

TUMWATER PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
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CONVENE: 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Elizabeth Robbins and Commissioners Terry Kirkpatrick, Brandon Staff, and Michael Tobias.

Excused: Commissioners Grace Edwards and Anthony Varela.

Staff: Planning Manager Brad Medrud and Land Use and Housing Planner Erika Smith-Erickson.

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

**APPROVAL OF
MINUTES
TUMWATER
PLANNING
COMMISSION: MAY
14, 2024:**

MOTION: **Commissioner Staff moved, seconded by Commissioner Tobias, to approve the minutes of May 14, 2024, as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS: There were no reports.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Medrud reported on the upcoming Housing Open House on Wednesday, May 29, 2024 in the Council Chambers from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. An online open house will be available as well and will be active until June 16, 2024.

Planner Smith-Erickson said the housing survey is currently available online. The City has received 22 responses to date.

PUBLIC COMMENT: **Amy Tousley, Local Municipal Manager, Puget Sound Energy (PSE),** expressed interest in working with the City on the Comprehensive Plan update. Land uses are of particular interest to PSE because it speaks to energy planning and energy resources. She looks forward to the Commission's discussion.

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE – LAND USE: Manager Medrud reported the discussion will focus on Land Use Element goals and policies. Additionally, the schedule for updating the Land Use Element is tracking closely with the schedule for the Housing Element as Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) is on track to release the

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most current Land Capacity Analysis by the end of June. The analysis informs policies and goals in the Land Use Element.

Manager Medrud displayed a spreadsheet listing the goals, policies, and implementation actions within the Land Use Element. The spreadsheet identified new goals, new policies, and new actions, initial proposed language, old goals, old policies, and old actions. Goals within the Land Use Element are in different categories. The first set of goals relate to the Growth Management Act (GMA). The goals are broad, and the intent of the update is to remove duplicative policies and goals or move them to more appropriate elements with the Comprehensive Plan, as well identifying implementation actions that tie directly to policies.

As Chair Robbins previously suggested, staff has not had an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of policies, improvements to policies, or costs associated with implementation. Staff intends to present that information at a future meeting.

Commissioner Tobias referred to recent legislation enabling cafes and other similar uses in single-family zoned areas. He asked whether the City allows cafes and other types of commercial services in different residentially zoned areas or whether the use is restricted to only Neighborhood Commercial zoning. Manager Medrud responded by sharing information on discussions by the City of Olympia staff about the potential of allowing commercial uses outside of neighborhood commercial nodes based on a two-year review. The City of Tumwater currently allows neighborhood-oriented commercial centers in residential zone districts. However, no developer has pursued any project under that zoning, as it is likely a limiting factor because the zoning allows up to three commercial uses on one lot and the use must be a retail service to serve residents in the immediate neighborhood designed to operate at minimal impact to the neighborhood.

Commissioner Tobias inquired about the possibility of home businesses. Manager Medrud said home-based businesses fall under home occupation as an accessory use, which is allowed.

Chair Robbins cited the commercial center located off Capitol Boulevard housing the Spuds grocery store, a pizza restaurant, and several other small businesses. She asked about the possibility of increasing the number of businesses allowed within a commercial center and the reason for limiting the number of businesses to only three. Manager Medrud responded that he believes the neighborhood commercial use zoning in residential zone districts has been in place since the 1990s and was unsure as to why uses were limited.

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Discussion ensued on the benefits provided by small stop and go grocery stores within residential neighborhoods and neighborhood commercial centers offering retail/restaurant/bar services. Those types of services can provide many benefits including safety by keeping people off the roads who may consume alcohol during a meal or a visit to the local pub.

Manager Medrud reported the initial review by staff of the first section the element resulted in combining some policies addressing coordination with other plans within the City or with other state or national codes. Some policies and implementation measures were revised to reflect all adopted City plans and regulations to remove redundant references. Other similar language addresses coordination with regional plans and plans of neighboring public districts (school districts, Port of Olympia Airport Master Plan, and LOTT Clean Water Alliance, etc.).

A goal for engaging and planning on a neighborhood level continues to be valid; however, staff recommends removing the Neighborhood Appendix, which is a large section. An update of the section would be substantial to update neighborhoods in the City that are not necessarily identified as such. There is some uncertainty for retaining individual neighborhood descriptions. The neighborhood element is similar to all elements in describing land uses within each area as well as some history. The section does not specifically call out special policies or implementations related to a neighborhood.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick noted that the intent of the neighborhood section was included at the direction of staff and was not originated by the Commission. He is uncertain as to the source/reason for including the section within the element.

Chair Robbins suggested obtaining some feedback from neighborhoods as to the inclusion or exclusion of the section. Some members of the community often identify with their respective neighborhood, which may have influenced the reason to include neighborhood designations. She asked about other sections in the element or other regulations that address activities at a neighborhood level. Manager Medrud said he is not aware of any section or ordinance that speaks to neighborhoods as defined in the Land Use Element. However, some planning efforts by the City in the past speak to specific areas, such as the Littlerock Road Subarea Plan. However, the plan does not include the boundaries of the neighborhood as defined in the Land Use Element. Other areas, such as the Brewery District were defined in a subarea plan. Outside of the subarea plans, he is not aware of any regulations or other plans that address other neighborhood areas in the City.

Planner Smith-Erickson noted that one comment from the community survey spoke to a request for more (neighborhood) themes or

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characteristics. However, it is possible to address the comment in new LU-1.4 to create a new city center.

Manager Medrud pointed out that LU-1.4 pertains to the Tumwater Town Center with a staff note of: "This is a reference to the Town Center. Is this still a goal?" The City adopted regulations for the Town Center. As the area develops and redevelops, projects are required to complete streetscape improvements. The Town Center is identified as all properties located south of Israel and north of Tumwater Boulevard between Capitol Boulevard and I-5. The vision for the Town Center is included in the zoning code as well as a streetscape plan.

Commissioner Staff remarked that most residents in the City would consider the location of the City's center as the area around the Craft District or the Brewery District. The current language is somewhat confusing.

Planner Smith-Erickson said the questions would be important to include in any public engagement effort for both the neighborhood designations and the City center. Manager Medrud supported the recommendation.

Chair Robbins added that the issues appear to be cross-linked with the Economic Development Element or marketing to determine the City center.

Manager Medrud said the City anticipates hiring a new Economic Development Manager as some interviews have been completed of candidates.

Commissioner Staff asked how the City's marketing of tourism of Tumwater ties into the City center and the City's identity, as well as the relationship with the Destination Master Plan developed by *Experience Olympia and Beyond* for Thurston County. Manager Medrud said staff has addressed how to tie City efforts to the work of *Experience Olympia and Beyond*. Staff was recently notified that the plan will be forwarded to the City for review by staff.

Manager Medrud reported Goal LU-2 essentially captures GMA. Staff plans to adjust language within the section, which will likely increase the section. The section speaks to more about developing higher densities, centers, and maintaining neighborhoods. The section promotes the anti-sprawl message within the GMA.

Goal LU-3.1 addresses public services. The goal ties the City's Capital Facilities Plan to the Land Use Element, identifies expenditures, and ensures adherence to all system plans. Staff contacted LOTT Clean

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Water Alliance staff to review some of the policies in comparison to LOTT's policies. Staff anticipates receiving input from LOTT. The section acknowledges that much of the development of the City's utility system will be dependent upon private development, requiring some efficiency in terms of improvements and connectivity. Staff plans to revise some of the language within the section.

Chair Robbins asked whether the goal has a nexus with the Public Purposes Element. Manager Medrud advised that essential public facilities is a stand-alone policy as the section pertains to facilities that no one wants developed in their respective area but is needed by society, such as a jail or a university that creates substantial impacts to immediate neighborhoods. Because the policies address specific uses, the policies are separate and not intertwined with other elements such as Transportation or Utilities.

Essential Public Facilities are addressed as new Goal LU-11 with new policies. The RCW includes a list of essential public facilities. The state advises jurisdictions not to list different types of facilities that are not included on the state list. The last section addresses the regional airport encompassing 500 acres within the City.

Chair Robbins cited a prior circumstance of a social service use that was deemed an essential public facility. She asked whether the use was included on the list. Manager Medrud said the use was likely a drug treatment facility. Those types of facilities are included within Goal LU-11. Additionally, the list of essential public facilities could be expanded by the state.

Manager Medrud referred to the goals on housing, transportation, and open space. The new goals are to ensure against the loss of connections between the Land Use Element and other elements. The connection between land use and the types of housing are directly connected with transportation following a similar link. The City's land use patterns enable affordable housing development. Following the City's receipt of the land capacity analysis, more information will be available to aid in the Commission's review.

Policies for multimodal transportation are in coordination with the Transportation Plan.

Policies on critical areas also address GMA land use requirements by addressing open space and limitations on land. Manager Medrud recommended retaining the policies and deferring a discussion on the implementation measures.

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Not addressed in the Land Use Element that should be reviewed and discussed are new requirements for designating urban forestry land. The City's zoning includes an Open Space zone district; however, the state encourages jurisdictions to identify urban forestry areas rather than consolidating them within other open or critical areas.

Goals for residential development pertain to traditional land use designations of residential, commercial, etc. Older policies did not separate commercial from industrial uses. As the uses are distinctly different, staff separated and created new sections. The policies address land supply for residential uses and implementation measures. The implementation measure of not permitting gated communities is still appropriate to retain.

It is important to ensure an adequate supply of commercial land is available near transportation corridors as well as encouraging a variety of uses.

Commissioner Staff inquired about the notation of nearby access to healthy food for residential development. Manager Medrud explained that an emphasis from the Council over the last several years has been on the promotion of urban agriculture to enable locally sourced food to the extent possible. Staff is also developing a food security plan for the City that speaks to ensuring residents have access to food and that it is healthy and local food. Continued emphasis on the goal should be included in the plan. Additionally, the Conservation Element includes a section on agricultural with some alignment between the two elements.

Commissioner Staff suggested explaining the goal in more detail. Manager Medrud said the goal captures many different elements, such as the informal food distribution of independent food stands along roads selling extra produce.

Discussion ensued on the availability of restaurants offering healthy food options rather than local drive-through fast food restaurants. Commissioner Tobias commented on the importance of the Land Use Element including a goal to avoid the development of food deserts because there is data correlating living in a food desert with other negative economic implications. It is important to have more development of food spaces for neighbors but not necessarily a stop and go store on every corner.

Commissioner Tobias asked whether food courts surrounding a food truck must provide restroom facilities to the public. Manager Medrud said it is unlikely the state requires restroom facilities; however, should the City consider allowing larger-scale food courts, restroom facilities should be considered.

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Manager Medrud reviewed the section on manufacturing, industrial, and warehouses goals. Discussions with the City's new Economic Development Manager will support the review of the section.

Open Space, Trails, and Recreational Facilities are linked to the Parks and Open Space Plan and the Conservation Element.

Chair Robbins suggested including some stronger language emphasizing active acquisition and maintenance of open spaces. Trails and walkways are important in areas that lead to different types of uses (commercial, recreational, nature features, etc.) and are a key component to community building. Manager Medrud noted that pedestrian and bicycle connections between neighborhoods are just as important for connections in addition to roads.

Manager Medrud referred to the sections on Essential Public Facilities and the Port of Olympia properties. Some types of land uses are not allowed near the airport runway.

Commissioner Tobias inquired as to any restrictions of a sky diving business at the airport. Manager Medrud said he is not aware of any restrictions by the City other than the possibility of restrictions by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Commissioner Staff noted that language in the section on *GOAL LU-12: Promote preservation of sites of historical and cultural significance* lacks any reference to indigenous people. A site across from the airport is an historic site that is often overlooked (Bush Prairie Farm). Manager Medrud agreed the goal warrants additional review.

Manager Medrud reported no other goals were moved into the Land Use Element from other elements. He reviewed a list of goals/policies relocated from the Land Use Element to the Conservation Element, such as flooding and critical areas. A section on energy efficiency was previously included in the Land Use Element but would be appropriate to move to the new Climate Element. However, some overlap will continue because of the building code requirements. Additionally, some goals/policies on economic development are not necessary to retain in the Land Use Element. Those goals would be moved to the Economic Development Plan. A number of goals/policies have been recommended for deletion, such as state goals under GMA and the County-Wide Policy Plan. He encouraged Commissioners to review the draft spreadsheet on the Land Use Element and offer any suggestions and/or changes.

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Chair Robbins asked how the public could access the County-Wide Policy Plan if it is not included in the Land Use Element. Manager Medrud explained that the 2016 draft included the appropriate county-wide planning policies within each element to include the goals and actions contained in the Sustainable Thurston Plan. Staff continues to work on language to ensure the draft speaks to the connection with the County-Wide Planning Policies. He added that as part of the introduction to each policy section, language could be included addressing connections with GMA policies and County-Wide Planning Policies.

Planner Smith-Erickson added that there are several options for including references, such as including the policies as an appendix. One objective as part of the update is to reformat and shorten the document. Staff is considering options to include references to County-Wide Planning Policies and other adopted policies.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting is scheduled on June 11, 2024.

Planner Smith-Erickson asked the Commission to consider whether to include more action items within the policies and goals with checklists to document the status for the next update. A similar chart was a requirement through FEMA for the Hazardous Mitigation Plan reflecting the status of each action item and the assigned department lead.

Manager Medrud reported the Commission and the Council are scheduled to meet during a work session on June 25, 2024 to review the development code. The focus of the discussion will be the City's approach to meeting state standards. A joint worksession is scheduled on July 9, 2024 to discuss the Climate Element.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Tobias moved, seconded by Commissioner Staff, to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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