

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION

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CONVENE: 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Debbie Sullivan and Councilmembers Peter Agabi, Michael Althaus, Joan Cathey, Leatta Dahlhoff, Angela Jefferson, Charlie Schneider, and Eileen Swarthout.

Staff: City Administrator John Doan, Parks and Recreation Director Chuck Denney, Police Chief Jon Weiks, Planning Manager Brad Medrud, Communications Manager Ann Cook, and City Clerk Melody Valiant.

THURSTON CLIMATE MITIGATION PLAN PHASE 4 INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT:

Manager Medrud briefed the Council on the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan Phase 4 Interlocal Agreement (ILA). The briefing covered accomplishments to date, provisions within the interlocal agreement, next steps in the process, 2021 Annual Report findings released by Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC), Phase 4 long-term governance agreement that includes the interlocal agreement with the City of Tumwater, City of Lacey, City of Olympia, and Thurston County, the work program for the first year of the three-year interlocal agreement, and how TRPC's work program supports the work program. He asked the Council to consider including the acceptance of the ILA on the February 15, 2022 City Council meeting agenda.

In January 2021, the City Council accepted the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan as the framework to guide future actions to reduce local sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Following acceptance of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan, a Phase 3 Interlocal Agreement was approved by the jurisdictions to guide the first year of implementing the plan. Four interrelated components of the implementation strategy include:

1. Legislative Agenda
2. Regional Coordination to Implement the Plan
3. Individual Actions
4. Supporting Partner Roles

Manager Medrud reviewed activities completed in 2021 in support of the Plan. The City of Tumwater approved the addition of a Sustainability Coordinator to manage the City's implementation of Plan actions.

Greenhouse gas emissions data collected through the end of 2019 did not account for the affects of the pandemic or the adoption of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan. Data documents the continued increase in emissions reflecting a 15% increase over 2015 levels.

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Manager Medrud cited some activities completed by each jurisdiction to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. He outlined sources of emissions and noted that the highest levels of emissions are generated by transportation and land use.

Manager Medrud reviewed the status of actions in the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan.

The three-year ILA extends the period of governance and identifies the parties, purpose, commitments, and a goal to develop a work program and budget to achieve the goals of the ILA. A steering committee comprised of representatives from each jurisdiction serves as the driving force for regional efforts. The annual work program identifies annual tasks to achieve the goals of the ILA and outlines the oversight and coordinating committees, regional priorities, monitoring and assessment, and public outreach.

The TRPC scope of work supports activities of the annual work program, provides staffing support for the committees, and assists in regional coordination. The 2022 work program oversight and coordination committees are the Steering Committee, Technical Committee (staff), and various task committees formed as necessary.

The overall cost of standing tasks of the work program is approximately \$220,000 with the City of Tumwater's share of \$55,077. As part of the 2022 regional priorities, ongoing tasks from the previous phase include the Phase 1 Energy Efficiency Program and the Phase 1 Carbon Sequestration Program. The City of Tumwater and the City of Olympia are moving forward on a separate project for a Building Electrification Cost Estimate for commercial buildings.

Councilmember Althaus asked whether the estimate would account for opportunity costs of conversion of a building. Manager Medrud said the cost estimates consider new commercial and industrial projects and conversion projects. The estimate is focused on commercial buildings rather than public buildings.

Councilmember Cathey asked whether existing building codes would be adjusted as the region implements actions. Manager Medrud advised that the current building code was updated and adopted in 2021 to include a new energy code. As part of the Legislative Agenda, further work will be necessary to update the building code. That process would be pursued at the state level as the building code applies statewide.

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Additionally, opportunities exist under state law enabling some adjustments to local codes to address commercial buildings below 50,000 square feet. Staff is currently exploring potential changes to local codes.

Councilmember Schneider asked about current efforts by the City to move toward solar energy. Manager Medrud said the City is participating in the purchase of solar power for all municipal buildings and is exploring options of electrifying other City facilities and equipment, such as water pumps and other energy uses by the City.

Councilmember Schneider questioned the possibility of the City actively pursuing installation of electric vehicle charging stations in local parks. Manager Medrud said the City requires new development to provide electric charging stations. Discussions are in process for the next level of station installations.

City Administrator Doan added that the City is also exploring ways of adding charging stations for City vehicles throughout the community to include parks.

Councilmember Cathey mentioned the possibility of obtaining funding through the Olympic Region Clean Air Agency for electric charging stations.

Manager Medrud reported the City's share of the one-year work program is \$60,660. Additionally, the City would be contributing a 0.25 FTE to support the program.

Manager Medrud reviewed the 2022 priorities identified and approved by the Steering Committee for the plan moving forward:

- Phase 1 Energy Efficiency Program
- Building Electrification Cost Estimate
- Phase 1 Carbon Sequestration Program
- Financing Strategy

Legislative Priorities include:

- *Buildings & Energy:*
 - Direct the State Energy Office to create energy benchmarks for categories of buildings and climate regions so prospective purchasers, tenants, and investors can make informed decisions
 - Allow jurisdictions to adopt local standards that reach beyond state minimum code requirements for energy use in new building

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- construction to support a faster shift toward greater efficiency and electrification
- Provide funding to improve the energy efficiency of existing low-income housing units
- Pass statewide deadlines for phasing out use of natural gas in all new residential construction and new commercial/industrial non-process uses
- Fund a pilot program to convert from gas/oil to electric heat and appliances in 100 existing low-income housing units
- *Agriculture & Forests:*
 - Provide funding to acquire community forest land to be managed for sustainable harvesting and carbon sequestration
 - Fund the Sustainable Farms and Fields grant program through the Washington State Conservation Commission to increase carbon sequestration on agricultural lands

Funding requests for Thurston County managed by TRPC include energy efficiency at \$ 2 million, electric conversion at \$2 million, prairie acquisition at \$10 million, and forest acquisition at \$10 million for a total of \$24 million.

The City's internal efforts to date have included:

- Green Team
- New Sustainability Coordinator:
 - Located in Water Resources & Sustainability Department
 - Supported by City Green Team
 - Candidate interviews are scheduled

The City of Lacey and Thurston County approved the Phase 4 ILA and the City of Olympia is scheduled to consider approval of the ILA. Manager Medrud requested the Council add acceptance of the ILA to the Council's February 15, 2022 meeting agenda for consideration.

Councilmember Swarthout serves as the primary member representing the City on the steering committee and Councilmember Schneider serves as the alternate member.

Discussion ensued on budgeting needs to support City actions and whether any additional support is required for code changes and regional actions. The discussion acknowledged labor shortages, product increases, and supply chain issues and how those trends are factored as the City moves forward to accomplish some of the actions. Manager Medrud encouraged the Council to budget conservatively to cover unexpected expenses. City Administrator Doan noted that the City had

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budgeted \$150,000 for some earlier phases and future purchases of electric vehicles. The funding source is from the general fund and any unspent funds are carried forward.

COMMUNITY GARDEN:

City Administrator Doan reported the Tumwater Metropolitan Park District budget includes an allocation of \$200,000 of one-time funding for community gardens. The plan does not include a definition of a community garden other than the funds would be used to support community gardens. The City received a proposal for a community garden from Tumwater United Methodist Church. He asked for feedback on the proposal and whether the proposal meets the intent of the budget allocation.

Director Denney outlined the proposal from the church. He visited the site and met with Pastor Sandy Ward to discuss the intent of the church's proposal. The church is striving to open the church and exterior grounds to the community to meet a variety of community needs. Providing a community garden would enable garden space for community members at a small fee. The first phase of the project is construction of additional raised garden beds to add to eight existing beds. The next phase would add garden space in a much larger area followed by a third phase of adding orchard trees along the church's street frontage. The church's proposed budget is approximately \$22,000 with the possibility of donations from the community. The City could help support funding a connection to water and assisting with the purchase of garden soil, fencing, and other gardening supplies. Raised garden beds would provide individuals with their own garden space while the larger garden area would serve the community collectively and provide a source of food to the Thurston County Food Bank. The proposal aligns with the intent of community gardens within the Metropolitan Park District plan and budget.

Councilmember Cathey supported the proposal as it presents a good opportunity for the City to work with the community. The church is committed to supporting the City's goal of adding community gardens. The proposal provides an opportunity for the City to launch the first community garden and it enables a way to contribute to the food bank.

Councilmember Althausen inquired about the fee the church plans to charge for raised garden beds, as he wants to ensure participation is not limited because of the lack of financial resources. Director Denney explained that the church plans to charge a \$20 fee to be refunded at the end of the year. The fee is charged to ensure participants commit and

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stay engaged. If a participant cannot financially afford to pay they can participate in the larger garden plot at no charge.

The Council discussed a waitlist process, size of the garden area, and acknowledged the efforts of Councilmembers Cathey and Jefferson for reaching out to the church to launch the first community garden project.

City Administrator Doan advised that based on the positive feedback, staff plans will continue working with the church to promote the development of the community garden.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

City Administrator Doan advised that the presentation is prompted by a number of conversations surrounding public engagement. The presentation provides a framework of public engagement and identifies a number of effective tools to apply to different situations. The goal is to provide the Council with both common language as well as a common toolbox as the Council and City pursue different activities and programs.

Manager Cook presented one course in a series of several for receiving certification as a public works director. The waiting list for the full communications and public engagement program is two years.

A metaphor for community engagement and ways local governments interact with communities has been described as transactional that often does not enable community engagement. A model developed approximately 30 years ago centered on the tradition of community working together to build both the community and relationships. Community and public participation should be considered less transactional and more about relationship building with opportunities for participation.

Public participation or community engagement is a process that involves the public in problem solving or decision-making and uses public input to make decisions. Public meetings can generate different experiences for participants. It is important to provide timely, purposeful participation for individuals who feel they are being heard and that the process builds trust. Successful participation or community engagement can entail whether the right meeting format was used, whether the right expectations were established, and whether people understood their role. Bad or ineffective meetings often involve chances for the public to yell or only hearing from those who are angry. The meeting is not timely or has no defined purpose and is held just to check off a box of a legally required meeting. The public often feels unheard or used and there is no feedback loop. Such meetings reduce trust of the organization. If no

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potential influence on any part of the outcomes occurs, it is not public participation.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) developed a spectrum of public participation, core values, code of ethics, and a training program. Manager Cook reported she has completed two of courses and is seeking certification as a trainer.

Manager Cook reviewed the core values established by IAP2.

Councilmember Dahlhoff said she is seeking clarification as to the appropriate entity (City Administrator, Mayor, or staff) to respond to questions she often receives from constituents via email or other forms of contact.

Councilmember Schneider added that public comments offered during a meeting or a public hearing generate no response from the Council or staff. He is unclear as to the rules and policies with respect to responding to citizens; however, as an elected official he often would like to engage with the individual or respond to the comments. City Administrator Doan said the question is timely as it speaks to one of the topics included during the retreat of reviewing procedures at Council meetings.

Councilmember Cathey recommended reviewing the City of Olympia process as the Olympia Council typically does not respond directly to speakers; however, the Mayor affords an opportunity for each member to comment in response to a speaker's comments.

Manager Cook offered to share some strategies to help people manage expectations about what occurs during a Council meeting or a public hearing.

Manager Cook reviewed the spectrum of public participation. When considering a public meeting or any opportunity for community engagement, it is important to learn from the community what their knowledge is of an issue, establish a level of participation and outcome expectations, and define the decision process and participation objectives. The City's engagement toolbox (inform, consult, involve, collaborate, & empower) is based on a communications matrix to assist in identifying the benefits of using each of the outreach techniques dependent upon the goal(s):

Inform:

- Website

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- Staff Contacts
- Telephone Hotlines
- Info Kiosks
- Fairs & Events
- Reports
- Newsletters, Direct Mail
- E-mail, Listserv
- Interviews
- Public meetings

Consult:

- Information Repositories
- Fairs & Events
- Focus Groups
- Reports
- Comment Forms
- Resident Feedback
- Scientific and Polls
- Interviews
- Public Meetings & Public Hearings

Involve:

- Revolving Conversations
- Tours & Field Trips
- Online, Interactive Processes
- Fishbowl Processes
- Workshops
- Charrettes
- Deliberative Forums
- Deliberative Polling
- Focused Conversations
- Ongoing Advisory Groups

Collaborate:

- Tours & Field Trips
- Fishbowl Processes
- Workshops & Charrettes
- Open Space Meetings
- Study Circles
- Deliberative Forums
- Citizen Juries
- Focused Conversations

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- Deliberative Polling
- Ongoing Advisory Groups

Empower:

Involve:

- Future Search Conferences
- World Cafes
- Deliberative Polling
- Citizen Juries
- Ongoing Advisory Groups

Collaborate:

- Tours & Field Trips
- Fishbowl Processes
- Workshops & Charrettes
- Future Search Conferences
- Study Circles
- Deliberative Forums
- Citizen Juries
- Focused Conversations
- Deliberative Polling
- Ongoing Advisory Groups

Some tools for reaching underserved audiences could include:

- Reducing barriers that can make establishing relationship or communication with them more difficult
- High value on comprehensive involvement
- Extra consideration to ensure equal access to information for all residents
- Recognizing “Hard-to-reach” groups such as youth, low English proficiency speakers, low income, people with disabilities

City Administrator Doan cited an example of empowering by the City through an annual budget allocation to the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission for purchases approved by each commission.

Manager Cook said the City began piloting the public participation program prior to the pandemic with the Community Development Department and Public Works Department. During the pandemic, the City did not sponsor any meetings. The City is ready to initiate the program as the pandemic begins to wind down.

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Councilmember Dahlhoff recommended incorporating the tools (inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower) within the toolbox within the Council's communications to ensure consistency, increase ongoing awareness, and encourage community engagement.

Councilmember Jefferson asked whether staff found it easier during the pandemic to seek public participation through social media and zoom. Manager Cook advised that early in the pandemic, many community members experienced an information overload. She viewed the City's website analytics. During the early days of the pandemic, website visits significantly dropped, as well as the time of day visits. Social media engagement also experienced some changes and although the City did not necessarily lose followers, the number of followers lessened or the audience was much smaller. Today, social media continues to experience an information overload. The City does receive good response from people who follow City activities. The City's open rate on its Listserve is higher than the industry standard.

Councilmember Agabi inquired as to the status of the City's redesign of the website. Manager Cook said efforts continue on the redesign of the website with content expected to migrate to the new format during the next six to eight weeks. The City's website has over 1,800 webpages.

Councilmember Agabi asked about the possibility of including a Q&A page. Manager Cook explained that after completion of the build-out, the contractor plans to consider integration of some engagement tools affording an option for questions and answers. The tools will include options for polling and questions to obtain community input.

Mayor Sullivan advocated for pursuing common terminology for engagement and community participation to ensure a mutual understanding by the Council and staff.

The Council and staff discussed methods and ways to inform the Council of events or activities that have generated community interest or sparked media interest.

MAYOR/CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

City Administrator Doan asked the Council to review some information that will be sent in the next day to help prepare for the retreat.

Mayor Sullivan reported she is attending the Association of Washington Cities Mayors Exchange on Thursday, February 10, 2022.

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ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Mayor Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.**

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