

**TUMWATER GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 11, 2024 PAGE 1**

CONVENE: 8:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Chair Michael Althausser and Councilmembers Joan Cathey and Leatta Dahlhoff.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, Community Development Department Director Michael Matlock, Finance Department Director Troy Niemeyer, Transportation Engineer 1 Bernie Gertje, and Land Use and Housing Planner Erika Smith-Erickson.

**APPROVAL OF
MINUTES: GENERAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE - SPECIAL
JULY 17, 2024 MEETING:**

MOTION: **Councilmember Cathey moved, seconded by Councilmember Dahlhoff, to approve the minutes of July 17, 2024 as published. A voice vote approved the motion.**

**2025 COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN PERIODIC
UPDATE –** Planner Smith-Erickson reviewed the draft Transportation Plan of the Comprehensive Plan.

TRANSPORTATION: The City contracted with Fehr and Peers represented by Daniel Dye to assist staff in completing the update of the Transportation Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan is the centerpiece of local planning efforts and guides future development and expenditures. The State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires the City to thoroughly review and update the City’s Comprehensive Plan and development regulations every 10 years. SHB 2296 adopted in 2024 extended the update deadline from June 30, 2025, to December 31, 2025.

Transportation Goal 3 under the GMA states, “Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled, and are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.” Tumwater’s transportation system provides for the safe, efficient, cost-effective movement of people and goods in ways that support adopted land use plans, enhance neighborhood and community livability, support a strong and resilient economy, and minimize environmental impacts. Staff is working with the consultant to update priorities to cover the next 20 years. The focus of the update will be on safety for both drivers and pedestrians for all modes of transportation.

Elements included in the Transportation Plan are land use assumptions, state-owned transportation facility analysis, facility and service needs

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funding analysis, Intergovernmental coordination efforts, demand management strategies, and active transportation.

Major changes to state law require the City to address Climate Response and Comprehensive Planning (House Bill (HB 1181), Missing Middle Housing (House Bill 1110), and Accessory Dwelling Units (House Bill 1337). HB 1181 is overarching legislation affecting all elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Under HB 1181, climate-related metrics for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) are required. GHG and VMT reductions within the city/jurisdiction must not shift VMT/GHG to elsewhere in the state. Focus should be on GHG/VMT reductions that benefit overburdened communities. The policies cannot restrict growth to achieve GHG/VMT reduction requirements.

Planner Smith-Erickson reviewed a table that analyzes the City's most impactful strategies for reducing GHG/VMT. Land use provides the highest potential for reductions in GHG/VMT. Land use would affect zoning and development regulations, especially density as increased density helps to reduce GHG/VMT. Parking policies were also addressed for middle housing within the Housing Element update. Road pricing was addressed by the consultant as gas taxes are reducing because of the increase in electric vehicles. Some strategies include taxing people based on vehicle miles driven for impacts to the road and the environment.

The term "pedestrian and bicycle facilities" will be replaced by "active transportation facilities," defined as "facilities provided for the safety and mobility of active transportation users including, but not limited to, trails, as defined in RCW 47.30.005, sidewalks, bike lanes, shared-use paths, and other facilities in the public right-of-way." Staff recommends extending the definition to include walking, rolling, scootering, and wheel chair access for equity. Active transportation facilities should be included in existing conditions reporting.

Engineer Gertje reported the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) provided new guidance on stress pedestrians and active transportation users experience as they navigate the transportation system. WSDOT recommends using the guidance as the basis for establishing level of service for active transportation users. The City will use the guidance for active transportation. Essentially, the standards are dependent on the type of road. Higher motorized usage generally creates more stress to pedestrians, cyclists, and other active users. It is likely greater requirements will be necessary for protection for users, such as increased physical separation or planted buffers between motorized traffic and active transportation facilities.

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Chair Althausser asked whether the guidance also accounts for ADA compliance, such as curb cuts to ensure accessibility for all users. Engineer Gertje said the new multimodal level of service (MMLOS) requirement is not based on the average of each segment but on the weakest part of any road. An example is the 70th Avenue and Littlerock Road intersection that includes a shared-use path along 70th Avenue approaching Littlerock Road. The shared use path ends prior to connecting to the sidewalk at the roundabout requiring pedestrians and other users to walk along the shoulder of the road creating a higher level of stress. While most of the road offers multimodal uses, the segment missing those improvements would result in a lower MMLOS.

Councilmember Dahlhoff referred to two emails she sent regarding that area and the crosswalk. A community member recently witnessed another community member who narrowly escaped from being hit by a vehicle. Cars speed and do not stop for the crosswalk with multiple instances of cars driving into the stormwater retention area. She asked whether planning would address areas that need improvement.

Engineer Gertje advised that the MMLOS assessment will be part of the update effort for the Transportation Plan by identifying high priority areas in the City. A large element of the prioritization will be based on location to the City center, access to government facilities, and other criteria.

Councilmember Dahlhoff recommended the prioritization process should include a discussion on rural areas of the City. The sidewalk along 70th Avenue provides access; However, her mother on a scooter is unable to access the other side of the street as it lacks a sidewalk and is obstructed by stormwater infrastructure. Engineer Gertje acknowledged the request as those issues are also factored as part of the prioritization process. Councilmember Dahlhoff added that staff should contact the Squaxin Island Tribe about its new development near 79th Avenue and Littlerock Road to discuss the possibility of completing a lighted sidewalk during the development process, as the development will generate more pedestrian traffic. Engineer Gertje acknowledged how staff works closely with developers to ensure the development of connected multimodal facilities.

Planner Smith-Erickson reported HB 1181 requires ADA Transition Plans as part of the Transportation Plan. The legislation requires the City to evaluate current facilities to assess ADA accessibility, develop program access plans or “transition plans” to address deficiencies, identify physical obstacles, describe methods to make the facilities accessible, develop a schedule for making changes, and identify public officials responsible for implementation. The plan must include a discussion of how funds will be secured to address identified needs of the transportation system, including state owned facilities. However, the City is not required to identify a source of funding or obtain funding for state owned transportation facilities other

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than state owned facilities must be addressed in the plan.

HB 1181 requires targeted outreach efforts for vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. Vulnerable populations include those at higher risk for poor health outcomes due to unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, racial or ethnic minorities, and low-income populations. Overburdened communities are a geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts that include but not limited to highly impacted communities.

“Missing” middle housing is housing types between single-family residences and mid-rise, multi-family residences and includes duplexes through sixplexes, townhouses, stacked flats, courtyard apartments, and cottage housing. Designated GMA cities need to allow certain minimum densities in support of middle housing. The new requirements for missing middle housing affect the Transportation Plan because of population due to increased density. Enabling more housing in higher densities of buildings and eliminating parking spaces must be considered in terms of accommodating housing parking needs. The review will also include current transportation impact fees. The new requirements would enable a minimum of two accessory dwelling units per lot. New state laws require changes in the City’s codes, as owner-occupancy is no longer required for the residential lot. Parking requirements will change as well as impact fee calculations.

Draft Comprehensive Plan Goals include:

1. Engagement – Continuous engagement with the community and the region.
2. Coordination – Coordination between Plans/Elements.
3. Vibrancy – Community Vibrancy – Foster livability by evoking a sense of identity through arts/culture, attracting and sustaining desired economic activity that supports the community. Make investments that emphasize Tumwater as a welcoming place and enhance community building.
4. Equity – Ensure that all members of the community, especially those whose needs have been systematically neglected, are well served by making decisions and investments through an anti-racist and inclusive process which results in equitable outcomes.
5. Resiliency – Increase climate resiliency by promoting sustainability, reducing pollution, promoting health habitats, and supporting clean air and water.
6. Fiscal Stewardship – Wise investments of public and private funds.
7. Environmental – Protection and enhancement.

City staff and the consultant project team met in June 2024 to review goals

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in the Transportation Plan. The current Transportation Plan includes 19 goals. Following more discussion, the team identified four top-level goals with many of the existing goals converted to policies and/or implementation actions under the main four-level goals.

Planner Smith-Erickson reviewed the 19 categories of existing goals:

1. Transportation & Land-User Consistency
2. Multimodal Transportation System
3. Barrier-Free Transportation
4. System Safety and Security
5. System Maintenance and Repair
6. Travel Demand Management
7. Transportation Technologies
8. Freight Mobility
9. Streets, Roads, and Bridges
10. Public Transportation
11. Bicycling
12. Walking
13. Rail
14. Aviation
15. Public Involvement
16. Intergovernmental Coordination
17. Environmental & Human Health
18. Performance Measures
19. Transportation Funding

Draft 2025 Transportation Plan Goals include:

- Improve and maintain a complete system that efficiently supports people walking, rolling, and biking, accessing transit, driving, and making regional connections
- Prioritize safety and quality of life especially for the most vulnerable users of our system
- Invest wisely to support a resilient and maintainable transportation system
- Minimize our impacts and advance environmental goals

Chair Althaus asked how trails are factored within the new goals. Prior community surveys rank trails as an important asset by the community. The City is also working on several trail projects.

Engineer Gertje reported trails generally fall within the realm of the Parks and Recreation Department. However, there is some overlap between the Transportation and Engineering Department and the Parks and Recreation Department. Trails should be included in the conversation with the consultant.

Planner Smith-Erickson reported the Planning Commission offered

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feedback on the four goals. Most of the comments pertained to language, such as “minimize our impacts” and cautions against including “our” as it speaks to ownership of an issue. The Commission suggested the goal of “investing wisely” could be improved to reflect a proactive statement.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked about any discussion on the language of “vulnerable users” within the second goal of “Prioritize safety and quality of life.” The goal should speak to all types of users. Planner Smith-Erickson advised that the comment would be followed up with the project team.

Chair Althaus added that “vulnerable user” is a term the state uses based on recent law that speaks to pedestrian safety and vulnerable users. The state often uses the terminology, which could have been replicated in the new goal.

Engineer Gertje explained that the term refers to anyone not using a motorized vehicle. As vehicle safety has increased for occupants, safety has not kept pace for pedestrians and other multimodal transportation users.

Councilmember Cathey questioned the intent of the goal to “Minimize our impacts.” Engineer Gertje said the goal speaks to minimizing environmental impacts by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing vehicle miles traveled.

Planner Smith-Erickson added that the goals are broadly stated but each goal includes policies and actions that provide more detail.

Councilmember Cathey conceded that as development of the plan continues, environmental impacts would be acknowledged because all transportation affects the environment greatly.

Planner Smith-Erickson said the Commission also provided comments on the goal to “Improve and maintain a complete system” and expanding the goal to acknowledge all forms of the system, such as including freight, aviation, and other modes of transportation. It may result in revising the goal and addressing multimodal within the policies and actions.

Chair Althaus recommended replacing “Invest wisely” with “Invest strategically to support a resilient and maintainable transportation system.”

Planner Smith-Erickson said the team plans to begin reviewing other emerging transportation ideas of safety, multimodal considerations, level of service standards for all modes, congestion, state of good repair, and sustainability.

The consultant shared information with the Planning Commission on the safe team system approach. Safety is an important topic within the update

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covering safe road users, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads, and post-crash care. The target goal for safety is zero with no accidents. The intent is to eliminate accidents and keep pedestrians safe. The previous focus was on vehicle driver safety with airbags and seat belts; however, the focus has been expanded to consider safety of all users of different transportation modes.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether the fire and police departments review the Transportation Plan to provide feedback because they are the first responders to accidents. Planner Smith-Erickson said first responders are a component of the post-crash care in terms of how traffic and accessibility affect timely response and how quickly responders are able to reach accidents to provide assistance. The police and fire departments should be involved in the discussions.

Councilmember Dahlhoff cited a recent accident in front of Tumwater Middle School. The configuration of the road prevented the fire department from responding to the incident. Design elements in the transportation system should consider access by first responders. She would welcome police and fire feedback when they encounter barriers because of the design of roads, which affects response times.

Engineer Gertje described WSDOT's target zero campaign by prioritizing efforts that prevent fatal and serious injury crashes. A substantial element in the campaign is ensuring vulnerable transportation users are considered for all streets. Tumwater has some specific challenges with fire access and redundancy as the City has many hills and wetlands that prevent redundancy. It is also important that neighborhoods have multiple accesses through community development standards. Staff is considering all those aspects as part of the update.

Planner Smith-Erickson reviewed a diagram of Safe System Principles. The draft plan is also expanding level of service to reflect multimodal level of service encompassing, auto, pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and global. Some considerations under each mode include:

- Auto
 - Volume to capacity (Vice Chair Michel) ratio
 - Intersection delay
 - Corridor Travel time
- Pedestrian
 - Sidewalks
 - Connectivity
 - Block length
- Bicycle
 - Network completeness
 - Connectivity

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- Perception of Safety/stress
- Transit
 - Service present
 - Service quality
 - Corridor amenities
- Global
 - Mode split
 - VMT
 - Person trips
 - Person delay
 - Mobility units

Planner Smith-Erickson shared a diagram of Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) 1-4 with Level 1 representing the lowest level of stress that most children and their parents would find comfortable to Level 4 as tolerable for any significant distance only by strong and fearless bicycle riders who are comfortable riding in a mixed traffic environment.

Engineer Gertje explained that LTS is an assessment of the level of travel stress on any road. Most users would be uncomfortable riding a road rated LTS 4. The intent is to ensure all roads are accessible and appealing to all people by ensuring a rating of LTS 1 across the City. The same level of traffic stress is different for each street. A residential street with low traffic and speeds would be easy to rate as LTS 1, while collector and arterial roads would be more difficult to rate at LTS 1. The LTS model will be applied to all streets in the City to document needed improvements to achieve a rating of LTS 1 on all streets.

Planner Smith-Erickson cited the discussion on congestion. Studies have documented that when lanes are added or roads are widened, traffic will increase creating ongoing congestion. Adding capacity can decrease safety. Some capacity improvements are justified. However, the City prefers to avoid adding lanes to address traffic. The City has been progressive by adding roundabouts to reduce traffic congestion. The update will consider ways to address congestion other than adding more capacity.

The City was rated and received a report from the Society of Civil Engineers for aviation, bridges, dams, drinking water, roads, schools, transit, stormwater, and wastewater. The City's average score was C. Staff is considering ways to improve the rating during the periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan and through planning activities.

The Transportation Plan must also consider sustainability in terms of climate change, natural disasters, equity, and the economy. As the population increases, factors to consider is how well the transportation system can keep pace, what new tools and modes of travel could assist the

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City in managing transportation, and how can streets and roads support vibrant and local economies.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether sustainability also considers the composition of materials used for roads. She asked how procurement of materials or the utilization of new technology is factored in the plan.

Engineer Gertje said that although the question is important, that aspect has not been considered during the update of the Transportation Plan. Councilmember Dahlhoff recommended including a discussion about the type of materials during the update and in forecasting the future. One example is using carbon-friendly materials, such as wood products for furniture. WSDOT lab has been testing different material compositions. Procurement of materials should be included in the sustainability element as a baseline. Engineer Gertje pointed out that the focus of maintaining existing roads rather than adding capacity would have some affect on the carbon impacts of materials. Councilmember Dahlhoff acknowledged the intent but preferred to include an element to ensure materials are considered.

Planner Smith-Erickson reported the current plan serves as a foundation for the update. The pandemic changed how and where everyone works and travels and there have been changes in transportation priorities at the federal, state, and local levels since 2016. The update will incorporate all the changes, input from the community, Planning Commission, stakeholders, and the committee. Staff continues working with the consultant on the draft goals and policies. Pending information to be received by the City include land capacity analysis and final housing allocations from Thurston Regional Planning Council. Staff plans to begin working on the details of the plan and updating language of the four goals.

**2025 COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN PERIODIC
UPDATE – DOCUMENT
FORMAT:**

Planner Smith-Erickson presented a template of the proposed format of the Comprehensive Plan. The layout has been revised to increase user friendliness and accessibility. Goals and policies will be separate from technical information. The intent is to simplify when possible. The proposed plan introduction provides an overview of the plan, background, GMA, and overarching goals. Staff proposes to develop a separate user guide and a goal and policy guide. The plan includes all the elements with accompanying goals, policies, and implementation actions, a technical background document, subareas plans, maps and appendices. Some elements do not require subarea plans or maps, etc. Staff proposes to reduce some of the technical information by incorporating information in either the user guide, plan introduction, or the goal and policy guide. Throughout the plan, more graphics and pictures will be included to aid in the readability of the document.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether staff uses a screen reader to test whether the document can be accessed and read by people who have

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difficulties seeing to access and interact with digital content. She also recommended using “plain talk” as state agencies have been mandated to use “plain talk” and ensure documents are understandable.

Planner Smith-Erickson explained that prior to uploading documents to the website staff completes accessibility checks. Staff received training from the Communications Department and it is a requirement for staff to complete an accessibility check.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether staff also tests for translation and audio. Planner Smith-Erickson advised that she would follow up with the Communications Department to ensure all accessibility requirements are tested.

Planner Smith-Erickson asked the committee to provide feedback on formatting to ensure readability of the document by the public and whether the information is understandable.

Chair Althaus offered that his perception of an introduction section entails a discussion as to why the City completes a comprehensive plan. However, the introduction appears to be both an introduction and an executive summary. He supports providing a user guide for the community as the entire document would be difficult to navigate.

ADJOURNMENT: With there being no further business, Chair Althaus adjourned the meeting at 9:03 a.m.

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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