

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

**PRESENT:** Chair Elizabeth Robbins and Commissioners Grace Edwards, Terry Kirkpatrick, and Brandon Staff.

Absent: Commissioner Gina Kotek.

Staff: Deputy Director Brad Medrud, Sustainability Manager Alyssa Jones Wood, Land Use Planner Erica Smith-Erickson, and Associate Planner Dana Bowers.

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

**CANCELLATION OF  
REGULAR FEBRUARY 25,  
2025, COMMISSION  
MEETING:**

**Commissioner Kirkpatrick moved, seconded by Commissioner Edwards, to cancel the February 25, 2025 regular Commission meeting. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**COMMISSIONER'S  
REPORTS:**

There were no reports.

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT:**

Deputy Director Medrud reported on scheduled interviews of three candidates for the Associate Planner position within the department. Filling the position is important to free time for Planner Baruch to assist in the update of the Comprehensive Plan and transitioning to a new permitting system. Staff is working with the Executive Department to schedule interviews for Commission candidates. Additionally, the Council will consider an ordinance to reduce the size of the Commission from nine to seven positions with one position representing the urban growth area.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There were no public comments.

**FOOD SYSTEM PLAN  
UPDATE:**

Planner Bowers reported that the City Council directed staff to address community concerns with food insecurity on the local level as part of the 2025 Long Range Planning Work Program. The City contracted with Rebeca Potasnik to assist in the preparation of the Plan. Ms. Potasnik has been working since August 2024 to obtain initial information and has reviewed other food system plans from other areas as well as City policies and plans to support a Food System Plan.

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Rebeca Potasnik briefed members on the initial steps of the process to develop a Food System Plan for the City.

Ms. Potasnik said she has been meeting with people to receive feedback. Many individuals are involved in the food system within the county. A survey was recently released to 69 individuals that are connected to the food system. The survey includes 15 open-ended essay questions. Several survey responses were received with one individual conveying support for the City to release a survey and another who appreciated the City for pursuing development of a Food System Plan.

She invited the Commission to provide input and ask questions.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick said he was impressed with the diversity of the individuals and groups Ms. Potasnik has contacted to date.

Ms. Potasnik said the scope of the plan focuses on food security, food waste, and processors and producers. The scope served as a guide to ensure the Plan incorporates all those areas. She has spent considerable time on food security as well as connecting with local businesses about their respective business activities. The current focus has been information gathering to create a snapshot of current conditions. The next phase will speak to goals and strategies to achieve the desired outcome.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick said the goal is identifying ways the City can support access to food within the community and where there may be pitfalls preventing accessibility to food. The Plan should also include some suggestions on what actions the City could pursue to overcome issues. He noted that he has not received feedback from any constituent other than when he assists at the Thurston County Food Bank where he engages in conversations with patrons and receives much information about the status of food access. He believes the City is seeking actions that are currently lacking to help the community.

Commissioner Staff commented on a friend that has conveyed interest in forming a non-profit for raising funds for individuals in school to help pay for food and to ensure they have food security. The individual has launched a cookie business to sell cookies to raise funds for the program.

Commissioner Edwards thanked Ms. Potasnik for her efforts because there is a clear need for a Plan. She questioned how the Planning Commission could assist in the development of the Plan or achieving some of the goals.

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Chair Robbins said her interest is in expanding urban agriculture on a smaller scale intertwined with goods exchange rather than a monetary system. The Plan appears to be a good opportunity to help connect with other City goals, such as economic development and small business promotion utilizing food produced within the local food system. Additionally, successful activities should be sustained. The Plan should identify some issues people are facing and ideas for solving those issues.

Commissioner Edwards acknowledged that although there may be actions or activities outside the scope of the Plan, it would be important to document those issues to reflect that the issues were considered and discussed.

Ms. Potasnik queried members on any additional contacts to add to the list to engage. The Commission offered no additional names.

Ms. Potasnik asked about any observations of innovations that are not occurring in the City but employed in other cities for food systems.

Chair Robbins said she is aware of produce stands or pop-up farm stands in other communities.

Ms. Potasnik asked for any feedback on prior regional food system collaboration that for unknown reasons were not pursued or continued. Chair Robbins said she was not aware of any regional collaboration on food.

Commissioner Kirkpatrick said the City has designated LeMay as the primary pickup for recycling waste. Many cities have not pursued that action and have assumed the responsibility although many are not as effective. Many cities do not offer recycling services, which is why he is impressed with the level of service Tumwater provides.

Ms. Potasnik advised that the assessment is scheduled for review by the Commission on April 8, 2025. She encouraged Commissioners to send any comments, questions, and feedback.

**2025 COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN PERIODIC UPDATE –  
CLIMATE ELEMENT:**

Manager Jones Wood updated Commissioners on the Resilience Sub-Element of the Climate Element.

Manager Jones Wood reviewed current outreach efforts. Next week, the Thurston Climate Action Team is hosting a community assembly focusing on the Climate Element. Jurisdictional staff will attend the event to participate in a panel discussion on the Climate Element followed by a networking session to build connections and

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relationships with organizations that have not engaged in previous outreach efforts.

New state legislation requires that the Climate Element must consider environmental justice to avoid worsening environmental health disparities in the community.

The Resilience Sub-Element focuses on adaptation such as weatherizing and hardening homes and infrastructure, developing densely and in low-risk areas, improving and restoring habitat connectivity, and expanding access to local and culturally significant food.

Key definitions in the sub-element include **Adaptation**, a process of adjusting to new climate conditions in order to reduce risks to valued assets and people; **Climate Resilience** is an ongoing process of anticipating, preparing for, and adapting to changes in climate and minimizing negative impacts to natural systems, infrastructure, and communities; and **Passive Survivability** is building to ensure that residences will remain at a safe temperature for occupants if the power goes out and that they will overall require less power to keep at a regulated temperature. It can also entail building single-family residences with one room designed to maintain comfortable temperatures or multifamily residences with a designated common area designed to serve this same function. Building for passive survivability also reduces demand on local energy infrastructure.

Today, based on current trends, the world is facing an increase in temperature of 3°C. Tumwater is forecasted to be in the high emissions scenario. The climate hazard forecast is based on Climate Impacts Washington Group's work for each county as part of the Department of Commerce guidance to consider at the minimum, the data and to identify risks. By 2100 as a community in a high emissions scenario, the average summer temperature between June and August will reflect a 9.5°F increase causing 58.2 hot days over 90°F. Total annual precipitation is forecasted to increase with extreme annual rainfall. As a local jurisdiction, all efforts are necessary to ensure the community remains safe in the future. Sea level rise would affect Tumwater with Historical Park and the old brewery potentially impacted. Climate Inroads projects increased wildfires with 7 to 13 additional wildfire danger days annually by 2100.

Chair Robbins questioned the lack of any mention that one of the hazards of risk is social unrest and upheaval. Manager Jones Wood agreed that there is a strong correlation between extreme heat and violence and domestic violence. There will be many changes in response to climate change. Although not addressed in the Resilience

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Sub-Element, the issue is considered a side effect of climate hazards and should be included within the technical section (Part II of Climate Element).

Chair Robbins reiterated the need for the element to address social response to climate change to help prepare the community to potential social unrest and an increase in violence.

Manager Jones Wood asked a series of questions to consider for each goal (listed below):

1. Do you have any general or specific comments to share about any of the goals?
2. Are there shifts in action timelines that should be considered for each goal?
3. Do you foresee any unintended consequences or burdens associated with policies and/or actions under any of the goals?
4. Do you anticipate anyone in the Tumwater community being left out by any policy and/or action under any goal? If so, how could we fix that?
5. Using the Icons to see which actions are publicly identified priorities, which would/could impact you or the things you care about most? What do you expect that impact might be?
6. Do you have any additional thoughts to share related to any goal and its associated policies and actions?

**Goal CL-9 Ensure that buildings and energy infrastructure can accommodate renewable energy opportunities, keep the community safe, and can withstand and recover from extreme weather and natural hazards worsened by climate change.**

*Commissioner Kirkpatrick cited CL-9.1.1 Identify potential funding sources to bury existing power lines and associated infrastructure, or to make more resilient to climate impacts where burial is not feasible. He pointed out the City's ongoing current and past practice of undergrounding power lines that is not reflected in the action. He recommended revising the timeline to reflect that the action is ongoing.*

*Discussion followed on future funding sources.*

*Commissioner Kirkpatrick noted missing language under CL 9.3.2. Manager Jones Wood acknowledged that the missing language would be added.*

*Commissioner Kirkpatrick referred to conflicting issues in CL-9.3.4 in terms of reducing the amount of power while also meeting the needs of people. He questioned whether the City should mandate air*

*conditioning in all residential housing if the intent is to reduce emissions. Manager Jones Wood replied that the intent of “passive survivability” is to ensure at least one room is air conditioned for people to recover from heat stress. Commissioner Kirkpatrick acknowledged that CL-9.4.1 addresses passive survivability and that it should be noted as well in C-9.3.4, to avoid an entire air-conditioned home.*

*Chair Robbins questioned the definition of “redevelopment” in terms of large-scale redevelopment of an area or smaller scale remodeling. Manager Jones Wood said the intent of the language is for large-scale redevelopment rather than remodeling. Chair Robbins recommended including some type of threshold.*

**Goal CL-10 Increase preparedness for acute climate impacts and improve the resilience of Tumwater’s people and systems against climate hazards.**

**Goal CL-11 Preserve, protect, and sustain cultural sites and resources in alignment with the values and needs of Tribes, traditional stewards, and frontline communities.**

**Goal CL-12 With climate, growth, and environmental changes in mind, identify and elevate the protection of key habitats, ecosystem services, and wildlife corridors.**

*Commissioner Kirkpatrick asked whether the study as referenced in CL-12.4.1 is currently in progress or is scheduled. Manager Jones Wood advised that the study is not included in the current budget; however an assessment is scheduled to begin in 2026 for ecosystem service valuations that will include an assessment of existing conditions for critical areas and other ecosystems to ascertain the quality of habitat for fish and other species.*

*Chair Robbins suggested including a note in the element as to the status of funding for each action. Manager Jones Wood offered that supplemental information is under consideration to the Comprehensive Plan that could include information on the funding status for action items. She explained that most actions are not funded, as many of the actions are dependent upon state programs funded by the Climate Commitment Act.*

*Commissioner Edwards commented that many of the actions likely require partnerships with other jurisdictions as the impact would be minimal as a standalone action. She recommended emphasizing the importance of collaboration with other cities, tribes, and the state.*

**Goal CL-13 Ensure that zoning and development decisions support compact urban development, prevent displacement, and foster system-wide resilience, including a resilient local economy.**

*Commissioner Kirkpatrick recommended rephrasing CL-13.5 to reflect immediate action rather than the recommended timeline of 2030. Manager Jones Wood responded that the state has not provided a revised map of wildland-urban interface areas. Commissioner Kirkpatrick said he would hope that the City would act if a development occurred in a forested area. A map is unnecessary other than the map mandates the City's action. Deputy Director Medrud advised that the state committee responsible for developing the mapping is scheduled to begin meeting. He is a member of the committee as a local representative. He advised against any change to the action at this time until the state finalizes mapping. However, the City could adopt the Wildland-Urban Interface code as an option. The issue is mapping and how areas are identified that has not been resolved. Adopting the current code could codify the existing map, which is problematic for the City. He recommended not changing the date of the action at this time. There is also a cost of adopting current Wildland-Urban Interface code because of required protections to the structures at the time of construction. At this point, he recommends not changing the action or timeline to deal with one issue that could create another substantial issue unintentionally.*

**Goal CL-14 Ensure that the local transportation system, including infrastructure, routes, and non-motorized travel modes, fosters connectivity and can withstand and recover quickly from climate impacts.**

**Goal CL-15 Protect and improve water quality and availability.**

*Commissioner Kirkpatrick questioned the timeline of 2030 for CL-15.5 Assess current and projected future water demand and water storage. Manager Jones Wood noted that the timeline should reflect "ongoing" as assessment of future water demand and storage is an ongoing activity by the City.*

*Commissioner Kirkpatrick noted the usage of "lobby" and "advocate" and recommended including only "advocate" as "lobby" may have political implications. Staff affirmed the request.*

**Goal CL-16 Expand local food justice to address climate impacts and increase access to nourishing, affordable, culturally appropriate, and climate-friendly foods while expanding local use of composting.**

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Manager Jones Wood invited the Commission and the public to provide comments on the element to either Deputy Director Medrud or at [compplan@ci.tumwater,wa.us](mailto:compplan@ci.tumwater,wa.us).

Manager Jones Wood shared additional information on planned user guides of the Comprehensive Plan explaining the benefits of the Plan to the public.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Deputy Director Medrud requested feedback from the Commission on the proposal for reducing the membership of the Planning Commission.

Chair Robbins recommended not reducing the membership to less than seven members. Commissioner Kirkpatrick noted the addition of other advisory bodies and the difficulty of recruiting new members. Commissioner Staff agreed that a membership of seven is more reasonable recognizing the difficulty of filling vacant positions. Commissioners commented on the importance of also ensuring the entire community is represented by the Commission.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next meeting is a joint Transportation Plan tour with the City Council on February 25, 2025 at 5 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Commissioner Edwards moved, seconded by Commissioner Staff, to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President  
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