

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

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**CONVENE:** 7:01 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Chair Elizabeth Robbins and Commissioners Terry Kirkpatrick, Brandon Staff, Michael Tobias, and Anthony Varela.

Excused: Commissioner Grace Edwards.

Absent: Commissioner Brian Schumacher.

Staff: Transportation and Engineering Assistant Director Mary Heather Ames, Planning Manager Brad Medrud, and Planner Erika Smith-Erickson

**CHANGES TO AGENDA:** There were no changes to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**TUMWATER JOINT CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES DECEMBER 12, 2023:**

**MOTION:** **Commissioner Kirkpatrick moved, seconded by Commissioner Tobias, to approve the minutes of December 12, 2023 Tumwater Joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS:** There were no reports.

**MANAGER'S REPORT:** Manager Medrud referred to the Attorney General's memorandum concerning decisions surrounding the taking of property.

Approximately 782 survey responses have been received through December 28, 2023 for the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. The City continues to receive responses with the number of surveys completed numbering over 800. Communications staff is developing a report summarizing the responses. An open house on the update has been scheduled both virtually and in-person on Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 7 p.m. at the Tumwater Fire Station Training Room. Staff is developing the content and format of the open house and public outreach. The open house is the first of a number of different types of

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public outreach events and activities to engage the public during the update process.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There were no public comments.

### **2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE – TRANSPORTATION:**

Manager Medrud reported the briefing is the last of the Phase 1 briefings and discussions on the current Comprehensive Plan. Staff is transitioning to review proposed changes and amendments to the Transportation Plan tentatively scheduled at the end of February. The Transportation Plan is one of the most important elements in the Comprehensive Plan as much of the City's budget is devoted to capital facilities and development activities. He introduced Assistant Director Ames to review the current Plan.

Assistant Director Ames reported the Growth Management Act (GMA) requires the City to demonstrate that each element in the Comprehensive Plan meets the relevant planning goals of the GMA. The GMA includes 15 goals that guide the development and the adoption of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The goals were updated by the Legislature in 2023. A new goal adds a transportation goal of: "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." Achieving the goal will be accomplished through a combination of goals, policies, and actions within the Land Use Element and the Transportation Plan.

The City's 2016 Transportation Master Plan provides the functional framework for Tumwater's transportation vision. The City's Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) informs decisions for achieving the vision.

General topics addressed during the update include:

- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice throughout the Comprehensive Plan (new)
- All elements, plans, and maps will be updated for internal consistency
- The updated Comprehensive Plan will be comprised of shorter individual Elements and Plans with a focus on simplified and updated goals, policies, and implementation actions with appendices of technical information
- A new Comprehensive Plan Goal and Policy Guide will be created for staff and policymakers, as well as a new User Guide for community members
- Development of a mutually agreeable Memorandum of

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Agreements between the City and tribes on collaboration and participation in the planning process

Topics addressed as part of the Transportation Plan update include:

- Update of maps
- Update of existing conditions and operations
- Update of planned improvements and future operations to 2045
- Update of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Update of the financial analysis
- Update transportation impact fees
- Update estimated traffic impacts to state-owned transportation facilities resulting from land use assumptions to assist the State Department of Transportation in monitoring the performance of state facilities, to plan improvements for the facilities, and to assess the impact of land-use decisions on state-owned transportation facilities
- Update land use assumptions used in estimating current and future transportation needs

Factored within the update of facilities and service needs is an inventory of air, water, and ground transportation facilities and services, including transit alignments and general aviation airport facilities, to define existing capital facilities and travel levels as a basis for future planning. Level of service standards will be reviewed for all locally owned arterials and transit routes to serve as a gauge to judge the performance of the system. For state-owned transportation facilities, a review of the level of service standards for highways will gauge the performance of the system. The review will identify specific actions and requirements for bringing into compliance locally owned transportation facilities or services that are below an established level of service standard, as well as updating forecasts of traffic for at least ten years based on the adopted Land Use Element to provide information on the location, timing, and capacity needs of future growth. The review will also identify state and local system needs to meet current and future demands.

The financial analysis update includes analysis of funding capability to balance needs against probable funding resources and a multi-year financing plan based on the needs identified in the Comprehensive Plan, the appropriate parts of which shall serve as the basis for the six-year street, road, or transit program required for cities and for public transportation systems. Should probable funding fall short of meeting identified needs, information will be included on how additional funding would be identified, or how land use assumptions would be reassessed to ensure level of service standards are achieved.

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The Transportation Plan, the six-year Capital Facilities Plans for cities and for public transportation systems, and the ten-year investment program for the state must be consistent. A projection is required of state and local system needs to meet current and future demand.

The update includes a pedestrian and bicycle component of collaborative efforts to identify and designate planned improvements for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and corridors that address and encourage enhanced community access and promote healthy lifestyles, consider approaches that increase physical activity, describe any existing and planned transportation demand management strategies, such as high occupancy vehicle lanes or subsidiary programs and parking policies, an analysis of future funding capability to judge needs against probable funding resources, and a multi-year financing plan based on needs identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

Assistant Director Ames shared that she met with staff from Intercity Transit on another topic but did mention the City's work on the update of the Transportation Plan Element. Intercity Transit staff expressed interest in working with the City through the planning process and potential future projects to increase access to transit.

The update will describe intergovernmental coordination efforts, including an assessment of the impacts of the Transportation Plan, land use assumptions on the transportation systems of adjacent jurisdictions, and how the Plan is consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan, and identify lands useful for public purposes such as utility corridors, transportation corridors, landfills, sewage treatment facilities, stormwater management facilities, recreation, schools, and other public uses. The Plan will identify open space corridors within and between urban growth areas, including lands useful for trails. The Plan will be updated as needed on the process or criteria for identifying and locating essential public facilities in coordination with the update of the Lands for Public Purposes Element. Demand-management strategies will be updated as well as information on pedestrian and bicycle components to include collaborative efforts to identify and designate planned improvements for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and corridors that address and encourage enhanced community access and promote healthy lifestyles.

Staff is reviewing revisions to enable some form of Intercity Transit turnarounds on Littlerock Road and Old Highway 99 for future transit services, update and include information from the Thurston Thrives Walkability Study, Intercity Transit studies, and the Old Highway 99 Corridor Study, allow active transportation facilities, transportation

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demand management, or public transportation services to meet concurrency, incorporate equitable implementation, estimate multimodal level of service impacts to state transportation facilities, add impact fee revenue for bike and pedestrian facilities, provide multimodal level of service and needs forecasts for arterials, transit routes, and active transportation facilities, afford priority to the greatest multimodal safety benefit to each category of roadway users, include Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan, and provide funding analysis to include state transportation facilities. A new requirement is incorporating environmental justice in goals and policies.

Assistant Director Ames reviewed the format and content of the current Transportation Master Plan.

To assist with the update, the Department of Commerce provided some guidance materials for updating the Transportation Plan. The next step of the update is hiring a consultant to assist in the update of the Transportation Plan. The City plans to issue a non-cost Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit proposals from consultants on their respective qualifications for completing the work and a proposal scope of work with no request for costs. Costs will be negotiated after the selection of the consultant. The General Government Committee is scheduled to receive a briefing on the same information on January 10, 2024.

Assistant Director Ames invited comments, written comments, and questions from Commissioners.

Commissioner Tobias asked about the primary sources of revenue for the transportation budget. Assistant Director Ames said most transportation revenue is from grants, which is the largest source of funds. The basis for grant funding is the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program, which ensures the City is eligible for federal and state grants for transportation projects. The funding cycle is regularly scheduled through other funding sources such as the Surface Transportation Block Grants (STBG), Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and funding for air quality projects. Additionally, Tumwater is positioned favorably with a voter approved Transportation Benefit District providing .02% sales tax for transportation projects in the City mostly related to paving and repaving projects. The third source of funds is from Transportation Impact Fees, which depend on the level of development in the City. Impact fees are utilized for projects identified in the Transportation Impact Fee Program. Staff is updating the Transportation Impact Fee Program as part of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update process.

Commissioner Varela asked whether the update plans to address

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connecting the City to larger transportation options, such as the Sounder or light rail to Seattle and other locations to the north. Assistant Director Ames said the City's Transportation Master Plan does not address those options other than discussions facilitated by TRPC through regional efforts rather than independently by the City.

Manager Medrud asked whether TRPC is in the process of updating the Regional Transportation Plan. Assistant Director Ames affirmed the Regional Plan is undergoing an update. A specific study is underway to address high speed public transportation between the region and Seattle and other locations.

Commissioner Staff inquired as to whether staff has considered attracting traffic from Interstate 5 and how it impacts local transportation or options for funneling more traffic to Tumwater to increase tourism. Assistant Director Ames said the Transportation Plan addresses the tourism component in the form of transportation infrastructure to ensure the network can accommodate an increase in tourism activity. Concurrency is the primary component to address infrastructure level of service.

Manager Medrud added that the discussion about attracting more tourism to the City would also be addressed during the update of the Economic Development Plan.

Chair Robbins asked whether development proposals are ever required to submit origin destination studies or a traffic analysis of a proposed development.

Chair Robbins asked about the timeline for contracting with the consultant and the type of qualifications the City desires to include any regional transportation planning experience. Assistant Director Ames said staff is gearing up to advertise the position with several weeks afforded for applicants to prepare proposals. It likely will require one to two months to begin the update. Staff is seeking qualifications from firms that have experience and a reputation for completing a successful transportation master plan. Several well-qualified firms have been identified that have completed similar work for other jurisdictions.

Commissioner Staff commented on the possibility of the consultant working in coordination with *Experience Olympia and Beyond* as part of its destination tourism plan that included an impact study. The work was completed several months ago. Manager Medrud advised that the City contracts with TRPC for many types of projects and any recent studies completed in the region would be considered as part of the update.

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Assistant Director Ames added that the City is considering the model used by TRPC for the region, which provides the basis for some of the analysis completed.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick cited the forecast of a major increase in population over the next 30 years. Areas served by Intercity Transit are where most of the new apartment complexes are being constructed. Since Intercity Transit does not offer extensive route service within the City, there are no benefits for a developer to build an apartment unless the property is served by an existing bus route. He asked about the possibility of working with Intercity Transit to assign some routes that would attract developers to the City to develop apartments in areas that are currently not served by transit. Assistant Director Ames responded that during recent discussions with Intercity Transit staff, the topic was addressed in terms of new housing developments located outside of Intercity Transit's regular service area. The agency is exploring other methods for serving those areas, such as a future pilot program in the City to increase transit service innovatively. Intercity Transit is willing to work with the City and explore ways of providing bus service that might not be a traditional bus route. As more development occurs the customer base increases enabling Intercity Transit to provide service. The issue is a "chicken and egg scenario" as transit depends on land density and customers to support bus service.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick noted that as the City of Lacey expands its transportation system north of Hawks Prairie, the city is opening many large properties that are much more attractive to the development community than in Tumwater. Manager Medrud noted that the issue is also a component of politics with more pressure by the City Council to promote more transit service from Intercity Transit. When Intercity Transit expanded service to Hawks Prairie, the impetus was partially attributed to the increase in the number of households, as well as political pressure from the City of Lacey.

Chair Robbins expressed interest in encouraging transportation connections through different avenues other than Intercity Transit such as offering incentives for Uber-type services or other models that are not public agencies to provide transit service to help the community meet its travel needs. She asked about the possibility of exploring options in the plans and analyses. Manager Medrud advised that it would be appropriate to explore, especially as the state now requires the City to plan and accommodate all income groups for housing and access to services. The City lacks the ability to meet all demands with transit routes because of some areas located outside of the service area.

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Commissioner Staff asked whether the City has produced a map of current transit service and future bus service to map out desired transit service to serve the population. Manager Medrud cited the possibility of working with Intercity Transit staff to develop a transit service map of the City.

Commissioner Staff commented that a visual would be helpful as it would identify areas of disparity and provide an overall view of areas where equity has not been achieved. A map would be an impactful way and could possibly lead to more conversations with Intercity Transit on ways to meet needs.

Assistant Director Ames said an inventory of the City's sidewalks exists as well as a plan for expanding sidewalks. In terms of bus service, it is also important to have access to bus stops. The City's interface with transit service is important to ensure facilities are available for walking and biking to a transit stop or another location with access to other types of public transportation.

Manager Medrud acknowledged that the suggestions were helpful because the City is required to accommodate all new state requirements.

Manager Medrud explained that the update on the Transportation Plan was delayed because of the pending receipt of state funds to fund the consultant contract. The City received notification at the end of December that it will receive funding. At the end of month, work on developing the Climate Element is scheduled to begin.

**ORDINANCE NO.  
O2023-017, TMC 18.38  
FP FLOODPLAIN  
OVERLAY:**

Planner Smith-Erickson briefed the Commission on updates to the City's floodplain ordinance.

Approximately 300 towns, cities, and tribes participate in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program in the state. Continued enforcement of the City's floodplain management regulations in TMC 18.38 enables FEMA to provide federally backed flood insurance to City property owners. As a condition of participation in the program, communities are required to adopt and enforce flood hazard reduction regulations meeting the minimum requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program.

In May 2023, staff participated in a FEMA floodplain community assistance visit with Department of Ecology staff to review the City's floodplain ordinance. The community assistance visit determined the ordinance was in good standing but required some minor updates.



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In November 2023, FEMA notified the City of final flood determinations for Thurston County and incorporated areas. The FEMA flood hazard determination for the City is considered final. The Flood Insurance Study Report and the Flood Insurance Rate Map covering the City are effective on May 8, 2024.

Prior to May 2024, the City must amend its existing floodplain regulations for consistency with the model ordinance for floodplain management, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Flood Insurance Program.

Planner Smith-Erickson advised that the staff report includes summaries of the 15 proposed amendments, code sections affected, and proposed amendment language. Three new sections were added for detached accessory structures, storage and materials and equipment, and penalties. A notice of intent for ordinance O2023-017 was mailed to the State Department of Commerce on December 14, 2023. A SEPA Checklist for the ordinance was completed on December 13, 2023 for issuance of a Determination of Non-significance (DNS) in 2024.

Manager Medrud described the SEPA review process for proposed changes to the ordinance.

Planner Smith-Erickson asked Commissioners to review the proposed amendments and new sections in the ordinance for preparation for a future work session and address whether the proposed amendments are clear and easy for developers to understand within a floodplain. A work session is scheduled on January 23, 2024 with a tentative public hearing on the ordinance scheduled for February 13, 2024.

Commissioner Tobias requested information on the criteria for determining significance or non-significance during a SEPA review. Manager Medrud explained that the initial threshold is whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required. A significant ruling requires completion of an EIS to review all potential impacts in detail and identify associated alternatives. When SEPA was originally adopted in 1971, the cost was substantial to complete. Today, completion of an EIS is less common with some jurisdictions electing to conduct an EIS for an update on a comprehensive plan. The SEPA process is a threshold to determine whether an EIS is required, and, if not, the next level is a Mitigated DNS to address any impacts caused by various proposals. A Mitigated DNS is typically applicable to projects and is not typical for updates to ordinances.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick asked whether the City is required to provide notification to state agencies for a 60-day comment period if a SEPA is

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not required. Manager Medrud advised that there are two different processes. The SEPA process includes a separate notification process to specific agencies and interested parties. The Notice of Intent process as codified under the Growth Management Act is a separate notification process administered through the Department of Commerce as the lead agency for the GMA. Most regulations or plans typically fall under the Department of Commerce notification process.

Chair Robbins inquired as to the frequency FEMA updates floodplain maps. Manager Medrud said the last similar process completed by the City was in 2015. Chair Robbins asked whether any event triggers an update. Manager Medrud explained that it is a federally timed process.

**RESOLUTION NO.  
R2024-001, FOURTH  
EDITION HAZARDS  
MITIGATION PLAN  
FOR THE THURSTON  
REGION:**

Planner Smith-Erickson updated members on the status of the update of the Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region. The fourth edition of the Plan outlines strategies to reduce the risk of the most destructive natural hazards of floods, earthquakes, and wildfires threatening the local area. The Plan's goals, policies, and actions will minimize lawsuits and protect people in the community and assets from future disasters.

Managed risks contain costs and promote sustainable communities. FEMA has enacted hazard mitigation planning requirements for states, tribes, and local governments through the adoption of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. Local governments are required to adopt a federally approved Hazards Mitigation Plan to apply for and receive federal hazard mitigation assistance funding. The City of Tumwater Annex is the fourth edition, which was first adopted in 2003. Goals, policies, and actions if implemented would minimize losses and protect assets from future disasters. The Plan's mitigation strategy includes regional actions to improve multiagency coordination, build mitigation capabilities, and strengthen resiliency across Thurston County. Each Plan participant produces an Annex with prioritized actions to minimize losses within each jurisdiction.

The Plan must demonstrate that the community's proposed mitigation measures are based on a sound planning process that accounts for risks to the capabilities of the individual jurisdiction. Local governments are required to conduct a planning process that satisfies FEMA requirements to receive FEMA Plan approval.

Planner Smith-Erickson reviewed identified risks in the City. The City Annex identifies actions that are specific to the vulnerability of the community and the responsible parties for implementing actions. The City identified 20 initiatives to help mitigate and reduce impacts from natural hazards. The initiatives are categorized by initiative type that

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include public outreach and information, planned coordination and implementation, data collection and mapping, development regulations, hazard preparedness, hazard damage reduction, and critical facilities and replacement retrofits.

Planner Smith-Erickson shared an example of a mitigation initiative for the City of Tumwater. Staff identified initiatives from the last update and reviewed example plans to select the initiatives. Some of the initiatives are incorporated within the Capital Facilities Plan, biennial budget, the 2020 Water System Plan, Deschutes Flood Reduction Plan, City of Tumwater Comprehensive Plan, development code updates, and 2023 and 2024 City Work Programs. The City Annex identifies potential City projects designed to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards that could occur in the future dependent upon funding, direction, and need. The mitigation initiatives are projects developed from input from each City department.

Planner Smith-Erickson shared an overview of the Annex structure comprised of 144 pages categorized into 12 sections. She summarized each section in the Plan. Jurisdictions must have at least one mitigation action for each identified hazard. The planning team is responsible for monitoring and maintaining the Plan. The Annex and the Regional Plan are a climate resiliency sub-element in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Planner Smith-Erickson reviewed the schedule and activities for the update of the Regional Plan and Annexes. TRPC facilitated the planning for updating the Plan and serves as the lead for creation of the Regional Plan. The City's Annex was submitted in conjunction with the Regional Plan on November 27, 2023 to the Washington Department of Emergency Management Division for a 30-day review. Following the conclusion of the review, the Annex and Regional Plan will be forwarded to FEMA for its 45-day review. FEMA may recommend some revisions for further review.

Planner Smith-Erickson recommended scheduling a public hearing on the proposal on January 23, 2024.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick noted a public comment was included in the packet, but no response was included. He suggested addressing the comment. Manager Medrud advised that he responded to the individual and shared additional information as to the notification process.

Planner Smith-Erickson said the comment was received on November 11, 2023. The commenter expressed concerns about an existing development within a liquefaction area and whether residents living in

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that area were notified of the situation.

Commissioner Varela commented on the delay in the update and questioned whether the City is currently subject to any negative implications because of an outdated Plan. Manager Medrud said that FEMA has not advised the City that it is not in compliance as the ongoing update falls within the window of response for ensuring the City's ability to apply for grant funding.

Chair Robbins asked about the scenario where the City is unable to receive funding from other resources and the City's liability risk for not implementing an initiative. Manager Medrud said he would follow up with an appropriate answer.

Chair Robbins asked about the involvement of lenders and insurers in assisting the City in mitigating risks. Manager Medrud advised that those entities did not have a formal role in the update process as the update is intended to identify risks and mitigation measures rather than serving as an opportunity for coordination with lenders and insurers. Chair Robbins suggested the Plan's public outreach activities should also include those entities as well.

Planner Smith-Erickson requested scheduling a public hearing on January 23, 2024 on the proposed resolution.

**MOTION:** **Commissioner Tobias moved, seconded by Commissioner Staff, to schedule a public hearing on January 23, 2024 for Resolution No. R2024-001, Fourth Edition Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** The next meeting is scheduled on January 23, 2024.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Commissioner Kirkpatrick advised that he would be unable to attend the February 13, 2024 meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:** **Commissioner Tobias moved, seconded by Commissioner Kirkpatrick, to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**