

TO: Planning Commission  
FROM: Dana Bowers, Associate Planner and Alyssa Jones Wood, Sustainability Manager  
DATE: May 26, 2026  
SUBJECT: Battery Energy Storage Systems

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1) Recommended Action:

Provide input on issues related to battery energy storage systems to help inform potential amendments to Tumwater Municipal Code (TMC) Title 8 Health and Safety, TMC Title 15 Buildings and Construction, and TMC Title 18 Zoning.

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2) Background:

Battery energy storage systems store electricity for later use, helping manage peak electricity demand, support electrical grid reliability, and maintain power during outages. These systems vary in scale from small residential installations to larger utility-scale facilities that support regional electrical infrastructure.

The battery energy storage industry is experiencing rapid growth due to increasing electricity demand and decreasing battery costs. As a result, utilities and jurisdictions throughout Washington State are evaluating how and where these systems may be appropriate. Tumwater Municipal Code (TMC) Title 18 Zoning does not currently allow battery energy storage systems.

Like other forms of energy storage already present in the community, such as gas stations and propane storage, battery energy storage systems have both benefits and potential risks that require careful consideration related to land use compatibility, public health, and safety. Tumwater is also exploring the potential use of battery backup systems to support continuity of operations and emergency response at critical public facilities during power disruptions.

Topics of Planning Commission consideration and discussion include:

- Energy Storage Capacity and Use
  - Physical Scale of the Facility
  - Zone Districts
  - Screening and Setbacks
  - Fire/Thermal Runway
  - Noise
  - Decommissioning
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3) Alternatives:

- Draft code amendments for TMC Title 8 Health and Safety, TMC Title 15 Buildings and Construction, and TMC Title 18 Zoning to allow battery energy storage systems.
  - Not allow battery energy storage systems.
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4) Attachments:

- A. Staff Report
- B. Presentation