open to the public. The first phase of public outreach is a community wide survey open until July 31, 2022. All community members are encouraged to take the survey and share information on hazards of concern and potential actions to reduce losses. The project website includes information on meetings and materials, workgroup, partner resources from FEMA, contact information, and plan documents and maps.

The Thurston Region Hazard Assessment Map overlays hazard areas with community assets. A search tool on the website enables the user to enter an address and cycle through the hazard tabs on top of the map that may affect a residence or business.

Next steps include completion of the community survey on July 31, 2022, monthly workgroup meetings, development of the plan update by fall 2022, and beginning the formal jurisdictional review and adoption process in the first half of 2023.

Manager Medrud invited questions or comments.

Councilmember Jefferson asked about the vehicle for completing the community survey. Manager Medrud advised that the survey is an online survey located at <https://trpc.org/160/Hazards-Mitigation-Plan>.

Manager Medrud responded to a comment regarding how the plan addresses environmental justice. The planning process does not explicitly speak to environmental justice, but it would be appropriate to query TRPC and the broader stakeholder group about what the region should be doing in the plan to support environmental justice measures.

WSDOT RIGHTS OF WAY INITIATIVE PROCESS AND HOUSING ACTIONS UPDATE:

Manager Medrud reported the update will cover the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Rights-of-Way Initiative, an update on the Regional Housing Council (RHC), and the status of work on tenant protections.

The WSDOT Initiative is a state-driven effort to address people living in Thurston County I-5 right-of-ways, which are affecting specific sites in Thurston County, as well as King County, Pierce County, and other

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large counties in the state.

A Governor's Executive Order was issued in May directing state agencies to work with local communities to move people from targeted state right-of-ways into better living situations. The effort is contingent on local agencies offering appropriate housing or shelter that is safer than living within a state highway right-of-way. Several challenges inherent in the process are the timeline for resolution and coordination with service providers. WSDOT is spearheading the coordination between Washington State Patrol, Department of Commerce, Thurston County, and the three jurisdictions in north Thurston County.

Four targeted right-of-ways have been identified as part of the effort and are located within the City of Olympia. The right-of-ways are located at I-5 interchanges at Lilly Road, Pacific Avenue, Sleater-Kinney, and along some portions of I-5 right-of-way near Wheeler, Plum Street, 4th Avenue, and Henderson Boulevard (Olympia). The Cities of Lacey and Tumwater are involved in the effort to ensure any spillover affects do not create cascading issues elsewhere and that a regional mechanism has been identified to contend with the issue.

The jurisdictions have been meeting frequently with the state agencies to review the process, next steps, and areas of responsibilities. The Lilly Road area was cleared last week. Approximately four individuals living at the site were offered opportunities for shelter in coordination with local non-profit organizations.

The state allocated funds to the counties affected by the issue. Thurston County is scheduled to receive \$19 million to address efforts. The funds could assist in obtaining permanent housing or for services. The three sources of the funds include Proviso funds for ongoing services, outreach, operations, acquisitions, and capital improvements with the possibility of multi-year awards; Home Security funds for services, rapid rehousing, housing acquisition, and vouchers as a one-time fund over the course of three years; and Rapid Capital Acquisition funds for acquisition of rehab shelters, permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, or permanent housing with one-time funding.

The state has imposed a timeline to respond and submit a proposal for review and approval of a program and associated costs for each component. Additionally, an option exists for competitive resources available from Rapid Capital Acquisition and Apple Health and Home. The intent is to address immediate shelter needs and supporting services to help individuals transition and remain permanently in housing.

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The three jurisdictions identified 24 shelter beds at Unity Commons in Olympia available for three years. It is likely the entire effort would require nearly 200 shelter beds. The proposal includes outreach to those living in WSDOT right-of-ways for three years to ensure if they move there is a successful outcome, hotel vouchers for individuals fleeing from domestic violence, and exploration of options to rent other hotel rooms on a temporary basis for temporary shelter.

The City of Olympia is working on a project located off Franz Anderson (south of Martin Way near Sleater-Kinney) to develop a portion of the property housing 50 tiny homes with services offered onsite. Other options explored include acquisition of local hotels or motels. Three options are under consideration. The first option is an acquisition of a 100-unit hotel used primarily for enhanced shelter initially with conversion to permanently supportive housing. The estimated cost is \$15 - \$20 million. The option would assist those individuals or families living in the four WSDOT right-of-ways. Right-of-way funding would be used to support the acquisition, operations, and rehab with 50% of the units dedicated to right-of-way individuals. A component of a local contribution would be necessary for acquisition and operations. A second option is acquisition of another 100-unit hotel for permanent supportive housing with 50% dedicated for enhanced shelter for right-of-way individuals. A local contribution would also be required. The third option is acquisition of both hotels.

The next steps include ongoing discussions between staff and preparation of a draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the Council to consider on July 19, 2022. The MOU is between the state, Thurston County, and the largest cities outlining the process the jurisdictions will follow with subsequent agreements to follow. Thurston County and the City of Olympia have entered into agreements with the state on shelter, outreach, and hotel vouchers. The City of Olympia is receiving agreements for the Franz Anderson site.

Councilmember Althausers underscored the anxiety many service providers are experiencing about the directive from the state. He is also uncomfortable with the position the cities and the county have been placed in by the state while acknowledging the opportunity to invest a significant amount of dollars into the system; however, the issue is the challenge of meeting the requirements to receive the funds. It is likely that some individuals will become displaced rather than sheltered based on the reality of the situation. The choice is the massive amount of funding the region could access to help build out the system but at a

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potentially high cost for people who are living outside.

Councilmember Swarthout agreed the turnaround of one month is creating stress for all parties involved. She asked whether any hotels have been identified for potential acquisition. Manager Medrud advised that some hotels have been identified and some are in the process of acquisition with more details to follow.

City Administrator Doan emphasized that the massive investment is occurring in a very short timeframe. The focus is on the larger encampments along I-5 right-of-ways. Some individuals may elect not to take advantage of housing and it will be important to monitor those instances and be prepared to respond while also providing resources for individuals living along other right-of-ways.

Discussion ensued on the potential of other instances of individuals living in the right-of-way and steps the state might take to enforce encampments in right-of-ways. Manager Medrud explained that the jurisdictional group is discussing those concerns in terms of responsibilities for the initial clean-up efforts and ongoing enforcement and monitoring.

Manager Medrud reported the Regional Housing Council (RHC) (comprised of elected officials within Thurston County), jurisdictional staff, and providers through the Housing Action Team (HAT) recently met several times in May to explore the future of RHC and how it relates to other organizations within the community. As a follow-up to those meetings, staff and the RHC technical team are discussing short- and long-term proposals for three components of the Council's governance structure, how to integrate Housing Action Team functions within the RHC structure, and identifying resources to pursue long-term funding and policy solutions.

Councilmember Althaus commented on the need for dedicated staff to support RHC. Currently, jurisdictional staff members have been providing support which has created strain on city and county staff. One component is a need for assistance with staffing, as the workload is substantial.

Discussion ensued on some of the conversations surrounding the future governance structure of the RHC and the current role of the RHC and Thurston County Board of County Commissioners for some of the funding allocations. The RHC, in that role, forwards recommendations to the County Commission for funding priorities. The current structure

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affords the RHC with the option of reconfiguring the funding priorities if the County Commission does not agree with the original proposal. The current structure of the RHC affords adequate influence for designating funding priorities supported by the cities.

Manager Medrud added that the technical team has completed the process and the next step is involving elected officials for the next level of discussions. The team is also planning to contact other similar organizations in the state to review their respective processes. The actual structure and function of the RHC will be dependent upon future discussions.

Councilmember Dahlhoff commented on her attendance to the HAT subgroup meetings of the Rental Senior Affordable and the Homeless Housing Hubs. Some of the discussions mentioned that the senior group would be left out of the RHC/HAT discussions. She asked Councilmembers Althausen and Cathey to ensure the senior element is included in those discussions. Manager Medrud advised that the technical team has not discussed exclusion of any of the subgroups of HAT. The subgroup's work on rental senior housing and homelessness is important to retain, as well as coordinating those efforts at a much better level in conjunction with RHC efforts. The team is discussing the best process to ensure all interests are represented and considered.

Manager Medrud updated the Council on the status of tenant protections. Staff is working with staff from the Thurston County Dispute Resolution Center to draft a proposal for tenant and landlord conflict resolution services. More information will be shared with the Council as those discussions continue. Additionally, staff is working on two housing practices ordinances. Legal staff has reviewed the state's Residential Landlord Tenant Act and provided feedback. Staff is revising the ordinance. The first ordinance includes some updates to the code for unfair housing practices, as well as a new chapter on rental housing code issues. The Council is scheduled to review the proposed ordinances in fall 2022. The fourth ordinance addresses the rental housing registration program.

Councilmember Cathey inquired about any recent action by the state to protect tenants from substantial rental rate increases experienced by many after the pandemic moratorium was lifted. Councilmember Althausen explained that state law preempts local jurisdictions from imposing rent controls. The recent work by the City on tenant protections is a good first step to ensure rental increase notification information is conveyed to renters.

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The Council discussed some of the requirements and measures included in the proposed tenant protection ordinance and how recent increases in rents are affecting senior citizens and low-income residents.

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT TO SOLICIT RFPS FOR A DESIGNATED SERVICE PROVIDER(S) FOR PEG ACCESS CHANNELS:

City Administrator Doan noted the proposal is not related to the performance of TC Media. Although TC Media has been the Public, Education and Government access (PEG) provider for cable service for many years, the jurisdictions have never released a bid for PEG services. Subsequently, the jurisdictions agreed it was important to provide an opportunity for other providers to compete and to ensure taxpayers are receiving the best service at the most affordable price.

Manager Cook reported that during the cable franchise agreement negotiation with Comcast, a number of changes in the federal cable act became effective and the three cities (Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater) and Thurston County executed an interlocal agreement (ILA) to negotiate jointly with Comcast. Together, the jurisdictions negotiated the new franchise agreement with each jurisdiction. Within the franchise agreement a provision is included for PEG services as an option. Municipalities can choose to exercise options for PEG services in any combination desired by the jurisdiction. When the cities and the county first exercised the option for PEG services, only one provider provided the service. Since then, more providers are available along with a shift in cable viewership with national studies reflecting that only 40% of households have cable television. Cable subscribers continue to decline in the cities and in the county. New and emerging technologies provide more service options. During the pandemic, web-based meetings increased substantially. TC Media also began offering live streaming giving people access to watch Council meetings, committee meetings, and worksessions through web-based platforms and live streaming.

Based on a recent consumer survey, 53% of consumers want to access content on two or more wireless devices requiring the City to consider ways to deliver content (Council and advisory board and commission meetings) through traditional channels and through digital media. The proposal is to release a Request for Proposal (RFP) to receive proposals on what services can be provided. The City has the ability to award contracts to more than one service provider. TC Media has been contacted and encouraged to submit a proposal.

Councilmember Dahlhoff referred to the Council's work on the equity toolbox and asked whether the RFP has been updated to reflect diversity

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preferences for inclusion of small, women, minority, and veteran owned businesses. Manager Cook said she would follow-up as the RFP is currently under development.

Councilmember Swarthout asked about the timeline associated with the RFP process. Manager Cook said the proposed ILA is scheduled for the next Council meeting with the RFP issued in August for award of a contract in December 2022.

City Administrator Doan added that implementation of a new contract is unknown at this time dependent upon the new provider and its ability to begin providing services.

Manager Cook noted the current contract with TC Media terminates at the end of the year for all four jurisdictions.

MAYOR/CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

City Administrator Doan encouraged the Council to participate in the City's 4th of July activities.

Mayor Sullivan reported the July 5, 2022 Council meeting has been cancelled. On July 7, 2022, the Council is scheduled to meet with the Squaxin Island Tribal Council.

Councilmember Jefferson referred to the recent presentation on the results of the Healthy Youth Survey presented by Janine Koffel from Tumwater HOPES and recounted her personal interactions with local families dealing with bullying incidents of their children in local schools. One young boy identified as gay experienced a bullying incident. The parent has elected to remove the student from Tumwater schools and is now attending another school in another neighboring district. She reached out to the Tumwater School Superintendent, Sean Dodson to thank him for his leadership as he assumed the position during a difficult time. She shared that she received guidance from City Administration after communicating a desire to speak to the Tumwater School Board as a Tumwater citizen to address some of the issues. She conveyed her thanks for her appointment and asked for the Council's support to serve as the City's representative on the Tumwater School District Equity Advisory Committee to continue the conversations.

ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Mayor Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 7:03 p.m.**