

TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING
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CONVENE: 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Elizabeth Robbins and Commissioners Nelida Daniel, Grace Edwards, Terry Kirkpatrick, Gina Kotek, Sandra Nelson, and Brandon Staff.

Staff: Deputy Director Brad Medrud and Associate Planner Dana Bowers.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: Because of the late arrival of the minutes, consideration of the minutes was removed from the agenda.

The Commission discussed the City's plan to revert to action-oriented minutes rather than more in-depth minutes.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick commented on the helpfulness of detailed minutes as many times, the meeting packet includes previous sets of minutes pertinent to an agenda item for consideration. Minutes provide the ability for members to refresh their memory of the original discussion, which is useful. The proposed new format would not provide that same level of detail.

Chair Robbins agreed with the points while acknowledging that the City is incurring a cost for preparation of detailed minutes; however, she is also concerned with the loss of detailed records and the lack of context for the Commission's decisions. It is possible to support the new format, particularly if staff could provide summary notes to capture key points, questions, and actions.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick suggested that if the new format lacks sufficient information, Commissioners could visit the website for information from City Council meeting agendas and associated attachments. It is likely he could have answered his questions if he had pursued that avenue.

Commissioner Daniel questioned whether the change in the format of minutes would include access to videos of the meeting. Deputy Director Medrud affirmed the availability of video and audio recordings of all Commission and other advisory boards on the City's website. Commissioner Daniel shared that summary instead of detailed minutes would be preferable as summary minutes are easier to review. If she has additional questions, she would refer to the recording. She is supportive of summary minutes.

Commissioner Kotek agreed as she has completed minutes in a summary format. If she has questions not answered within the summary, she refers to the video to listen to the conversation. It is

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important to convey to the community that they can review both the minutes and the video to seek additional information.

Commissioner Edwards said she understands the benefits and negatives of both options. However, she would be interested in learning whether the City Council plans to solicit feedback on the new format for minutes.

Chair Robbins suggested that the Commission could monitor the issue for a period to determine whether summary minutes suffice, and if not, than perhaps the Commission could consider sending a message to the Council on the topic.

Discussion followed on Robert's Rules of Order, Planning Commission's Rules and Procedures, and the possibility of reviewing the Rules and Procedures for guidance on the format of minutes. Chair Robbins said the Commission typically reviews the Commission's Rules and Procedures in the fall.

Deputy Director Medrud addressed questions on the preparation of current minutes. The City's contractor prepares City minutes for advisory bodies and the Council,

Deputy Director Medrud added that the Commission's Rules and Procedures includes a section acknowledging that revised Robert's Rules of Order govern the Commission in addition to the Rules and Procedures, with the Rules and Procedures addressing minutes and recordings specifically. The provision stipulates that if recordings are not available then minutes should be of sufficient detail. Essentially, video and audio recordings have priority over written minutes.

Based on the Commission's discussion and the desire for a more detailed record of the discussions, an option could include preparing a note of the key decision points to include agreement or disagreement, so the Council and the public understand how the Commission reached a decision. The note would not be detailed but could provide some context of the discussion and each Commissioner's opinion. Another option is acknowledging within the meeting agenda reports and documents any conversations and how the Commission addressed particular issues. The last option would also include providing a summary of the Commission's deliberation and recommendation when forwarding a recommendation to the Council.

Deputy Director Medrud provided a live demonstration of the City's website for accessing meeting agendas, minutes, and recordings.

**COMMISSIONER'S
REPORTS:**

There were no reports.

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**DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S
REPORT:**

Deputy Director Medrud reminded the Commission of the email from City Administrator Parks about the prohibition of any political campaigning or political discussions when using public facilities.

In terms of staff support to the Commission, the primary contact for administrative assistance is Administrative Assistant Jessica Lee with backup support provided by Housing and Land Use Planner Erika Smith-Erikson.

Staff is working with the City's consultant to complete the draft of the Conservation Habitat Plan. The 160 plus page plan requires some internal coordination. An internal draft of the plan is anticipated for completion soon for review followed by release of a public draft. He recommended scheduling a work session with the Commission to review the plan in July/August.

Deputy Director Medrud announced the pending retirement of Director Matlock. The Mayor recently appointed him as the new Director effective June 2, 2025. The City is pursuing recruitment to replace his position. Those changes speak to a period of transition and the need for some flexibility in terms of scheduling and deadlines.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chris Lester advised that he had no comments other than he is attending to listen to the discussion.

**2025 COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN PERIODIC
UPDATE – LANDS FOR
PUBLIC PURPOSES AND
UTILITIES:**

Deputy Director Medrud said that the Lands for Public Purposes Element and the Utilities Element are two related elements. The review will cover both draft elements in terms of formatting and structure, details in each element, and goals policies, draft implementation actions, and next steps in the process.

Each element has two parts. The intent of each part is to improve usability of the document by the Commission, City Council, other City advisory bodies, and staff. Goals, policies, and actions mostly refer to technical information when applicable. The format for Part 1 for Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions include the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 – Introduction
- Chapter 2 – GMA & Element Goals
- Chapter 3 – County-Wide Planning Policies
- Chapter 4 – Element Goals And Policies
- Appendix A – Draft Implementation Actions

Following internal discussions, staff identified how implementation actions could be accomplished over the course of the next 20 years or in three to five years. There would likely be other actions identified

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in the near term that should consider how the goals and policies support the development of those actions in the future. Staff considered separating goals and policies and including them within a separate section with the implementation actions converted to draft implementations that staff would utilize to develop annual work plans the Council would approve, similar to the work plan for Long Range Planning. That format enables more flexibility to separate implementation actions that could be addressed as circumstances change, and it would enable some adjustments by eliminating the necessity of amending the Comprehensive Plan when implementation actions change.

Deputy Director Medrud demonstrated how it would apply in practice by sharing a draft of the Utilities Element. The Utilities Element includes Part 1 with the Table Of Contents similar to the review of the previous outline. The background information explains how to read the information in the Element, and how two goals of the Growth Management Act are applicable to the Element. One page describes the Countywide Planning Policies and its relationship with the Utilities Element. Another section includes goals and tables for Policies. Appendix A addresses Implementation Actions.

The Lands for Public Purposes Element and the Utilities Element are the simplest elements in the Comprehensive Plan. Deputy Director Medrud invited feedback on the format.

Chair Robins cited Essential Public Facilities and questioned how they relate to the Lands for Public Purposes Element. Deputy Director Medrud said staff discussed the preferred location of Essential Public Facilities. Essential Public Facilities are facilities that the state has identified as needed by communities that everyone uses but does not want in their community. State law requires jurisdictions to allow for the siting of essential public facilities within the jurisdiction for airports, jails, or rehabilitation facilities, etc. In the 2016 Draft Comprehensive Plan, Essential Public Facilities are included in the Lands for Public Purposes Element. However, Essential Public Facilities are more applicable to land use and subsequently have been included in the Land Use Element.

Deputy Director Medrud said the format for Part 2, the technical information section, includes all research and background work to demonstrate to the state that all necessary connections have been identified and that the City is supporting the policies and implementation actions. Part 2 will vary dependent upon the element. The technical part for the Lands for Public Purposes Element includes an introduction explaining the purpose of the technical information and a map. Lands For Public Purposes pertain to public services or facilities that are required to support development. Utilities are

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privately-owned that are necessary to support development the City must allow but does not have the level of detail for planning because private utilities are often unwilling to share information with the City.

An important aspect of Lands for Public Purposes establishes the basis for the City's Capital Facilities Plans (CFP), which are six-year plans for building infrastructure and facilities to support development based on the availability of funding for planning and construction. Inclusion of projects in the CFPs ensures eligibility for the City to receive grant funding. Projects listed on the CFPs are not in priority order to enable the ability to take advantage of funding opportunities.

Chapter 3 includes more details on capital facilities and services the City manages, such as water service, fire, police, as well as City-owned buildings and facilities, and other public capital facilities and services required for development but are not owned or managed by the City.

Appendix A includes the list of foundational documents used to develop the technical information.

Appendix B is the new Capital Facilities Equity Checklist, a new addition as part of the City's efforts on equity to evaluate projects added to CFPs.

Within the Utilities Element, Part 2 Technical addresses different topics to include an introduction, a chapter on utilities regulations, and private utilities provided in the City.

Deputy Director Medrud reviewed sections in the Lands for Public Purposes. Lands For Public Purposes managed by Tumwater include City buildings, fire and emergency medical services, parks, open space, and recreation facilities, police services, stormwater, transportation, and water systems and facilities. Other publicly managed structures/facilities include Timberland Regional Library, school facilities, sewage treatment & sanitary sewer, solid waste management, and transit service.

Deputy Director Medrud described the relationship of the Lands for Public Purposes Element between the Capital Facilities Plan, a six-year financial forecast of projects, and the adopted biennial City budget, to identify service needs and meet growth demands. Complicating the process is the different timelines for each plan's update.

Chair Robbins inquired as to which plan prevails in terms of priority. Deputy Director Medrud replied that it would likely be the biennial budget as the budget dictates City resources and capacity.

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Deputy Director Medrud said some connections to other elements include the Transportation Plan, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, and the Land Use Element that identifies where growth is anticipated, the type of growth, and intensity of growth that feeds into the Lands for Public Purposes Element. Economic development is not a required element by the state, but it is important because it guides economic goals of the City.

Deputy Director Medrud reviewed some of the high level goals for the Lands for Public Purposes Element:

- *Goal LPP-1 - Provide necessary and efficient services to Tumwater and its urban growth area.* If development is identified at a specific level, the City would provide the services to accommodate that growth. Services would include water, sewer, transportation infrastructure, and fire and police, etc. The Comprehensive Plan covers a 20-year period regardless of whether growth occurs. Eventually, areas in the urban growth area (UGA) would annex to the City. As part of the City's agreement with Thurston County, the City is planning for the UGA to ensure development occurring in the UGA conforms with City plans.

Deputy Director Medrud addressed questions on the jurisdiction responsible for funding the extension of public infrastructure and services. Typically, when Thurston County receives a development application for the UGA, county planners identify a need for water or sewer service and notify the City about the development proposal. The City notifies the county about the City's ability to extend service or negotiate with the developer and shares that information with the county, which is included as a condition of development. The process for water and sewer is easier than required transportation improvements related to the development proposal. Agreements often stipulate that the county should honor the City's development regulations. Mechanisms are in place to address development in the UGA.

Commissioner Nelson said the Utilities Element included language that spoke to saving power and increasing efficiency in energy. She cited a similar need for water and increasing efficiency of water usage and whether those measures were included in any other long-term plans. Deputy Director Medrud advised that some policies address water efficiencies.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick said some measures are also included in the Lands for Public Purposes Element.

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Commissioner Nelson cited homeowner association covenants requiring green lawns. Deputy Director Medrud replied that the City has no authority to override homeowner association (HOA) covenants; however, the cost issue associated with green lawns both for homeowners and for HOA facilities often result in more cost awareness by a HOA to maintain green lawns.

Planner Bowers noted that the Water Resources and Sustainability Department pursues programs for water conservation and outreach. The City supports educational efforts rather than dictating compliance by the community.

- *Goal LPP 2 - Support improvements in the provision of public services.* The goal pertains to capital improvements and environmental quality to offset impacts while providing adequate public facilities concurrent with development.

Deputy Director Medrud reviewed the goals for the Utilities Element, which encompasses natural gas, electricity, natural gas, fuel pipelines, and telecommunications. The Element addresses inventory, location, capacity, demand, and climate change resiliency.

Goals in the Utilities Element include:

- *Goal U-1 - Increase efficiency when planning for and siting utilities.* The City will work with utilities when siting facilities through a clear and simple permitting process to meet the needs of development. The goal supports development of an underground management plan.
- *Goal U-2 - Increase energy generation from renewable resources to reduce the region's carbon footprint.* The goal supports pursuing incentives to support the installation of distributed electrical generation equipment, (e.g., rooftop solar panels), large-scale, multi-jurisdictional renewable energy projects (e.g., large-scale solar arrays), and adoption of uniform building codes and permitting practices in jurisdictions to make the installation of solar panels, or other distributed generation technologies, easier and faster.
- *Goal U-3 - Enhance the region's electricity distribution, monitoring, and storage infrastructure to support adoption of cleaner technologies and practices.* Explore energy storage innovations, promote installation of electric vehicle charging stations/infrastructure, and coordinate with the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan to reduce service interruptions.
- *Goal U-4 - Increase energy efficiency and conservation to reduce the region's carbon footprint.* The City can support green buildings, conduct energy audit of existing facilities to

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identify potential energy improvements to reduce energy consumption, and develop incentives.

- *Goal U-5 - Ensure vital utilities are created, operated, and maintained in a safe manner.* Review impacts of new infrastructure and increase safety through awareness and regulations.

Next steps in the review process is a General Government Committee briefing on May 14, 2025. Both Elements will be forwarded to the stakeholders for review and comments, as well as a broadcast email to individuals who have been involved in the Comprehensive Plan update. Other elements will be released for public review and comment as well. The Planning Commission is scheduled to receive another briefing as part of the larger ordinance in October 2025. Deputy Director Medrud encouraged Commissioners to direct any questions and comments to compplan@ci.tumwater.wa.us. Planner Bowers confirmed that members should also submit any grammar or spelling errors.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is on May 27, 2025. A briefing on the Housing Element is on the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT: **Commissioner Nelson moved, seconded by Commissioner Kirkpatrick, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

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