

**TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING**  
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**CONVENE:** 7:01 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Chair Elizabeth Robbins and Commissioners Terry Kirkpatrick, Gina Kotek, Malissa Paulsen, Cody Perez, Brandon Staff, Michael Tobias, and Anthony Varela.

Absent: Commissioner Grace Edwards.

Staff: Housing and Land Use Planner Erica Smith-Erickson.

Others: Consultant Daniel Dye, Fehr and Peers.

**CHANGES TO AGENDA:** There were no changes to the agenda.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSIONERS:** Commissioners provided self-introduction with newly appointed Commissioners sharing information about their respective employment and interest in serving on the Commission.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS:** There were no reports.

**MANAGER'S REPORT:** Planner Smith-Erickson updated the Commission on the status of the draft Climate Element. Staff has met with the stakeholder group and identified some goals and policies. Staff plans to reach out to the housing stakeholder group to review draft policies and action items that were presented to the Commission earlier in the summer. A displacement study update meeting has been scheduled. In June, City consultants toured Tumwater and identified different areas in the City where potential displacement could occur. Manager Medrud is scheduled to meet with the consultants during her absence the week of September 23, 2024. Those efforts are in support of the update of the Comprehensive Plan and the Housing Element.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There were no public comments.

**2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE – TRANSPORTATION** Daniel Dye, Fehr and Peers, reported the firm provides transportation planning and engineering consultant support to the City on the updates of the Transportation Master Plan and the Transportation Impact Fee. The briefing will cover the need for the updates, requirements, preliminary goals, emerging ideas, the current plan, the new plan, and next steps.

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the centerpiece of local planning efforts, guiding future development and expenditures. Under the State Growth Management Act (GMA), the City is required to conduct a thorough review and update of its Comprehensive Plan and development

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regulations every 10 years. SHB 2296 in 2024 extended the deadline to complete the update from June 30, 2025, to December 31, 2025.

Mr. Dye cited the GMA Transportation Goal, “Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled, and are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.” According to a 2021 report on greenhouse gas emissions at the countywide level, transportation emissions account for one-third of all greenhouse gas emissions in the region with buildings and energy accounting for the largest emissions.

The City’s current Transportation Plan was last updated in 2016. The transportation system provides for the safe, efficient, and cost-effective movement of people and goods in ways that support adopted land use plans, enhance neighborhood and community livability, support a strong and resilient economy, and minimize environmental impacts.

Elements within the Transportation Plan include land use assumptions, funding analysis, active transportation, state-owned transportation facility analysis, intergovernmental coordination, facility and service needs, and demand management strategies.

New requirements due to state law changes include:

- HB 1181: Climate Response and Comprehensive Planning
- HB 1110: Missing Middle Housing
- HB 1337: Accessory Dwelling Units

HB 1181 adopted in April 2023 requires improving the state’s climate response through updates to the state’s planning framework. The first plans required to include the new requirements are due in 2025. The new climate-related metrics are Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reducing policies per capita:

- GHG and VMT reductions within the city/jurisdiction must not shift VMT/GHG to elsewhere in the state
- Focus on GHG/VMT reductions that benefit overburdened communities
- Cannot restrict growth to achieve GHG/VMT reductions requirements

HB 1181 replaces “pedestrian and bicycle facilities” with “active transportation facilities” defined as “facilities provided for the safety and mobility of active transportation users including, but not limited to, trails, as defined in RCW 47.30.005, sidewalks, bike lanes, shared-use paths,

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and other facilities in the public right-of-way.” Active transportation facilities should be included in existing conditions reporting.

HB 1181 replaces vehicular Level of Service (LOS) with *Multimodal Planning and Level of Service (MMLOS)*:

- Forecast multimodal demand
- MMLOS impacts will replace general “traffic impacts”
  - Development cannot be denied for LOS failure/concurrency reasons if impacts can be mitigated through active mode, transit, ride sharing, demand management, or other transportation management strategies funded by the development
- Facilities that provide the greatest safety benefit to each category of roadway users should be prioritized

HB 1181 requires ADA Transition Plans for transportation as part of the Transportation Plan:

- Perform self-evaluations of current facilities in relation to ADA accessibility requirements
- Develop program access plans or “transition plans” to address deficiencies:
  - Identify physical obstacles
  - Describe methods to make the facilities accessible
  - Develop a schedule for making changes
  - Identify public officials responsible for implementation

HB 1181 requires jurisdictions to include a discussion of how funds will be raised to address identified needs of the transportation system, including state owned facilities.

HB 1181 requires targeted outreach to vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. Vulnerable populations include those at higher risk for poor health outcomes due to unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, racial or ethnic minorities, and low-income populations, etc. Overburdened communities are geographic areas where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts, and include, but is not limited to, highly impacted communities.

HB 1110 addresses missing middle housing types comprised of single-family residences and mid-rise, multi-family residences, duplexes to sixplexes, townhouses, stacked flats, courtyard apartments, and cottage housing. Designated GMA cities are required to allow certain minimum densities in support of middle housing. Middle family housing requirements are based on a population tier system for each jurisdiction. Tumwater is a tier two city with a population of at least 25,000 but less

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than 75,000. Tier two cities are required to allow 2 dwelling units (DU) on a lot unless zoning permits higher densities within residential zones, 4 DUs unless zoning permits higher densities near a transit stop (within ¼ mile walking distance of a major transit stop), and 4 DUs of which 1 DU must be affordable unless zoning permits higher densities.

HB 1337 addresses accessory dwelling units (ADU). ADUs are small, self-contained residential units located on the same lot as an existing single-family home, either attached or detached. ADUs must include:

- A kitchen, sleeping area, and bathroom
- New requirement allows a minimum of two ADUs per lot in all GMA urban growth areas
- Applies to all GMA-planning local governments regardless of population and includes unincorporated growth areas

Tumwater cannot require ADUs to:

- Be smaller than 1,000 square feet
- Be subject to dimensional or aesthetic standards
- Complete street improvements
- Have owner occupancy of the main dwelling unit as a requirement
- Provide parking

Tumwater cannot prohibit the sale of a condominium unit independently of a principal unit solely because the condominium was originally an ADU and impact fees are limited to no more than 50% of those assessed to the principal housing unit.

Commissioner Tobias inquired as to potential ramifications if an initiative on the Climate Commitment Act is repealed by voters. Mr. Dye advised that the issues are separate despite similar components. The Climate Commitment Act is a cap and trade act addressing carbon pricing and offsets that is separate from GMC-based changes. However, many transportation projects are funded from the Climate Commitment Act that could affect transportation projects and financial forecasting.

Chair Robbins asked whether HP 1181 requires the City to include an adaptability component to climate response. Mr. Dye advised of a resiliency sub-element within the Comprehensive Plan that is required for some jurisdictions. It is likely the City of Tumwater will be required to complete a resiliency component.

Planner Smith-Erickson added that resiliency is included in the Climate Element as part of the Hazard Mitigation Plan adopted by the City that speaks to planning, upgrading, and retrofitting existing infrastructure and preparing for weather hazard events.

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Chair Robbins commented on the importance of the Transportation Plan including a component addressing what should be built into the system to ensure systems are resilient, built for longevity, and can withstand weather situations.

Planner Smith-Erickson pointed out that HB 1811 applies to all elements of the Comprehensive Plan and not just transportation. The new requirements will be embedded within the format of the updated Comprehensive Plan. Overarching goals will address HB 1181 with a specific section addressing all the requirements of HB 1181 spanning resiliency, public engagement, and other requirements in the bill as part of the update process.

Mr. Dye added that work is ongoing on existing conditions to identify areas that are close too or failing current LOS standards, as well as forecasting 20 years in the future by modeling travel to identify potential future failures. Following that work, a report will be compiled identifying ways to address those issues over the next 20 years.

Planner Smith-Erickson added that the Trosper Road interchange is a good example of concurrency and levels of service following the City's work to improve the area. The City requires traffic impact analysis for the Tumwater Boulevard –I-5 Interchange for any new development.

In response to questions about the need for middle housing while balancing the overall need for all types of housing, Planner Smith-Erickson explained that the City has identified the type of housing by household income based on the area median income (AMI) for Thurston County. Based on the different income levels, staff has identified the types of housing that would serve those different AMI households. The final housing allocation is pending from Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) and Thurston County. The allocation estimates the amount of growth designated for Tumwater based on the housing allocation process and available land capacity analysis that identifies zoning and densities. Pending receipt of several technical documents, forecasting will be completed on the type and number of housing units.

Mr. Dye reviewed draft Comprehensive Plan Goals:

- Engagement – Continuous engagement with the community and the region.
- Coordination – Coordination between Plans/Elements.
- Vibrancy – Community Vibrancy – Foster livability by evoking a sense of identity through arts/culture, attracting and sustaining desired economic activity that supports the community. Make investments that emphasize Tumwater as a welcoming place and enhance community building.

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- Equity – Ensure that all members of the community, especially those whose needs have been systematically neglected, are well served by making decisions and investments through an anti-racist and inclusive process which results in equitable outcomes.
- Resiliency – Increase climate resiliency by promoting sustainability, reducing pollution, promoting health habitats, and supporting clean air and water.
- Fiscal Stewardship – Wise investments of public and private funds.
- Environmental – Protection and enhancement.

City staff met with the Fehr & Peers project team in June to discuss the goals of the Transportation Plan. The existing plan has 19 goals. After much discussion, the team identified four top-level goals, as many of the other existing goals will become policies or implementation actions under the four top-level goals.

Mr. Dye reviewed the existing 19 goals and the proposed four top-level goals:

- **Improve and maintain a complete system** that efficiently supports people walking, rolling, biking, accessing transit, driving, and making regional connections.
- **Prioritize safety and quality of life** especially for the most vulnerable users of our system.
- **Invest wisely** to support a resilient and maintainable transportation system.
- **Minimize our impacts** and advance environmental goals.

Mr. Dye invited questions and comments.

Commissioner Tobias supported the consolidation as it improves the user-friendliness of the document. He recommended revising investing wisely to reflect an action-oriented goal rather than a subject-oriented goal.

Chair Robbins noted that the revised goals lack any reference to the importance of good movement of freight and traffic to support manufacturing and other industries in the City.

Commissioner Paulson recommended removing “our” from the goal of “Minimize our impacts” because while most transportation plans are City driven and it is important to consider developers and other constituents that are guided by the plan.

Commissioner Varela recommended revising “walking, rolling, and biking in the first goal to reflect “active transportation” to coincide with other language within the plan.

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Mr. Dye reviewed emerging transportation considerations:

- Safety
- Multimodal considerations and level of service (LOS) standards for all modes
- Congestion
- State of good repair
- Sustainability

***Safety*** - The plan prioritizes safety to reduce serious injuries and fatalities. The state established *Target Zero*, an ambitious but important goal to reduce deaths and serious injuries on the transportation system to zero over time. That task is incredibly difficult to accomplish; however, it is important to consider ways to impact the outcome sooner. The goal is modeled on efforts undertaken by several Dutch countries, which have experienced decreases as the countries have employed a systemic safety approach by considering the system as a whole and focusing on the most impactful accidents.

Mr. Dye cited different methods for reducing system-wide risk factors by considering: safe road users, safe roads, safe vehicles, safe speeds, and post-crash care. Redundancy is crucial and death and serious injuries are unacceptable. Although humans make mistakes, studies have revealed how accidents attributed to driver error occur. In most cases, it was caused by a predictable mistake given the circumstances of responding to different alarms or systems. A good example is the Amtrak accident in 2017 over I-5. The train triggered an over speed alarm; however a new engineer on that particular train was unaware of the intent of the alarm. Many times, accidents occur because of driver distraction. The intent is to design the entire system to ensure those mistakes are recoverable. One example is a crash continuator, such as concrete barriers or barrels to dissipate the force of the impact from a vehicle crash.

***Multimodal considerations and LOS standards for all modes*** - The draft plan includes multimodal LOS for vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and global considerations. Mr. Dye reviewed numerous options under consideration to improve multimodal transportation standards and LOS.

***Congestion*** - A resilient response to congestion considers that although system expansion of more lanes may not be the answer as it often decreases safety, system expansion through active transportation and public transportation is possible and can help reduce congestion.

***State of good repair*** – The American Society of Civil Engineers has graded Washington’s bridges, roads, and transit with a grade point average of “C.” The draft plan acknowledges the importance of return on investment for preservation of the transportation system.

*Sustainability –*

- Climate change: Wildfires, flooding, excessive heat, sea-level rise, and extreme storm events
- Natural disasters: Cascadia subduction earthquake, infrastructure failure, and cybersecurity threats
- Equity: Ensuring transportation system is accessible to everyone; addressing negative effects of transportation on overburdened neighborhoods
- Economy: With the growth in population, it is important for the City to consider how the transportation system will meet future needs and what new tools and modes will help manage travel. It is also important to consider how streets and roads support vibrant local economies

Mr. Dye said the current plan serves as a good foundation for the update. The pandemic has changed how and where people work and travel. Changes have occurred in transportation priorities at the federal, state, and local levels since 2016.

Mr. Dye reviewed the next steps of seeking input and feedback from the Commission and stakeholders. The new plan will incorporate the changes as reviewed, as well as the input from the Commission, stakeholders, and the community. The consultant team and staff continue to review existing conditions to identify near-failures and failures, sites experiencing traffic stress, and methods to improve conditions to create a holistic and connected system. Future modeling will begin after the City receives land use allocation information. The team will work with TRPC to run the travel demand model to identify impacts on expected traffic volumes in the future. Compilation of project lists and prioritization will begin in early 2026.

Mr. Dye was asked about the possibility of following up on project warranties when roadways that have been recently paved or repaired are causing vehicles to divert because of the formation of bumps in roads recently paved. Mr. Dye recommended following up with public works staff for questions on project warranties and any City mechanism for the community to report issues.

Chair Robbins spoke to the lack of recognizing the connections to the airport and railroads, which should be considered, as it is important for the City to understand the comprehensive transportation network. Mr. Dye affirmed the plan is required to include goals addressing air, rail, and water if those facilities are located within the City. However, LOS standards for those facilities are not required as each facility typically has an independent master plan or comprehensive plan. The City is required to consider how to ensure land use is compatible with the airport and how



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the transportation system interacts with the airport and the Port, etc. Those requirements are typically imbedded in the goals and policies.

Commissioner Paulson inquired as to whether the City adopts by reference, the airport master plan. She asked whether the master plan has been updated to reflect other alternative air fuel, such as hydrogen or batteries. Mr. Dye said that the City's various plans often adopt other plans by reference.

Chair Robbins commented on accounting for current and future use of drones in and around the airport.

Mr. Dye was asked whether the plan accounts for autonomous vehicles. Mr. Dye affirmed that some transit agencies are using autonomous shuttles for service. He is consulting with Pierce Transit for completion of its long-range plan with discussions including autonomous buses and other emerging technologies.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** The next meeting is scheduled on September 24, 2025.

**ADJOURNMENT:** **Commissioner Varela moved, seconded by Commissioner Staff, to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President  
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