

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MAY 27, 2025 Page 1

CONVENE: 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Debbie Sullivan and Councilmembers Peter Agabi, Michael Althausen, Joan Cathey, Leatta Dahlhoff, Angela Jefferson, Eileen Swarthout, and Kelly Von Holtz.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Assistant City Administrator Kelly Adams, Finance Department Director Troy Niemeyer, Community Development Department Director Michael Matlock, Water Resources & Sustainability Department Director Dan Smith, Parks and Recreation Department Director Chuck Denney, IT Department Director Lance Inman, Communications Manager Jason Wettstein, Police Lieutenant Carlos Quiles, and Deputy City Clerk Tracie Core.

Others: Dave Nicandri, Tumwater Historic and Preservation Commission, and Darlene Kemery, Consultant.

**HISTORICAL
COMMISSION
PROJECT
PRESENTATION:**

Director Denney introduced Dave Nicandri with the Tumwater Historic and Preservation Commission and former City Councilmember. As the Commission reviewed its work plan for 2025, Commissioner Nicandri volunteered to lead a project on Tumwater's historical trails and roadways and ways the City could identify the routes to increase visibility and the historical significance of the routes. Working with Darlene Kemery, Commissioner Nicandri developed a presentation for a potential project featuring the Cowlitz Trail and other historical markers. The Commission supported the proposal and forwarded a recommendation to the Council for further review and support to move the projects forward.

Commissioner Nicandri acknowledged the assistance of Ms. Kemery in developing the presentation materials.

Commissioner Nicandri presented the proposed Tumwater Historic Trails and Highways Signage project. The story of trails and historic roadways in Tumwater begins with George Bush, a pioneer traveling with Michael T. Simmons and others who established the area that became modern Tumwater in 1845. Settlers in the Oregon Territory passed a law that did not allow African Americans to settle in Oregon. George Bush, as an African American, and his traveling party decided to continue north of the Columbia River to an area located outside the jurisdiction of the provisional government of Oregon. They eventually settled in an area they called New Market as they traveled along the Cowlitz Trail.

Commissioner Nicandri explained that the documentation is based on a series of township plat maps produced by the Government Land Office in the early 1850s. The maps essentially carved up the public domain;

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MAY 27, 2025 Page 2

however, the federal government had not secured title of the lands from the various tribes in Washington Territory at that time. The government began individually distributed six-mile square township plats throughout the territory. He shared a copy of an 1853 plat map and identified the route of the Cowlitz Trail. The map depicts Olympia as an area three streets wide and eight streets long in 1853. Tumwater is located to the south of Olympia at the tip of Budd Inlet. The map includes a denotation of the Cowlitz Trail. By adding all the maps together, it is possible to extract the specific township range of the original trail. Dave Welch with the Oregon California Trail Association overlaid the Oregon Trail data with historic Highway 99 map data. Commissioner Nicandri shared a series of plat maps outlining the route of the Cowlitz Trail. Recent public testimony spoke to the Davis Meeker oak tree off Old Highway 99 as a landmark on the Cowlitz/Oregon Trail. At the location of the oak tree, the trail begins to divert and runs along the modern configuration of Old Highway 99.

Councilmember Agabi pointed out that the Oregon Trail did not extend into Washington State. Lewis and Clerk did not travel north to Washington and only traveled along the Columbia River to Astoria, Oregon. Commissioner Nicandri conceded that the observation is an important distinction and forms an important element of the presentation, as the case could be made that the Cowlitz Trail segment of the dozens of segments of the Oregon Trail should be added to the National Oregon Historic Trail system, which the project is intended to help accomplish. Many other trail segments have been recognized as part of the National Oregon Historic Trail, which presently ends in Oregon City; however, settlers during the Oregon Trail era continued overland to the shores of Puget Sound to establish Tumwater.

The Cowlitz Trail as it traveled along the airport diverted and followed the route of Bonniewood Drive past the backside of Peter G. Schmidt Elementary School. The trail then continued to Trosper Road and west of present day I-5 near Michael T. Simmons Elementary School and proceeded back to the Tumwater Falls area. That area was the principal element of the founding colony of New Market. The trail ended at Tumwater Falls. In the 1850s, a bridge was built across the Deschutes River near the site of the current Boston Street Bridge.

The Cowlitz Trail segment of the Oregon Trail has been well established. A federal study conducted by the National Parks Service has recommended its inclusion in the National Historic Trail for the Oregon Trail system. However, the process is complicated and requires an act of Congress to amend the National Trail. Congress continues to experience trouble focusing on many issues and the trail is just one of those issues. However, the trail is included on the National Parks Service agenda to include adding the Cowlitz Trail segment to the National Historic Trail

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MAY 27, 2025 Page 3

for the Oregon Trail system. If, and when the route is designated, the action would include adding signage depicting that part of the Oregon Trail along the I-5 corridor north of Vancouver, Washington through Cowlitz County, Lewis County, Thurston County, and Tumwater. Until the official designation by Congress, the proposal is an interim alternative proposal to install signs.

Commissioner Nicandri shared examples of a graphic image of the temporary sign denoting the historic trail. The image utilizes the City's former logo with some amendments featuring George Bush, an African American, and his wife Isabella standing over the Tumwater Falls. He identified the locations for placement of the signs.

Commissioner Nicandri added that the proposal includes adding an overlay of primary Washington State highway signs of the original State Road 1, which extended from Vancouver, Washington to Blaine and to the Canadian border. In 1927, when the federal highway system was created, parts of State Road 1 were overlaid with U.S. Highway 99 or Old Highway 99 signs. He shared an example of the proposed sign design for recognizing historic Route 1 by featuring the silhouette of President George Washington with "1" centered within the silhouette and "Washington" along the bottom of the silhouette. He reviewed different areas within the City for placement of the signs based on roadway alignments in 1922. He described how roads over time have been realigned especially after the construction of Interstate 5.

Commissioner Nicandri emphasized that Tumwater has a distinguished highway history beginning with the pioneer trail and Pacific Highway as one of the original destinations of State Road 1 or federal Highway 99. Additionally, Tumwater has the honor of U.S. Highway 101 originating at Deschutes Parkway. If the City is interested in drawing attention to Tumwater and building tourism infrastructure, the City should know that road enthusiasts across the country often travel to find spots all over the country where one road begins or ends. U.S. Highway 101 begins in Tumwater.

Commissioner Nicandri cited a sign located in Salem, Oregon depicting the site as the 45th parallel halfway between the Equator and North Pole. Other jurisdictions are marking or denoting significant parallels transecting their communities. He proposed adding a sign indicating that the 47th parallel transects Tumwater. The 47th parallel actually runs down the center of Trosper Road. He recommended placing a monument in one of the traffic circles designing the 47th parallel.

Councilmembers offered comments in support of the proposals. In response to the comments, Commissioner Nicandri shared that heritage and historical signage and designations provide an educational moment

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MAY 27, 2025 Page 4

for many to include children that is economically achieved in comparison to other alternatives, such as books or museums. It is his favorite form of historical interpretation because it is readily accessible history and/or geography.

Director Denney reported staff and the Commission will continue to refine the proposal and work with Transportation staff for feedback on sign placements. Funding for the trail and highway signs was included within the Commission's budget; however, the 47th parallel monument is beyond the existing budget. Staff will follow up with costs, location, and funding mechanisms to consider.

**BREWERY
REDEVELOPMENT
PLANNED ACTION
ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT
(EIS) PRESENTATION:**

City Administrator Parks reported the update will cover the ongoing work underway to address environmental contamination existing on different brownfield sites in the City. Information will be shared on the next phase of the project for the Planned Action EIS project to assist in combining the different elements to develop a strategy for moving forward with redevelopment of the brewery site. Additionally, staff is working on a community outreach program for brownfield redevelopment as well as for the Planned Action EIS process.

Assistant City Administrator Adams shared that the presentation will be provided to community members and community groups as well. The purpose is to inform, educate, and share beneficial efforts that have been underway for years in Tumwater.

Brownfield redevelopment efforts by the City are not designed to compete with developers or the community vision but rather serve as a mechanism to combine efforts and reduce some of the regulatory barriers for redevelopment of the sites.

Brownfields are properties with real or perceived contamination. Past uses of properties often impede or lead to problems for redevelopment, as prior uses tend to create uncertainty that many developers are unwilling to pursue because of the lack of potential return on investment or desired development potential. Prior uses are typically industrial uses, such as drycleaners, motor pools, auto repair shops, and landfills, etc.

Ongoing efforts include identifying and inventorying opportunity sites, engaging with regulators (Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Ecology), participating in a brownfield conference to learn about best practices from other cities and reuse planning, and working with the community and City planners. Two phases of environmental assessments are completed to identify the type of contaminants and the amount of contamination. Phase 1 includes historical research, interviews with former workers and owners, reviewing aerial photography, exploring suspected contamination, and

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MAY 27, 2025 Page 5

identifying where future testing should occur if contamination is identified. Phase 2 includes soil and groundwater investigation and remediation planning.

Success is defined as identifying the contamination, the extent of contamination, and developing a clean-up plan and cost estimate to provide certainty to the community and to developers. Community members assist in visioning any redevelopment. It is also possible to leverage additional funding. Private industry is unable to access cleanup grants that governments can access. Cleanup grants can be provided following completion of all due diligence.

The benefits of redeveloping a brownfield site include facilitating job growth, reducing nuisance properties, improving and protecting the environment, and facilitating private investment to improve public services through creation of a stronger tax base.

The City received an Integrated Planning Grant from the Department of Ecology and a Community-Wide Assessment Grant from the EPA. The grants are funding two different efforts. The Planning Grant is focused on completing due diligence tasks at the former Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Olympic Region Headquarters site. The EPA grant funds the larger brewery property sites.

Deliverables for the Department of Ecology grant is completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2 for one site, completion of a workplan, and completion of a feasibility study to determine whether the property can be redeveloped. Deliverables for the EPA grant are completion of an inventory of opportunity sites on the brewery properties and seeking willing property owners who would like Phase 1 completed. The grant requires completion of 15 Phase 1 and 10 Phase 2 efforts.

The City identified three opportunity sites as the Brewery Knoll site of the former Olympia Brewery, the Valley site of the former Olympia Brewery, and the former WSDOT Olympic Region Headquarters site.

Phase 2 drilling and testing were recently completed for the Knoll site. By the end of the summer, identification of the contaminants should be completed.

Phase 1 has been completed for the Valley site with Phase 2 work scheduled.

Testing on the WSDOT site began earlier in the day. Phase 2 has been initiated. Staff is collaborating with WSDOT staff and WSDOT environmental engineers. The environmental assessment has been split between the City and WSDOT to ensure the results represent a complete

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MAY 27, 2025 Page 6

analysis of current conditions on the site. This week, subsurface investigations are scheduled. Staff is working with WSDOT to assist in securing demolition permits for two buildings.

Assistant City Administrator Adams reported she is actively engaged in community outreach. She invited the Council to advise her of any other groups to meet with. Questions are welcome during the community outreach sessions. Staff follows up on all questions via email.

City Administrator Parks provided an update on the status of the Planned Action EIS. Progress has occurred on the initial efforts to identify potential environmental contamination. Next steps include engagement with the community on brownfield redevelopment and information on the status of the brewery properties.

The Planned Action EIS is a comprehensive strategy to bring together different processes and information, as well all ideas for future redevelopment of the property to assess potential redevelopment opportunities and required actions to facilitate redevelopment.

The Planned Action EIS considers all environmental cleanup requirements, information gained from Phase 1 and 2 environmental assessments, community and partnership engagement feedback on potential development alternatives, public infrastructure requirements for the brewery sites and other sites that might be developed within the general vicinity of the brewery properties, and a detailed comprehensive and broad environmental review and analysis.

The Planned Action EIS is a specific type of non-project planning level environmental impact statement that is authorized by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) primarily available to cities and counties as the regulatory land use authority. The Planned Action EIS is a more detailed comprehensive review occurring at the planning stage that analyzes an entire geographic area as opposed to an individual environmental review for individual projects. The area is a geographic subarea with specifically defined development scenarios and intensities of development that are assessed for associated impacts to both the built and natural environments. The evaluation identifies specific mitigation measures addressing all identified impacts. Following completion of the Planned Action EIS, the Council adopts a Planned Action Ordinance creating an added layer of requirements for future development occurring in that specific area.

Following completion of the Planned Action process, any future projects that are consistent with the development scenarios and the types and intensities that were evaluated including all mitigation measures identified in the Planned Action Ordinance are not required to complete

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MAY 27, 2025 Page 7

an additional SEPA review process for the project.

The benefits of the Planned Action EIS provide a comprehensive versus a piecemeal environmental review evaluating a larger geographic area to evaluate potential development scenarios as opposed to individual projects on smaller properties. The Planned Action EIS is also consistent with the Economic Development Strategy the Council adopted as part of the strategic goals and priorities. The project assists in cleaning up the environment that has existed in a contaminated state while also moving the properties to a productive economic use that provides both jobs while also improving quality of life for the community and increasing the tax base.

The approach is focused on regional collaboration. Over a year ago, City Administrator Parks and Mayor Sullivan met with Lieutenant Governor Denny Heck about the project. As Lieutenant Governor Heck shared, the project is not just a Tumwater issue; it is also a state issue. For decades, the brewery property served as an iconic symbol for the state and for the last two decades, the site has been a blight on the entire region. It is important to ensure a collaborative approach with regional partners. The Planned Action EIS process enables regional collaboration.

Another direct benefit of a Planned Action EIS process is increased predictability for the community and identification of mitigation measures to address potential impacts, as well as increasing predictability for the development community.

A Planned Action EIS enables a more efficient permitting process for projects that are consistent with the development types and intensities that were evaluated during the process.

Through the end of 2026 ongoing community engagement will occur through two tracks on brownfield redevelopment and brewery redevelopment. A draft Planned Action EIS scope of work was completed by the City's consultant. The 2025/2026 budget includes partial funding for the project to complete early planning and identify the study area and review the detailed scope of work with the consultant, formation of regional committees to assist the City throughout the process, development of a communication plan, and identification of necessary cleanup strategies to address environment contamination. The funding strategy will also be a component of that work.

Councilmember Swarthout asked about the timeline associated with completion of the Planned Action EIS. City Administrator Parks advised that the last Planned Action EIS was completed in 2015. Each EIS has an associated expiration date; however, to date, no progress has occurred on the first EIS completed other than the value in identifying whether

**TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MAY 27, 2025 Page 8**

that area should be included in the current Planned Action EIS process. Based on experience, an EIS is valid for a period of 15 to 20 years. They can also be updated if progress is occurring on a project.

Councilmember Cathey inquired as to whether staff has considered the withdrawal of federal funding, especially when the funds pertain to protecting the environment. City Administrator Parks advised that staff has been tracking whether the City's EPA grant has been affected. Currently, many other projects are being targeted for withdrawal of funding. However, the brewery redevelopment project has not been included on the list at this time. Staff continues to monitor and track any federal action. The state has a robust program for brownfield redevelopment because of the Model Toxics Control Act instituted through citizen action in the late 1980s. The state has a dedicated source of funding based on the importation of hazardous materials into the state. The funding source is relatively reliable for brownfield redevelopment planning and cleanup processes. The City submitted a grant application for \$250,000 to a federally funded program administered through a third-party nonprofit organization. The City has other reliable funding resources other than the federal government to assist the City in brownfield redevelopment planning and eventual cleanup work.

**MAYOR/CITY
ADMINISTRATOR'S
REPORT:**

City Administrator Parks reported on the completion of approximately 100 Community Engagement Surveys during the first week after releasing the survey to the community. More outreach is scheduled to promote the survey.

The Elevate Fair is scheduled on Saturday, May 31, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the ASHHO Cultural Community Center Cultural Center.

The Water Quality Report has been distributed throughout the City.

The Parks and Recreation Department is sponsoring eight different events and is engaged in planning for the 4th of July Parade, Festival, and Fireworks Show.

City Administrator Parks thanked Community Development Director Michael Matlock for his decades of service to the City of Tumwater. His contributions to the quality of life in the community have been long-standing and selflessly delivered. Staff will miss his wisdom and knowledge and his sense of humor.

Mayor Sullivan acknowledged Director Matlock for his 35 years of service with the City.

Councilmember Althausen thanked Director Matlock for his public service to the City.

**TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
MAY 27, 2025 Page 9**

ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Mayor Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 7:33 p.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
Puget Sound Meeting Services, psmsoly@earthlink.net