

**TUMWATER GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL SPECIAL MEETING  
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**CONVENE:** 8:00 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Chair Michael Althaus and Councilmembers Joan Cathey and Leatta Dahlhoff.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Fire Chief Brian Hurley, Community Development Director Michael Matlock, Water Resources & Sustainability Director Dan Smith, Planning Manager Brad Medrud, and Land Use and Housing Planner Erika Smith-Erickson.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:  
GENERAL GOVERNMENT  
COMMITTEE, JUNE 12,  
2024:**

**MOTION:** Councilmember Cathey moved, seconded by Councilmember Dahlhoff, to approve the minutes of June 12, 2024 as published. A voice vote approved the motion.

**2025 COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE -  
CLIMATE ELEMENT:** Manager Medrud said the intent of the discussion is to address any outstanding questions from the Council's recent joint work session with the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Cathey conveyed appreciation and support of Councilmember Dahlhoff's submittal of written comments.

Manager Medrud reminded the committee of the upcoming in-person open house on the Climate Element on August 14, 2024 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the ASHHO Cultural Community Center with a companion online component available through the end of September. Staff anticipates presenting some deliverables from the Climate Element with meetings scheduled in the fall to brief the Council and the committee. Staff is drafting all Comprehensive Plan elements for reviews beginning this fall.

Manager Medrud addressed questions about the extent of outreach efforts to increase open house attendance. A stakeholder group established for the development of the Climate Element is playing an important role in public outreach. Additionally, the City utilizes social media and its website to advertise and promote participation.

Councilmember Dahlhoff said she appreciated language within the Climate Element, such as action-oriented terminology rather than passive. The element also addresses historical language and reframes language to active and intentional terminology reflecting the City's goals for the future.

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Councilmember Cathey noted that some of the changes in the draft Climate Element reflect the direction of climate change and the City's response and required actions.

Manager Medrud attributed efforts by the Planning Commission in helping to frame the document. The main issue is transitioning to implementation actions and identifying specific one-time actions.

Chair Althaus commented that the actions reflect the depth of the element moving forward. The City is creating an important plan that outlines those actions.

Councilmember Cathey asked staff to convey appreciation to the Planning Commission for its work on the update of the Comprehensive Plan.

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

Planner Smith-Erickson presented the initial first draft of Lands for Public Purposes Element and Utilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan. She noted that most of the changes and modifications revise and/or add proactive language to goals, policies, and actions emphasizing initiatives and responsibilities.

The Lands for Public Purposes Element includes two goals and supporting actions:

- *Goal LPP-1: Provide efficient and necessary services to Tumwater and its urban growth area. No changes are proposed to the goal other than modifying the version of Implementation Action #7 from the Land Use Element to reflect, Direct the timing and location of development with the provision of adequate facilities and services within Tumwater's Urban Growth Area, through periodic updates to the Tumwater and Thurston County Joint Plan and regulations.*
- *Goal LPP-2: Support improvements in the provision of public services. The goal was modified to: Make recommendations for improvements in the provision of public service."*
  - Policy LPP-2.1 was modified: *Work with regional partners to expand and improve Tumwater's multimodal transit network in conjunction with the Transportation Plan.*
  - Policies LPP-2.2: *Improve waste management services and decrease waste production in the City and LPP-2.2.1 Promote reuse, composting, and recycling to minimize solid waste production in the City are state requirements as part of House Bill 1799.*

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Members and staff discussed the proposed actions in response to legislation and to ensure the zoning code allows for the expansion of services. In response to questions about residential compost bins, Planner Smith-Erickson advised she would research the issue for potential implementation or actions to promote residential composting in addition to regular curbside recycling.

Chair Althausen questioned whether the use of rain barrels to capture stormwater is included as a strategy either in the Utilities Element or in the City's sustainability goals for water. The City incentivizes the use of rain barrels by offering a maximum rebate of \$60. Planner Smith-Erickson said rain barrels are likely included in the Utilities Element. The goals and policies were forwarded to Water Resources for review. She plans to follow up and review both state requirements and incorporate policies regarding rain barrels after additional review with Water Resources staff.

- Policy LPP-2.3 was modified to: *Work with the Tumwater and Olympia School Districts to site facilities that accommodate changing student populations.* Staff met with officials from the Tumwater School District during housing stakeholder outreach. The conversation centered on housing, students, classroom sizes, and needs for future facilities. She plans to follow-up with school district staff to review the policy and future growth in the next 20 years for possibly adding action items.

Chair Althausen noted that state law defines essential public facilities as a variety of uses ranging from schools to certain types of mental health facilities and juvenile justice correctional facilities. The update lacks any mention of other essential public facilities allowed by state law. He asked about adding a policy or action addressing the siting of essential public facilities.

Manager Medrud explained that the state definition of essential public facilities as required in the City's Comprehensive Plan address many uses that everyone needs but no one wants located near them or in the City, such as a jails, treatment facilities, or large universities. School facilities for K-12 do not attain the level of an essential public facility enabling a simpler process for project approvals. Staff is examining the appropriate element to add state required essential public facilities. He believes the use should be part of the Land Use Element. Language is also included in the Lands for Public Purposes Element as well. Future discussions on the Land Use Element will include a discussion on the draft of policies addressing essential

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public facilities. Staff is also examining processes for enabling an easier permitting process for local school districts. State law also requires the City to allow group homes, childcare facilities, and other types of uses, which are included in the City's current zoning code in commercial and residential zones.

Chair Althausen asked about the prospect of the Tumwater School District building a new school as many school districts are considering closure of existing schools across the state. Manager Medrud said he and Planner Smith-Erickson met with Mel Murray, the district's facility manager. He shared that the district anticipates the need for additional facilities within the next 20 years because of population growth and differences in composition of households than in the City of Olympia. Tumwater tends to have more families with children.

Councilmember Cathey cited a recent article about the construction of high schools and affects on climate change created by large parking lots as most high school students drive to school. Many districts are incorporating climate change impacts with respect to land use to stress the importance to students to avoid driving to school.

- Language in Policy LPP-2.4: *Work with the Tumwater and Olympia School Districts to site facilities that accommodate changing student populations* was modified to emphasize action.
- Policy LPP-1.3 was moved from the Land Use Element: *Direct the timing and location of development with the provision of adequate facilities and services within Tumwater's Urban Growth Area, through periodic updates to the Tumwater and Thurston County Joint Plan and regulations.*

Planner Smith-Erickson reviewed the Utilities Element.

- No changes are proposed to Goal U-1: *Increase efficiency when planning for and siting utilities.*
  - Action item, U-1.1.1: *Cooperate and participate with Puget Sound Energy in the formulation of policy and development of an underground management plan with respect to Puget Sound's aerial facilities with the City of Tumwater* was not changed. Staff is meeting with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to review plans and services for utilities over the

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next 20 years with the potential of additional actions following the discussion.

- No changes are proposed to Policy U-1.3: *Utilize transportation rights-of-way for utility corridors whenever feasible.* The possibility exists of an implementation action to support PSE's pole charging program where they attach EV charging to existing utility and light poles for adjacent parking and charging. Staff reached out to other service providers and plans to follow up with cell phone providers, cable, other service providers, and LOTT Clean Water Alliance to discuss utilities.
- No changes are proposed to Policy U-1.4: *Provide timely notification to all affected utilities prior to road construction.*
- No changes are proposed to Policy U-1.5: *Approve utility permits when the project to be served is permitted whenever.* Staff is reviewing new state permitting requirements and revising as needed.
- Policy U-1.6 was modified to provide clarity: *Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure consistency of the respective utility plans to facilitate orderly utility service.*
- Goal U-2: *Support energy generation from renewable resources to bring the region to net zero emissions by 2050* was modified because the City does not generate energy for the community except in a limited way for its own facilities.
  - No changes are proposed for Policy U-2.1: *Provide incentives to support the installation of distributed electrical generation equipment, (e.g., rooftop solar panels).*
    - Action U-2.1.1: *Encourage developers and homeowners to take advantage of existing national, local, and utility incentive programs (e.g., the tax credit program for the installation of solar systems in homes) was not changed; however, an implementation action was added related to the Solar Star program: The City of Tumwater is committed to going solar. Thanks to a streamlined permitting process, Tumwater residents can quickly have solar panels installed on homes and businesses and begin seeing the benefits of clean, renewable energy. For more information about the basics of solar energy, your solar options, and questions to ask solar*

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- professionals visit the Department of Energy's Homeowner's Guide to Going Solar.*
  - No changes are proposed for Policy U-2.2: *Support large-scale, multi-jurisdictional renewable energy projects (e.g., large-scale solar arrays).*
  - Policy U-2.3: *Maintain uniform building codes and permitting practices to make the installation of solar panels, or other distributed generation technologies, easier and faster* was modified.
- Goal U-3, *Support enhancement of the region's electricity distribution, monitoring, and storage infrastructure to support cleaner technologies and practices* was modified as the City does not manage energy infrastructure for the community except in a limited way for its own facilities.
  - Policy U-3.1 was modified: *Monitor system, or grid-scale, energy storage innovations, and use the experiences of communities that begin to deploy them to inform City codes and permitting.*
  - Policy U-3.2 was modified: *Support energy suppliers' equipment upgrades, innovative programs, and service offerings related to adding information technology to the system or grid.*
  - No changes are proposed for Policy U-3.3: *Collaborate with energy providers to assess innovative system-scale, grid-scale, energy storage solutions in isolated, controlled conditions. If, and when, technological progress is proven, collaborate with energy providers for the deployment of such storage solutions.*
  - For Policy U-3.4: *Support adding vehicle chargers to homes, businesses, and public parking infrastructure*, staff is addressing whether the language is appropriate because of new state requirements for certain types of buildings for EV charging. Members discussed requirements for permits to install EV chargers. Manager Medrud advised that electrical permits are issued by the state and that staff would modify the policy clarifying permitting requirements.
  - Policy U-3.5 was modified: *Promote equitable integration of electric vehicle infrastructure into new and existing facilities, including allowances in zoning regulations for charging stations in locations where they are needed.* Staff is addressing whether an implementation action eliminates the need to include allowances. Staff affirmed the need to clarify the term of "allowances." Councilmember Dahlhoff

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asked for clarification as to the terminology of “equitable” in light of the affordability of an electric vehicle by low-income households. Manager Medrud said the question generates more questions; however, the City does have the ability to provide and support vehicle infrastructure. It may be possible to consider potential implementation actions to support expansion of] electric infrastructure to other income groups. The issue is about affordability and the capability of low-income households owning electric vehicles.

Councilmember Dahlhoff noted the frequent use of “support” in different ways. Manager Medrud advised that the inclusion of “support” within policy language is appropriate, but implementation actions would need to define the scope and context of “support.”

The committee discussed terminology of permitting, timeliness, and streamlined and cited instances of citizens often avoiding change because of the cost or permitting process. Although streamlined is an objective to achieve, inspections taking months to complete can lead to frustration.

- No changes are proposed to Policy U-3.6: *Support local projects to increase the existing electric vehicle fleet.* Staff is working on the policy through the Green Team to electrify the City’s vehicle fleet.
- Policy U-3.7: *Support a change in state policies to increase the utility share of funding for undergrounding of overhead wires to reduce power outages* was modified. Staff is considering whether to add a policy with Puget Sound Energy’s language of “Support electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout the community in order to support the decarbonization of our transportation sector.” The Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan requires undergrounding of all new utilities.
- No changes are proposed for Policy U-3.8: *Protect and reserve existing electrical transmission corridors to maintain their usefulness in meeting future needs.*
- Policy U-3.9 was modified: *Coordinate with the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan to reduce service interruptions and provide services that are more dependable during hazard events.* Staff is reviewing whether the policy should reside in the Climate

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Element or reference the Climate Element.

- Goal U-4 was modified: *Support increasing energy efficiency and conservation to reduce the region's carbon footprint.*
  - Policy U-4.1 was modified: *Support new incentives for decarbonized green buildings.*
  - Policy U-4.2 was modified: *Partner with Puget Sound Energy and other utility providers to promote energy efficiency programs and initiatives and expedite permitting processes related to energy efficiency upgrades.*
  - Policy U-4.3 was modified: *Electrify the City vehicle fleet to the greatest extent feasible.*
  - Policy U-4.4 was modified: *Adopt policies that require properties to undertake an energy audit at time of sale or during substantial remodel, including, if deficiencies are found, encouraging energy retrofits to upgrade properties to a specified level.*
- No changes are proposed for Goal U-5: *Ensure vital utilities are created, operated, and maintained in a safe manner.*
  - Policy U-5.1 was modified: *Underground utilities to increase public safety.* Staff is crosschecking whether the goal is included in another element. Councilmember Dahlhoff commented on unintended consequences of the policy in terms of cost impacts to manufactured home park tenants and low-income households for undergrounding utilities.
    - No changes are proposed for Action U-5.1.2: *Work with neighborhood associations to encourage the development of local improvement districts to provide funding for undergrounding existing utilities.*
  - No changes are proposed to Policy U-5.2: *Encourage pipeline safety through public awareness and regulations.*
    - Action U-5.2.1 was modified: *Adopt regulations that limit high-risk uses near pipelines to protect both the public and the pipelines themselves.*
    - Action U-5.2.2 was modified: *Support education the public on pipeline safety and pipeline locations within the City.* Staff contacted pipeline companies and plan to follow-up on the initial contacts.



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Planner Smith-Erickson thanked the committee for the feedback on the first draft. The elements will be presented to the Planning Commission on November 12, 2024, and to the committee on November 13, 2024. Staff continues to meet with stakeholders and with other departments to incorporate changes. She encouraged members to submit any suggested changes to the tables and email them to staff.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**With there being no further business, Chair Althausen adjourned the meeting at 8:55 a.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President  
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