

TO: City Council
FROM: Lisa Parks, City Administrator
DATE: September 2, 2025
SUBJECT: Ordinance No. O2025-012 Creating a Communications Department

1) Recommended Action:

Adopt Ordinance No. O2025-012 Creating a Communications Department.

This ordinance was recommended for adoption under considerations by the Budget and Finance Committee at their July 25, 2025 meeting.

2) Background:

This proposal is intended to acknowledge and respond to the growing and evolving needs of the City of Tumwater related to communications and outreach to our community. There has been an evolution in the role of the communications team over the past several years, and moving to establish a communications department is a next logical step toward meeting the needs and expectations of our community. To create a new communications department, the ordinance establishes and authorizes three specific items:

- It creates the department (TMC 2.06.010);
- It creates a department director (TMC 2.10.010 and 2.10.120);
- It adds the communications department to the list of duties assigned to the City Administrator (TMC 2.10.020).

The purpose for creating the new department at this time is to more effectively communicate with and respond to the growing and changing needs and expectations of our community. Some of the specific benefits include the following:

- It emphasizes the importance the City places on communication and transparency about city governance and operations;
- It recognizes the evolution of the communications function in the organization, including working collaboratively to align and amplify communication protocols, strategies and standards cross-departmentally;
- It acknowledges the expanded role of the communications team in enhancing our overall public relations work, including engagement at regional events and with key constituent groups, and enhanced social media efforts;
- It clarifies that the Communications Director is an official spokesperson and voice of the City with the media and in various community engagement settings.
- It recognizes communications and community engagement are significant components in developing strategic alignment and approaches to various issues, as well as being a mission critical function in the overall operation and administration of the organization.

To implement this change, the current recommendation is to move the Communications Manager into the Communications Director position, with a commensurate increase in salary and execution of an employment agreement using the template recently approved by Council.

3) Policy Support:

Refine and sustain a great organization.

4) Alternatives:

- ☐ Modify the Ordinance.
 - ☐ Choose not to create a Communications Department.
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5) Fiscal Notes:

The only fiscal impact of this action is an adjustment to the salary of the Communications Manager. As Communications Director, this position would be placed in the City's salary grade system at Grade 41, which is consistent with most other Director positions. The maximum potential increase in salary associated with this adjustment would be less than \$50,000 for the biennium, which is within the existing budgeted capacity for salaries and benefits in the General Fund.

6) Attachments:

A: Ordinance No. O2025-012