

**TUMWATER GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING**  
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**CONVENE:** 8:00 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Chair Michael Althausen and Councilmembers Joan Cathey and Leatta Dahlhoff.

Staff: City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Community Development Director Michael Matlock, Finance Director Troy Niemeyer, Fire Chief Brian Hurley, Planning Manager Brad Medrud, Communications Manager Ann Cook, and Housing and Land Use Planner Erika Smith-Erickson.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**  
**GENERAL**  
**GOVERNMENT**  
**COMMITTEE,**  
**JULY 12, 2023:**

**MOTION:** **Councilmember Dahlhoff moved, seconded by Councilmember Cathey, to approve the minutes of July 12, 2023 as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**ENTERPRISE RESOURCE** Director Niemeyer briefed members on the status of transitioning to  
**PLANNING SYSTEM** the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.  
**UPDATE:**

The first module of Financials and Productivity was activated on April 1, 2023. The installation was on schedule and within budget. Prior to the initiation of the second and third modules, staff discovered the pace of implementation was too overwhelming because additional resources were lacking to assist in transitioning to the new system. The transition has created some stress, burnout, and some turnover by staff. The next installation module is Payroll and HR. Staff anticipates some additional challenges that likely will delay implementation of the module.

Director Niemeyer reviewed the project timeline as initially adopted. The process began in early 2022. Following installation of Payroll and HR, the Utility Billing module is scheduled next for installation.

The project was initiated in 2017-2018 when the City began exploring options to meet City needs. Since then, the City has experienced a turnover in personnel directly involved in the installation of the new system, as well as the loss of a Database Administrator, and several Finance Directors. An Accounting Supervisor position was replaced several times over the last several years, as well as the City's Senior Accountant who retired.

Implementation of the HR module encountered some setbacks with

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the departure of the Administrative Services Director, the HR Manager, who is scheduled to retire at the end of September, and another position. The loss of personnel has encumbered the transition planned for October 2023 for HR and Payroll. The two modules cannot be split and installed separately as they are interrelated, which will necessitate a delay as the City fills the positions.

Other challenges include the loss of institutional knowledge as employees leave the City. Institutional knowledge is important as staff builds and implements the system because it requires process decisions, configuration decisions, and decisions inherent in the operation of the system. When employees leave the City, their background and knowledge are no longer available to the project.

Additionally, the project team has experienced a number of vendor issues. The vendor is also experiencing turnover of personnel with many new employees joining the company. The vendor, in some cases, oversold and under-delivered some actions involving the importation of data from the old system to the new system as well as the proposed project timeline.

Director Niemeyer reviewed a graph on the status of implementation with actual times that often involved much more time than indicated by the vendor. Initially, the City intended assigning 1.5 FTEs as project managers. The project management work has increased substantially. Some risks identified by the Project Manager include employee turnover, vendor's lack of experienced staff, and allocation of time by existing City staff.

Staff proposes a change to the timeline adjusting the activation of the Payroll and HR module to March/April 2024. Instead of overlapping phases during implementation, staff proposes implementation of only one module at a time to reduce stress on staff and ensure a smoother transition.

Director Niemeyer responded to questions about the status of the Financial module. The Financial module is operational except for several components that have been delayed. Employees provided feedback as they learned how to operate the new system. Four other system modules for installation include Payroll/HR, Utility Billing Phase 3, Intergov (permitting system), and Enterprise Asset Management. All system modules are interconnected with the Financial module.

Director Niemeyer reported the original project cost was approximately \$2 million, which included staff time and project

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management. The actual contract amount with Tyler Technologies was \$891,000. Phase 1 costs were under budget by \$20,000. Staff anticipates achieving similar results for Phase 2 as the vendor has reduced onsite visits. Staff recommends reallocating the savings from Phase 1 of \$20,000 to Phase 2.

Next steps include feedback from the committee and conceptual approval for a contract amendment with the vendor for a briefing to the Council for final approval of the amendment. Council approval is required to reallocate the savings from the first module to the second module. Director Niemeyer requested delegation of authority for any adjustment in the timeline or to issue a change order.

City Attorney Kirkpatrick advised members that if they support granting some authority to the Finance Director for future amendments, the committee should approve the Finance Director making changes as long as the budget amount is not increased.

**MOTION:**

**Councilmember Dahlhoff moved, seconded by Councilmember Cathey, to recommend approval of providing flexibility on the timelines for the modules, as well as some flexibility of up to \$20,000 while remaining within the budget as presented for the Council's future consideration. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**HAZARDS MITIGATION  
PLAN FOR THE  
THURSTON REGION  
UPDATE:**

Planner Smith-Erickson briefed members on the Tumwater Annex and its relationship to the Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region.

Because the region is susceptible to multiple natural hazard events of earthquakes, landslides, storms, floods, wildland fires, and other hazards destructive and costly to communities, the region developed the 2023 Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region as a region-wide strategy to minimize the impacts of natural disasters.

Federal hazard mitigation requirements are outlined in the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, which require jurisdictions to adopt a federally approved Hazards Mitigation Plan to apply for or to receive federal mitigation assistance program grants. Federal mitigation planning requires the plan to be updated and reapproved every five years. The current Hazards Mitigation Plan was substantially updated in 2017. Staff is working with the Hazard Mitigation Workgroup and Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) to update the plan. The Tumwater Annex addresses actions the City would take to address hazards commonly present throughout the City.

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Hazard mitigation is considered any action that reduces or eliminates long-term risks to life and property. The 2023 Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region and the Tumwater Annex contain the City's strategies for preparedness, response, and recovery. Staff has been meeting with the Tumwater Fire Department, Water Resources, Parks and Recreation, Transportation and Engineering, and Communications to identify initiatives to include in the plan.

Hazard mitigation saves lives and reduces property losses, safeguards critical community lifelines, assists community members recover more quickly, and it reduces short- and long-term impacts to the economy and the environment while also reducing the costs of disaster recovery and reconstruction.

City staff and over 20 local agencies in Thurston County are working together on the plan. The workgroup meets monthly. Currently, the workgroup is in the public engagement phase. A website for the plan contains information on open houses, a survey for the community, and a copy of the 2023 Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region, and Tumwater's Annex Plan. Plan adoption is scheduled to begin in December 2023.

The project manager for the plan is TRPC serving as the liaison between the jurisdictions, Thurston County, federal government, and state government. The 2023 Hazards Mitigation Planning Workgroup membership includes representatives from each plan partner and regulatory partners (FEMA, Washington Emergency Management Division, and TRPC).

Staff identified hazards to address and the initiatives to prioritize by utilizing a hazard risk rating model. TRPC contracted with Tetra Tech to complete the model and provide data to the workgroup. Each community's risk to a particular hazard varies based on several factors of probability, location, and sum of impacts on population, property, and the economy. The project examines hazard areas overlap with residents, homes, businesses, and other structures across Thurston County communities to identify an overall risk score. The scores are ranked low, medium, and high for each risk. The higher score warrants greater attention from the community to commit to actions that help protect vulnerable assets from future hazards.

The City of Tumwater conducted an online community survey to inform the community about the multijurisdictional plan update. The survey was available from June 6, 2022 through July 31, 2022. The survey included 12 questions specific to perceived risks and preferred mitigation activities in Tumwater. Tumwater received 55 responses. Earthquake was rated the highest concern by respondents

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followed by climate change, wildfire, extreme heat, severe storms, flooding, and other hazards.

Earthquake is the highest ranking risk with a score of 36. The plan does not address sea level rise. TRPC is working with the City of Olympia to address sea level rise. Survey respondents ranked severe weather as a medium risk followed by tsunami, which ranked zero to low. Although volcano/lahar was ranked zero to low the Tumwater Annex addresses volcano/lahar because of the Mount St. Helen's eruption and the substantial amount of ash fall experienced by the City. Survey respondents ranked wildfire as a medium risk.

Councilmember Cathey inquired about the lack of including climate change despite being ranked as the second most important risk according to respondents in Tumwater. Planner Smith-Erickson explained that within the Tumwater Annex, severe storm or weather incidents are addressed. The plan addresses reducing heat island affects, extreme heat, and wildfires. However the plan does not specifically speak to climate change partly because Tetra Tech did not specifically identify climate change.

Manager Medrud added that the scope for defining hazards was based on guidelines from FEMA. Staff recognizes climate change has multiple affects across the community. Those issues are captured in other risks pertaining to sea level rise, severe weather, and wildfires. While not necessarily identified separately, the plan addresses climate change through other identified risks.

Councilmember Cathey recommended that for the benefit of respondents, it would be important for climate change to be addressed in the plan as it would be difficult to calculate how climate change is tied to the effects of other risks.

Planner Smith-Erickson acknowledged the request.

Planner Smith-Erickson reviewed the correlation between the regional and local plan. The regional plan contains goals and objectives applicable county-wide with an overall risk assessment for all identified hazards. Tumwater City Council is responsible for adopting the 2023 Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region as well as the Tumwater Annex containing specific City initiatives. The Tumwater Annex addresses compliance with National Flood Insurance, which is required for FEMA approval.

Councilmember Cathey asked whether the City has ever experienced a flood. Manager Medrud advised that the City experienced severe flooding on the brewery property, Pioneer Park, and the golf course

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approximately 10 years ago.

Planner Smith-Erickson added that the 2017 plan includes historical events of identified hazards mapped in the City. The 2023 update consider historical events and adds any new additional information specific to natural hazard events since the last update in 2017.

Planner Smith-Erickson reviewed the primary contents of the plan:

- Community Profile & Capability Assessment
- Risk Assessments – risks exist where vulnerable assets intersect with hazards

City of Tumwater mitigation initiatives (actions):

- Currently adopted
- Completed
- New
- Future land use plans, zoning, and development regulations

Draft Mitigation Initiatives – Earthquake

- Risk Ranking – High
- Four actions proposed:
  - Conduct a voluntary non-structural earthquake readiness inspection for all critical facilities on an annual basis (2017 HMP)
  - Have a professional engineer or otherwise qualified professional to assess infrastructure for earthquake vulnerability (2017 HMP)
  - Include retrofitting/replacement of critical system elements in Capital Improvement Plan (LOTT)/Capital Facilities Plan (City) (2023 Proposed)
  - Install auxiliary generator to power City main well/water supply (2023 Proposed)

Draft Mitigation Initiatives – Wildfire

- Risk ranking- Medium
- Five actions proposed:
  - Establish fire breaks and routine maintenance on Tumwater Hill adjacent to City property, the newly created City park, and the elementary school (2017 HMP)
  - Adopt the Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code (WWUIC), International Building Code (IBC) and International Residential Code (IRC) to meet WUI requirements (2023 Proposed)

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- Update the City of Tumwater map to show wildland urban interface map layers to coincide with the 2023 Building Code Update (2023 Proposed)
- Routinely inspect the functionality of fire hydrants (2023 Proposed)
- Develop a vegetation management plan, incorporating proper species selection, planting, and maintenance practices into landscape code updates (2023 Proposed)

Councilmember Cathey asked for an update on the status of the City's review of the Washington Wildland Urban Interface Code. Manager Medrud advised that staff continues to meet with state agencies and local jurisdictions to determine how to address the new requirements in the code. Staff has not received any input indicative of any change in the requirements from the Washington Building Code Council. Staff is working on preparing an updated mapping of the City to assist in identifying areas that may or may not be affected by the code. At this time, he is not confident it would be possible to change the requirements for defensible space around buildings. The Legislature instructed the Building Code Council to pursue the amendments in 2019. The State Building Code Council updated the Washington Administrative Codes (WACs) based on that direction. The new code becomes effective October 29, 2023. Further work by staff is pending the resolution of another larger issue surrounding the energy code, which might move the deadline to some degree as the changes are tied together.

**Draft Mitigation Initiatives – Severe Storm/Weather**

- Risk ranking- Medium
- Four actions proposed:
  - Inspect all trees within falling distance of the four City-owned critical facilities to determine if they pose a hazard to the facility or operation of the facility during a storm (2017 HMP)
    - Reduce heat islands by implementing urban forestry code updates (2023 Proposed)
    - Modify land use and environmental regulations to support vegetation management activities that improve reliability in utility corridor (2023 Proposed)
    - Assess feasibility of installing solar power and battery storage at City Hall and Tumwater Library (secondary emergency operations center) (2023 Proposed)

Councilmember Cathey asked about the remaining two critical City facilities. Planner Smith-Erickson said the last two critical facilities

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are likely the two fire departments in addition to the library and City Hall.

Councilmember Cathey commented that the recent adoption of the Washington Wildland-Urban Interface Code speaks little about the role of trees and vegetation play in reducing the effects of climate change. Based on conversations with some legislators, there has been some pushback on the new requirements. Her concern is how the new requirements affect other City plans.

Planner Smith-Erickson said the public process includes online open house and survey opportunities until August 25, 2023 at [www.trpc.org/hazards](http://www.trpc.org/hazards). Materials on the website enable viewing the regional plan initiatives as well as Tumwater's initiatives and provide feedback and participate in the survey for the initiatives. As of the previous day, the website has received three responses on Tumwater's plan. During the Thurston County Fair, she promoted the 2023 Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region with the public and to advertise the City's plan to solicit feedback. Another public comment period is scheduled from September 25, 2023 through October 8, 2023. All 22 proposed initiatives are included in the survey.

The next step is completion of the draft Tumwater Annex by September 15, 2023. On September 23, 2023, the Emergency Preparedness Expo is scheduled affording another public outreach opportunity to educate and inform the public about the update, the initiatives, and hazard preparedness. On October 16, 2023 the 2023 Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region and the Tumwater Annex will be submitted to Washington Emergency Management and by November, the City will submit the regional plan and the Tumwater Annex to FEMA for a completeness review.

A January 2024 work session and public hearing is scheduled with the Planning Commission followed by a February, March 2024 presentation of the plan to the City Council for consideration. Work is ongoing with City departments to finalize draft actions, conducting public engagement and outreach, and updating the hazard profiles and risk assessments.

**PRELIMINARY DOCKET  
FOR 2023 ANNUAL  
HOUSEKEEPING  
AMENDMENTS:**

Planner Smith-Erickson briefed members on the 2023 Annual Development Code Housekeeping Amendments Preliminary Docket and a request to the Council to include the amendments as the final docket for consideration during the September 5, 2023 Council meeting.

During 2022 and 2023, staff compiled information on minor



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housekeeping amendments to the Tumwater Municipal Code (TMC) to be considered in 2023. The proposed amendments are intended as minor corrections to the City's development regulations.

TMC 18.60.025(A) establishes a process similar to the one the City follows for annual Comprehensive Plan amendments. A preliminary docket of proposed amendments is reviewed by the Planning Commission for a recommendation to City Council on the final docket.

The proposed amendments cover the following topics:

- Manufactured Home Parks Required Open Space – clarifies the requirements for open space standards for development without division of land
- Undergrounding Utilities Requirements – clarifying new and existing electrical power, telephone, cable television, fiber optics, and other transmission to be installed underground and establish an appeal process through the Transportation and Engineering Services Manager
- Town Center Mixed Use Subdistrict First Floor Uses – clarifying uses allowed on the first floor of commercial and residential developments along main streets in the Town Center Mixed Use subdistricts
- Building Heights Over Sixty-Five Feet for Specific Industrial Uses – establish a Conditional Use Permit process in the Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial zoning districts for certain uses with heights exceeding 65 feet.

Staff will review to ensure the proposed amendments are consistent with the requirements of Growth Management Act and the Tumwater Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Commission is scheduled to receive a briefing on October 24, 2023 and conduct a work session on November 14, 2023 followed by and a public hearing on November 28, 2023.

The City Council will receive a briefing on the amendments on January 23, 2024 for consideration in February 2024.

Chair Althausen asked whether existing manufactured home parks are required to allocate 15% for open space. Manager Medrud explained that the new requirement would only apply if there was a redevelopment that exceeds the threshold or a new development of a manufactured home park. Existing uses would not be affected unless redevelopment of the property occurs beyond current thresholds.

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Councilmember Cathey inquired about the current height allowed in the City. Manager Medrud said building heights in the General Commercial cannot exceed 65 feet. The amendment applies to development within the Light Industrial or Heavy Industrial exceeding 65 feet. The project proponent would need to demonstrate why the height is necessary and obtain approval through a Conditional Use Permit process.

In response to questions about existing residential uses abutting industrial-zoned uses, Manager Medrud identified several areas of the City that include residential near industrial to include Mottman Industrial Park, the Beehive Industrial area, and in areas within the southern area of the City.

**2025 COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE  
– WORK PROGRAM AND  
SCHEDULE:**

Manager Medrud reviewed the process for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

The work program includes an introduction of the update process and the issues to be addressed, as well as an introduction to state guidance materials. State guidance materials comprise approximately 750 pages of information that must be addressed as part of the update process. The review will be presented in smaller increments to the extent possible.

The update timeline has some flexibility based on new requirements passed by the Legislature in 2023 that are not included within any of the guidance materials. The City's schedule is based on state requirements. The goal of the update is to provide a document that is easier for the public to absorb with areas of focus contained in shorter documents.

The structure of current Comprehensive Plan Elements include:

- Capital Facilities Plan
- Conservation Element
- Economic Development Plan
- Housing Element
- Tumwater Thurston County Joint Plan (not part of update process)
- Land Use Element
- Lands for Public Purposes Element Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (not part of update process)
- Shoreline Master Program (not part of update process)
- Transportation Plan
- Utilities Element
- Climate Element (required as of 2023)

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The plan includes a number of appendices:

- Neighborhoods
- County-Wide Planning Policies
- Sustainable Thurston Goals and Actions
- Land Use and Housing Survey Results
- Foundational Plans and Documents
- Glossary
- Ordinance No. O2016-012
- 2016 Tumwater Soil Report

Each of the elements follow a similar structures and include an introduction with background, a discussion on how each element meets the 15 growth management goals, and a discussion on how the element addresses the County-Wide Planning Policies and applicable Sustainable Thurston policies. A table of plans and foundational elements will be included.

The second chapter is a technical discussion appropriate for each element. The update will revise goals, policies, and actions. Staff proposes a separate chapter for goals, policies and actions, responsible entities, and an implementation timeline.

Chair Althaus mentioned the passage of the requirement to include climate change as an element and the previous discussion by staff and the Council to include climate change within existing elements as opposed to producing a stand-alone element. Manager Medrud said staff plans two courses of action as the new requirement requires a separate element on Climate, which will build on the work the City has completed with TRPC and other jurisdictions, as well as incorporating climate within the other elements.

The City's website includes a link to all documents related to the update. Staff is working with Communications staff to launch the Comprehensive Plan Update website. The website will include a list of all documents supporting the update, meeting minutes, and guidance materials.

New legislation requires more information on how the Capital Facilities Plan works in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan. Staff anticipates that the next update will be a different format than in the past.

Lands for Public Purposes pertain to all City public services of solid waste, sanitary sewer, water, and fire, etc. All private utilities are addressed within the Utilities Element.

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The Department of Commerce provided the City with a substantial amount of guidance materials for the periodic update comprised of over 1,000 pages. Of the most important materials, the Guide to the Periodic Update Process helps readers to understand the general process and steps the City follows under state law to update the Comprehensive Plan. The City has been encouraged to prepare and submit a checklist to the state of completed actions. The checklist includes all issues to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan and in the City's development regulations. The checklist does not address new legislation adopted during the 2023 legislative session. Staff plans to incorporate all new requirements within the City's checklist. The Department of Ecology provided a critical areas checklist to use for updating the development code and critical areas. Because the City has updated critical areas as changes occurred, the update will be minimal for that update process.

Other state guidance materials will be introduced during the update process and as specific elements are presented for review and discussion beginning in the fall.

Community outreach actions include scheduling some open houses and other events during the fall. Staff is working on completing a gap analysis for review by the committee in October. Staff submitted an application for a Department of Commerce grant to cover the cost of work on the Transportation Element and some technical information for the Economic Development Plan. Staff recently learned of the opportunity to apply for a Missing Middle grant of \$75,000 to fund updates to the development code.

Staff is currently in the mode of data collection and updating the format. The gap analysis covers all elements and all regulations subject to the update.

Manager Medrud outlined the review schedule for each element by the committee. He invited feedback on the process for presenting the information to the Council.

Councilmember Dahl recommended including a Council work session during a briefing on the Equity Toolbox to receive direction from the Council.

Manager Medrud reported Phase 2 beginning in 2024 is comprised of reviewing the amendments to the elements and amendments to the development code. Planning Commission reviews are occurring concurrently with the General Government Committee briefings. The legislative process will begin in fall 2024 to meet the June 2025 deadline.

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Councilmember Dahlhoff recommended incorporating more joint meeting opportunities between the Commission and the Council to enable an exchange of information and direction. Manager Medrud explained that the process begins with the Commission receiving an introduction of the elements followed by the General Government Committee receiving a review a month following the Commission's review. A joint meeting of the Commission and the Council is scheduled in December to discuss and approve the 2024 Work Program and the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update. Other joint meetings can be scheduled on specific topics as needed.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**With there being no further business, Chair Althausen adjourned the meeting at 8:23 a.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President  
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