STAFF REPORT

Date: October 27, 2026
To: Planning Commission
From: Sharon Lumbantobing, Deputy Community Development Director

2027 Long Range Planning Work Program

1. Recommended Action

Review the draft 2027 Long Range Planning Work Program and identify any proposed changes or priorities for discussion at the December 8, 2026, Joint City Council-Planning Commission work session.

2. Background

The City Council approves an annual Long Range Planning Work Program at the beginning of each year. The Work Program establishes the long range planning projects and ongoing responsibilities that staff will focus on during the coming year.

The City Council and Planning Commission will discuss the proposed 2027 Work Program at a joint work session on December 8, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. The joint work session provides an opportunity to discuss priorities, potential adjustments to the Work Program, and general topics related to their respective roles on community development issues. The Work Program is scheduled for City Council approval on January 19, 2027.

The City Council, Planning Commission, community members, and City staff may propose projects for the annual Work Program. TMC 18.60 establishes an annual docket process for proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations. The preliminary docket may include changes suggested by any interested person. Requests from citizens or property owners for Comprehensive Plan amendments, as well as applications for site-specific rezones, must be submitted by the first Monday in December for consideration in the annual amendment cycle.

Major areas of work in 2027 include housing implementation, the Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan, Urban Forestry Management Plan code amendments, the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Update, development regulation amendments, UGA analysis, annexations, and implementation of the new permit system.

Except for state grant funding for portions of the Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan, long range planning work is funded through the City's General Fund.

3. Tumwater Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan establishes the City's framework for managing growth, policymaking, and investment decisions through the 2045 planning horizon. It addresses where and how development will

occur and how growth will be coordinated with infrastructure, public services, housing, transportation, environmental protection, and other community needs.

The Comprehensive Plan's goals, policies, and implementation actions guide public and private development and City investments. In 2027, the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan is expected to be updated with consultant support and brought forward for City Council consideration.

4. Tumwater Development Regulations

The City's development regulations implement the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan through zoning, land division, and environment, design, and other development standards.

The City's Zoning Map establishes the location and boundaries of zoning districts and the uses and development intensities allowed within those districts. The Zoning Map implements the land use designations established by the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map.

The 2027 Work Program includes several significant development regulation projects, including housing regulations, Multi-Family Tax Exemption regulations, battery energy storage systems, climate implementation, and continued updates to the Urban Forestry Management regulations.

5. 2026 Accomplishments

Staff completed or made substantial progress on a number of projects included in the 2026 Long Range Planning Work Program, including:

- Housing Element implementation, including support for the Regional Housing Council
- Multifamily Tax Exemption Program Evaluation
- Affordable Housing Study
- Economic Development Plan Update
- Urban Forestry Management Plan code updates, including landscaping, tree and vegetation preservation, street tree regulations, and the Street Tree Plan
- Annexations
- Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan
- Brewery Redevelopment/Planned Action EIS and Ordinance
- Transportation-related development regulation updates
- Other development regulation updates

Several major projects initiated in 2026 will continue into 2027, including:

- Urban Forestry Management Plan code updates and Street Tree Plan
- Multifamily Tax Exemption Program code update
- Affordable Housing Study implementation
- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Update
- Development regulation updates
- Annexations

- Citywide Design Guidelines update
- Housing Code update
- Brewery Redevelopment/Planned Action EIS and Ordinance
- Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan
- Regional Housing Council participation

6. Proposed 2027 Long Range Work Program

The proposed 2027 Long Range Planning Work Program is organized into five major areas:

1. Comprehensive Plan Amendment Docket
2. Development Regulation Amendment Docket
3. Housing Element Implementation
4. Other Planning Projects
5. General Management and Coordination

Individual projects include an estimate of the staff time needed to complete the work. The proposed 2027 Work Program is based on 2.5 full-time employees assigned to long range planning. One Associate Planner will be allocated 50% to long range planning and 50% to current planning to assist with development review during implementation of the new permit system.

The proposed Work Program identifies activities as either Above the Line or Below the Line. The Above the Line activities represent the work that can reasonably be completed within the estimated capacity of 2.5 long range planning FTEs in 2027. Actual project timing may be affected by consultant schedules, City Council direction, coordination with other departments and jurisdictions, and completion of projects carried forward from 2026.

The Below the Line activities exceed available staff capacity and cannot be completed within the 2.5 FTE staffing level. If the City Council identifies a Below the Line activity as a priority for 2027, the Work Program will need to be adjusted by deferring, reducing, or removing other activities.

Following the December 8 Joint Work Session, staff will revise the proposed Work Program as needed and bring the final 2027 Long Range Planning Work Program to the City Council for consideration on January 19, 2027.

7. Suggested Joint Work Session Discussion Topics

The December 8, 2026, Joint Work Session provides an opportunity for the City Council and Planning Commission to discuss the proposed Work Program and priorities for 2027. Suggested discussion topics include:

1. How has communication between the City Council and Planning Commission worked in 2026, and are there opportunities to improve communication in 2027?

2. Are there additional Above the Line projects that should be considered for 2027? If so, which proposed projects should be delayed or reduced to accommodate them?