

**TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING  
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**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, Fire Chief Brian Hurley, Acting Police Chief Jay Mason, Community Development Department Director Michael Matlock, Parks and Recreation Department Director Chuck Denney, Transportation and Engineering Department Director Brandon Hicks, IT Department Director Lance Inman, Communications Manager Jason Wettstein, Sustainability Manager Alyssa Jones Wood, Police Lieutenant Carlos Quiles, and Deputy City Clerk Tracie Core.

**REGIONAL  
TRANSPORTATION  
PLAN PRESENTATION:**

Director Hicks introduced Transportation Manager Katrina Van Every with Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) to provide an update on the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The plan is one of many regional plans involving the City's participation and support. The RTP outlines regional transportation needs as required by state and federal regulations.

Ms. Van Every reported TRPC has been in existence for more than 50 years. The Council is comprised of 23 members. Councilmember Swarthout serves on the TRPC and Councilmember Agabi serves on the Council's Transportation Policy Board. TRPC's efforts focus on areas where issues between jurisdictions and organizations blur, such as transportation, growth management, environmental quality, economic opportunities, and sustainability with the mission to provide visionary leadership on regional plans, policies, and issues for the benefit of all the region's residents.

The RTP is a regional transportation planning document. The initial regional transportation plan study was completed in 1975. Every five years, the RTP is updated to include regional strategies. Transportation, land use, and economic prosperity are closely linked and need both a local and a regional viewpoint to maximize the benefits of all transportation modes. The RTP serves as a roadmap for a complete and high functioning transportation system for over the next 25 years.

The region's increasing population will lead to increased traffic volumes. Projects in the RTP will help mitigate vehicle congestion associated with that growth. Planned land use and roadway capacity alone will not be sufficient to meet regionally adopted targets, goals, and level of service for congestion standards. However, progress is possible on regionally adopted targets and goals to help reduce congestion and level of service

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failures in the future.

The RTP covers a 25-year planning horizon encompassing all transportation modes. The RTP includes a set of regional goals and policies, and recommendations to support the plan, as well as a financial forecast. The plan is constrained financially in terms of what the region can reasonably anticipate for funding availability for all transportation projects in the region. The plan also includes future conditions.

Areas of interest in the plan include:

- Safety
- Equity
- Climate Change & greenhouse gas emissions reductions
- Maintaining existing system
- Projects that enhance transit options and emphasize system efficiency
- Strategically expand the system where appropriate
- Plan for local and state roads as a cohesive whole

Development of the plan is based on submittal of information from local jurisdictions, information from the state, and information from federal sources to identify the current system and expectations of the future based on the inputs and information available on land use, transportation projects, and population.

Goals areas and targets include:

- Reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries to zero
- Increase share of households in urban areas and preserve rural areas
- Decrease annual vehicle miles traveled per capita
- Decrease greenhouse gas emissions as the trend reflects greenhouse gas emissions are increasing
- Increase active transportation and transit use (a goal) as the numbers have not changed substantially. The plan addresses whether a shift in priorities in funding might be necessary.

During the presentation, Ms. Van Every addressed several questions from the Council. When considering vehicle miles traveled per capita, it entails all miles traveled in the Thurston region. There are different ways to calculate the impact of greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled regardless of the type of vehicle. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) tracks traffic on I-5 at specific locations. One location is the Nisqually River bridges. WSDOT is able to identify cars versus trucks and buses. Data points reveal one in ten vehicles crossing the bridge is a truck or a large bus. The number is

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different at the data point located in south Thurston County as truck traffic disperses to different locations within Thurston County. With respect to home charging for electric vehicles, the plan includes a policy addressing the switch from gas-powered vehicles to electric vehicles and the importance of ensuring households with incomes 80% or less than the area median income are not overlooked, which speaks to charging infrastructure at home locations that are not necessarily single family homes.

Environmental justice is an area in flux as the plan was developed with different federal priorities. Environmental justice is one federal priority that has been rescinded and purported to be illegal. However, the plan's goals and policies address environmental justice. In 2021, TRPC conducted a countywide transportation priority survey and presented a goal that speaks to equity and environmental justice that was supported by 71% of the survey respondents. The plan was revised for consistency with the goal for equity. Other sections in the plan are within the Environmental Considerations chapter addressing environmental justice as it continues to be a state policy.

Ms. Van Every noted that the jurisdictions are working on updates to comprehensive plans due by the end of year while the RTP is due in mid 2025, resulting in a disconnect between the changes jurisdictions are considering and how those changes might affect regional transportation. Although that situation is not embedded in the plan draft at this time, there is the likelihood of different outcome in five years because of so much uncertainty.

Ms. Van Every addressed questions about any planned changes at the airport that could contribute to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, such as offering air service. The RTP policies and goals are consistent with the Olympia Regional Airport Master Plan. The federal government's forecast for passenger service at the airport is not expected to change; however, cargo service is expected to increase and any increase in greenhouse gas emissions associated with that increase are unknown at this time.

Anticipated changes in the region in 2050 include:

- An increase in population by 106,000 people representing a 36% increase from 2022
- 58,000 additional housing units or a 47% increase over 2022
- 52,000 more jobs representing a 32% increase from 2022
- 52,000 more people living near transit service, an increase of 26% from 2022
- 80 new regional projects (regional projects are projects that impact the movement of vehicles on a regional basis; however,

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- not all jurisdictional projects are included
- 18 miles of new roadways since 2022
- 36 or more miles of new general purpose lanes and center turn lanes since 2022
- 65 or more miles of new or rebuilt bicycle and pedestrian facilities since 2022
- 29 or more miles of new multiuse trails added since 2022
- Three new or realigned highway interchanges since 2022
- Improved transit facilities and expanded services since 2022

Some of the projects in the RTP relevant to Tumwater include capacity projects in the Brewery District, Tumwater Boulevard Interchange, Mottman Road Improvements, new E Street Connection, Tyee Drive Extension, Trail projects as part of the Deschutes Valley Trail, Karen Fraser Woodland Trail Phases 3 and 4, public transportation projects including expansion of urban transit services, an Innovative Service Zone Study to identify how Intercity Transit can better serve its community and places that are more difficult to serve, more express service, SMART Corridor projects to improve the flow of traffic along important urban corridors, and several studies. Tumwater is currently working on the I-5 and 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Interchange Improvements Study. TRPC is working on the Bicycle Connectivity Strategy, Freight Mobility Strategy, and a Regional Transportation Safety Action Plan.

A draft of the RTP is available and posted on TRPC's website for public review and comment. A revised draft of the RTP incorporating all comments will be reviewed by the Transportation Policy Board in June for a recommendation to TRPC. TRPC is scheduled to take final action on the plan in July.

**SALISH LANDING  
BRIEFING:**

City Administrator Parks reported Mike Brewer and Rob Rice have requested an opportunity to present an overview of their project located near Old Highway 99 and 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. The site is located outside Tumwater's urban growth area and is the subject of an application under consideration by Thurston County for potential inclusion within Tumwater's urban growth area. The presentation will provide an opportunity to answer questions from the Council and to ensure the Council is informed about the proposal.

Mike Brewer said the purpose of the review is to share information about the proposed application submitted to Thurston County involving an urban growth area swap.

The proposal involves a 35-acre parcel located outside of the City's urban growth area. Tith applicants applied to Thurston County to process an urban growth area swap with a goal of avoiding a net increase in the urban growth area. That process was codified during the 2022

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legislative session. The process is also under consideration as part of the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update by Thurston County. Thurston County's analysis includes conversations with Tumwater staff. The land proposed for removal from the urban growth area is the headwaters of Percival Creek in the area of Black Lake that is not developable because of environmental infeasibility. The applicants have suggested that it is in the interest of the community to remove designated parcels from the urban growth area of approximately 60 acres of undevelopable land and add 40 acres from the southeast corner of the urban growth area boundary.

Councilmember Swarthout asked for confirmation as to whether the proposal is to swap 60 acres that are undevelopable with 40 acres that could be developed. Mr. Brewer said the proposal essentially is a net reduction in the size of the urban growth area. As long-time residents in the region, the applicants support the intentions and goals created by the Sustainable Thurston Plan and believe the proposal will help the community and Thurston County meet many of the Sustainable Thurston objectives. The proposal would create a vibrant center and a corridor within close proximity to existing neighborhoods and acknowledge the important role of growth in population and tax revenue to the community. As environmental stewards, the applicants are conscientious of environmental risks and respectful in the design and development of the proposal, as well as assisting to mitigate future development threats of more vulnerable areas. The proposal will provide some economic benefit to Tumwater in terms of impact fees, jobs, housing units, property taxes, and retail sales tax.

The project was analyzed by the Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC). Executive Director Michael Cade provided a letter of support as the proposal will generate revenue from direct and indirect jobs and municipal tax revenue.

Mr. Brewer displayed a map of different zoning areas in the southern area of Tumwater. Many of the areas have been developed with residential housing. An area within the existing urban growth area does not have access to urban utilities. Much of the area is comprised of smaller parcels that likely would be unable to afford the investment to extend utilities. The Salish Landing proposal would extend City utilities to the southeast corner if the property is added to the City's urban growth area through the UGA land swap. The proposal would create an infrastructure utility loop by extending utilities to the southeast corner that would provide access to all small parcels to connect to City utilities and create opportunities of development of more housing. The City of Tumwater purchased a parcel of land for the location of a south water tower. The Salish Landing proposal will save the City's investment by activating the water tower.

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Mr. Brewer displayed another map of areas that have been developed since 1996 following the adoption of the Growth Management Act (GMA). A corner located to the southeast has not developed because of the lack of utilities. The only significant presence is the Melody Pines Mobile Home Park with over 100 individual septic systems offering another connectivity opportunity to City utilities and vacating over 100 septic systems.

Councilmember Swarthout asked whether the proposal includes connecting the mobile home park to City utilities for the 100 units. Mr. Brewer said the extension of the utilities along Old Highway 99 would provide an opportunity for connection to City utilities that otherwise would not have an opportunity for utility services for decades.

Councilmember Agabi asked whether any studies have been completed of any environmental impacts to groundwater in the vicinity of the septic systems. Mr. Brewer said the applicants hired a hydrogeologist to study groundwater wells in the area. The applicants have committed to funding an environmental impact study that Thurston County is pursuing, which will provide data for hydrogeology, groundwater, and utility extensions, as well as information on transportation impacts. Preliminary transportation studies document a reduction in miles traveled per capita. Tumwater has over 2,200 households located within two miles of the subject site with no access to simple household amenities or urgent care services. The households are driving much further distances to shop. The proposal would reduce the need to travel to distant areas for products and services.

The applicant has partnered with South Sound YMCA to add a new YMCA facility to the site to meet YMCA's growth goals to serve the extended community. YMCA's Briggs facility is over capacity. The applicant has also received strong support from local tribes.

Councilmember Von Holtz asked whether the applicants have been in contact with Intercity Transit to discuss the possibility of extending bus service to the area. Mr. Brewer affirmed contact with Intercity Transit representatives. One of the unique aspects of the site is the opportunity to serve as a pivot point for Intercity Transit buses. Currently, bus service is limited to Tumwater Boulevard as there is no southern turnaround area.

Mr. Brewer shared a conceptual drawing of Salish Landing developed by an architect with input from local tribes. The development could serve as a pivot point in the southern area for Intercity Transit. The site would also enable residents of 2,200 households to access transit and Dial-A-Lift service.

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Mayor Sullivan noted that Rural Transit currently offers service along Old Highway 99 as well.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked about the location of the proposal with respect to school district property and any potential impacts of the project with the proposed school project in the vicinity. Mr. Brewer responded that the Tumwater School District is one of a few districts in western Washington that is in need of new elementary schools. The school district owns two parcels near the proposed development, which is across the street from the school district property that would also benefit from the utility extension.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether the subject property was ever located within the City's urban growth area. Mr. Brewer said Tumwater's UGA was larger at one time; however, a lawsuit was filed challenging the size of the City's UGA and that it was too large to accommodate growth for the next 20 years. The land located on the south side of 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to the boundary of the subject property was removed from Tumwater's UGA. More than half of the subject property had been located in the Tumwater urban growth area at one time.

Councilmember Jefferson asked whether the proposal is the first large development proposal in Thurston County. Mr. Brewer said the proposal is the largest commercial development. Mr. Rice has completed many development projects in the City of Tumwater.

Mr. Rice reported that he has constructed residential projects in Thurston County for nearly 40 years. His first project in Tumwater was approximately 25 years ago near 79<sup>th</sup> Avenue of nearly 1,000 homes. Currently, another 1,000 homes are under construction off the Littlerock Road/Kirsop Road corridor. Most of his projects are residential homes and he has recently expanded to construct some commercial development. Salish Landing would be his largest project as a singular project that he and Mr. Brewer have worked on together.

Councilmember Cathey requested clarification as to other development along Tilley Road extending to Millersylvania State Park. Mr. Brewer explained that the map illustrates development that has occurred since the adoption of the GMA in 1996. Mr. Rice has developed many of the homes over the course of years. The proposed site includes much larger parcels and would be easier to invest in a utility extension because of the number of homes that could potentially be served. The proposed site is not located near Millersylvania State Park and is located off Old Highway 99 near Great Western Supply.

Councilmember Althauser questioned whether the proposed utility

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extension involves any latecomer fees if the City installed a 16-inch main from the new water tower, and whether the proposal includes extending the 16-inch main. A similar project is included on the City's long-term plan. He questioned how the proposal interacts with the City's current plan to construct the water tower to eventually connect the system to provide service and fire flow.

Mr. Brewer said the water tower, in all practicability, sits on a dead end water line for the foreseeable future. It is unlikely the City would invest in connecting the loop around the area of the property, which would be important for water flow and to avoid water stagnation. The proposal would complete a significant extension of a 16-inch water main to extend to the corner of the property and provide a half loop extension that is critical for a robust and secure water system. The area surrounding the subject properties would likely develop into fourplexes, duplexes, or multifamily. None of the parcels individually could extend the utilities whereby the Salish Landing project of approximately \$150 million could afford to make the investment to bring services to the project site. The development would provide offsite benefits to the community.

City Administrator Parks added that as a rate-based system, the new reservoir is planned to accommodate future growth. Any growth in the system is in effect paying for future growth through connection fees and rates to pay back the revenue bond. Economies of scale are often gained when developers who are willing and able to participate collaboratively in construction of the water tower in the general vicinity. The City has plans to extend and loop the 16-inch water main; however, the plan calls for those extensions to occur in phases. The proposed development in collaboration with the City's project would help the City's phasing analysis and economies of scale to extend the system sooner. Converting septic systems to City utilities in dense areas, such as mobile home parks, would benefit water quality for the City's domestic water system.

Mr. Brewer shared some renderings completed in cooperation with guidance from the Squaxin Island Tribe. The intent is to bring cultural awareness through long house designs, native landscaping, and color schemes. The status of the proposal is at conceptual design. The team believes in the importance of sharing the vision of the project. The proposal includes a donation of land for the YMCA facility and participation in the organization's capital fundraising campaign. The project will also complement some of the endeavors of the City, such as the new community center by offering places to recreate, live, and meeting some walkability targets. He reiterated that consideration for the proposed land swap is tied to the 10-year periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan.

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**POLICE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT:** Acting Police Chief Mason provided an annual report on Tumwater Police Department activities in 2024.

The department's authorized staff of 48 full-time equivalents include the following positions:

- Command:
  - Chief
  - Deputy Chief
  - 3 Lieutenants, Administrative Manager
- Supervision;
  - 8 Sergeants
  - 1 Records Supervisor
- Front Line Staff
  - 12 Patrol Officers
  - 5 Detectives
  - 5 Front Office Specialists
  - 1 Management Analyst
  - 2 Code Enforcement/Transport Officers
  - 1 Evidence Tech

Four divisions include:

- Patrol Division providing 24/7 coverage:
  - Two squads of 9 officers each respond to calls for service and proactive policing through community engagement & police visibility in the community
- Investigations
  - Major case
  - School Resource Officers
  - Evidence
- Training & Technology
  - Coordinates department training, internal & external
  - Technology, Equipment , Fleet Management
  - Code Enforcement Program
- Admin
  - Records Management
  - Public Disclosure Requests
  - Management analyst

Police responses in 2024 included:

- 19,270 calls for service or approximately 52 calls each day
- 787 arrests and referrals
- 1,567 Records requests

Department accomplishments in 2024:

- Completion of Tumwater Police Strategic Plan
- Attained close to 100% of authorized staffing level for the first

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- time in many years
- Presented “*Thinking Big in Smaller Departments – bringing academic research into policing*” at the International Association of Police Chiefs conference
  - Closed 21 Code Enforcement Cases
  - Personnel attended 3,762 hours of training
  - Contracted for new Records Management System (Tumwater Police Department is the lead agency)
  - Implemented a new radio system

Planned activities in 2025 include:

- Strategic Growth Plan
  - Requested additional staffing of 8 police officers in 25/26 budget
  - None of the positions were funded and department will adapt and adjust

Councilmember Dahlhoff inquired about the status of the Flock system that Acting Police Chief Mason provided information on at a recent neighborhood meeting. Acting Police Chief Mason advised that during a discussion at the Western Plaza Mobile Home Park, one of the members asked him if he supports license plate systems. He responded that he supports the system. Because of budget’s inability to add officers, the department continually explores different technologies to increase capacity to serve the community. There is value in license plate reader systems, especially the Flock system as demonstrated during a recent arrest of a homicide suspect comprehended by a license plate hit. However, prior to the department moving forward to implement any type of license plate reader system, staff would review and discuss the technology, opportunities, and some of the guardrails with the Council.

Councilmember a Dahlhoff asked staff to address the outstanding questions from the Public Health and Safety Committee at the next briefing to the committee on the Flock system.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether the City has explored expanding the Police Department space at the new Thurston County Sheriff’s facility near City Hall. The building would be secure and outfitted with appropriate technology. Acting Police Chief Mason advised that the Sheriff’s facility would not be operational until 2026. The department currently needs space. The downstairs space the department is slated to expand is only temporary as it will entail a future consideration of partnering or considering larger facilities as the City continues to grow. The space downstairs presented an inexpensive opportunity to provide additional space. He anticipates preparation of a long-term plan for all City operations. He supports partnering with

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different agencies to maximize efficiencies and service to the community.

Councilmembers Cathey, Althausser, Swarthout, and Agabi expressed their support on the selection of Acting Police Chief Mason to serve as Tumwater's newest Police Chief.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether the Police Department is aware of a rumor that the Tumwater School District may be considering a contract with the Thurston County Sheriff's Office for the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. Acting Police Chief Mason responded that he has heard similar rumors but through several informal conversations with school district employees, they indicated that they have not been aware of those rumors. However, the relationship between the district and the City has encountered some friction in terms of the City's support of school district operations. He is working to improve the relationship as the Police Department is fully committed to the school district. A high functioning and thriving school district is an important asset for the community. The current SRO contract with the school district expires at the end of 2025. Conversations were initiated with the school district earlier in the year. Information conveyed at that time spoke to renewing the contract. The department is updating salary and benefit information for presentation to the school district and school board.

Councilmember Agabi referred to a previous briefing to the Public Health and Safety Committee, which was tabled at that time because of the City's budget, as well as concerns surrounding the capture of data. Acting Police Chief Mason affirmed that questions were asked as to how data would be captured and utilized requiring a larger discussion later. Currently, the Police Department lacks the capacity to implement the Flock system at this time. He was somewhat surprised that the issue was addressed during the recent neighborhood meeting as the committee had tabled the proposal despite being included in the budget. The department believes the system has some value while recognizing that it would be implemented later following thorough discussions with the Council.

Discussion followed on the inclusion of the Flock system in the budget and some confusion that the proposal had been pulled from the budget. City Administrator Parks explained that the Flock system was initially added as an amendment to the last biennial budget, which was not approved. However, the proposal was included in the 25/26 budget with funding allocated and available. However, the expense does not necessarily mean it would be implemented based on the priorities of the department.

Councilmember Dahlhoff referred to her request in March to receive a final budget with specific line items as she would not have voted in favor

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of retaining the proposal until the policy was developed for the system. City Administrator Parks advised that the system proposal was included in the schedules provided earlier in the budget process. Staff is working on compiling the final budget document. Councilmember Dahlhoff requested department budget line item details. City Administrator Parks affirmed that she would follow-up with the timeline for finalization of the information.

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

City Administrator Parks reported on the status of scheduling the three Saturday meetings for strategic planning sessions. Several Councilmembers requested consideration of different dates. The consultant is checking availability for May and June dates. The September date was confirmed by six Councilmembers. She asked the Council to pencil May 3, 2025 and June 21, 2025 dates on their calendars as tentative meeting dates. Staff is forwarding a Doodle poll for the September Saturday session.

During the Earth Day event, 43 volunteers participated representing Black Hills High School, Tumwater High School, South Puget Sound Community College, Thurston County Specialized Recreation, and members of the public. Black Hills High School placed first and received the first prize of \$1,000 with Tumwater High School placing second and receiving \$500 from the PARC Foundation. During the Arbor Day event, 100 trees and shrubs were distributed to community member. Volunteers removed ivy, planted some trees, and picked up garbage around Historical Park. Thurston County Specialized Recreation supplied journals created from recycled paper. Mayor Sullivan officiated at both events.

The Easter Egg dash featured 20,000 candy and prize filled eggs stuffed by 64 volunteers over the course of 125 hours with Councilmembers Von Holtz and Swarthout volunteering. Approximately 2,000 children from infants to 11 years participated in the event. Tumwater Arts participated offering 160 art kits. Local businesses donated over 6,000 coupons and prizes. Twenty-five volunteers supported the event. State Farm, Black Lake Bible Camp and Toyota sponsored the event. The Police Department, high school mascots, and the Easter Bunny participated in the event.

Approximately 60 seventh and eighth grade students from Bush and Tumwater Middle Schools participated in the First Green Program at Tumwater Valley Golf Course developed and sponsored by the National Golf Superintendents Association. The program offers youth science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) education principles and participation and applying STEAM knowledge in the management of golf courses. The students rotated through a variety of different stations learning about different golf course applications.

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Mayor Sullivan commented on the concurrent events of the Easter Egg Dash, Earth Day, and Arbor Day. She acknowledged the efforts of Parks and Recreation Department staff for managing and overseeing three large events during one day.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Councilmember Cathey commented on feedback she received on concerns about a planned installation of a Tesla electric charging station at a new development located off Littlerock Road.

**ADJOURNMENT:** **With there being no further business, Mayor Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.**

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