



CITY OF
TUMWATER

**PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA**

**Online via Zoom and In Person at
Tumwater Fire Department
Headquarters, Training Room, 311 Israel
Rd. SW, Tumwater, WA 98501**

**Tuesday, September 09, 2025
7:00 PM**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Changes to Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Draft Tumwater Planning Commission Minutes September 24, 2024
 - b. Draft Tumwater Planning Commission Minutes October 8, 2024
 - c. Draft Tumwater Planning Commission Minutes November 12, 2024
5. Commissioner's Reports
6. Manager's Report
7. Public Comment
8. Food System Plan – Resolution No. R2025-015
9. 2025 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update – Plan Introduction
10. Next Meeting Date - 09/23/2025
11. Adjourn

Meeting Information

The public are welcome to attend in person, by telephone or online via Zoom.

Watch Online

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_M5II2cT9QECbQeSMg4PPvQ

Listen by Telephone

Call (253) 215-8782, listen for the prompts, and enter the Webinar ID 884 3245 8093 and Passcode 567931.

Public Comment

The public is invited to attend the meeting and offer comment. The public may register in advance for this webinar to provide comment:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_M5II2cT9QECbQeSMg4PPvQ

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

The public may also submit comments prior to the meeting by sending an email to: cdd@ci.tumwater.wa.us. Please send the comments by 1:00 p.m. on the date of the meeting. Comments are submitted directly to the Commission Members and will not be read individually into the record of the meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact Planning Manager, Brad Medrud at (360) 754-4180 or bmedrud@ci.tumwater.wa.us.

Post Meeting

Audio of the meeting will be recorded and later available by request, please email CityClerk@ci.tumwater.wa.us.

Accommodations

The City of Tumwater takes pride in ensuring that people with disabilities are able to take part in, and benefit from, the range of public programs, services, and activities offered by the City. To request an accommodation or alternate format of communication, please contact the City Clerk by calling (360) 252-5488 or email CityClerk@ci.tumwater.wa.us. For vision or hearing impaired services, please contact the Washington State Relay Services at 7-1-1 or 1-(800)-833-6384. To contact the City's ADA Coordinator directly, call (360) 754-4128 or email ADACoordinator@ci.tumwater.wa.us.

What is the Planning Commission?

The Tumwater Planning Commission is a citizen advisory commission that is appointed by and advisory to the City Council on the preparation and amendment of land use plans and implementing ordinances such as zoning. Actions by the Planning Commission are not final decisions; they are Commission recommendations to the City Council who must ultimately make the final decision. If you have any questions or suggestions on ways the Commission can serve you better, please contact the Community Development Department at (360) 754-4180.

Decorum Statement

Welcome to the Planning Commission meeting. We thank you for attending.

The City Council encourages community engagement in local government and provides a variety of ways to participate.

The Chair of the Planning Commission will be responsible for conducting orderly and efficient meetings within the scheduled time. To accomplish that, the Chair will maintain order and decorum and can regulate inappropriate debate, repetitious discussion, and disruptive behavior when needed.

The Chair will recognize those that wish to speak and may limit the time allowed for individual comments. City staff will record questions and comments during the meeting. If an issue or question cannot be addressed during the meeting, City staff will address the issue or respond to the question by following up with the individual.

We respectfully request that attendees refrain from disruptions during the meeting and comply with decorum rules.

Thank you for participating.

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CONVENE: 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Elizabeth Robbins and Commissioners Grace Edwards, Terry Kirkpatrick, Gina Kotek, Brandon Staff, and Anthony Varela.

Absent: Commissioners Malissa Paulsen and Cody Perez.

Staff: Planning Manager Brad Medrud, Housing and Land Use Planner Erica Smith-Erickson, and Sustainability Coordinator Alyssa Jones Wood.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR: Chair Robbins invited nominations for Chair.

MOTION: **Commissioner Varela moved, seconded by Commissioner Staff, to nominate Elizabeth Robbins to serve as 2025 Chair.**

VOTE OF AFFIRMATION: **By a unanimous vote of affirmation, Commissioner Robbins was elected to serve as 2025 Chair.**

Chair Robbins invited nominations for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Varela nominated Brandon Staff to serve as 2025 Vice Chair.

VOTE OF AFFIRMATION: **By a unanimous vote of affirmation, Commissioner Staff was elected to serve as 2025 Vice Chair.**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
JUNE 11, 2024:**

MOTION: **Commissioner Varela moved, seconded by Commissioner Staff, to approve the June 11, 2024 minutes as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS: Commissioner Varela advised of his plans to resign from the Commission at the end of the year. He is appreciative of the time he was able to serve. He is exploring several other options next year and will continue to be engaged within the community.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Medrud reported on the recent addition of Associate Planner Dana Bowers. Ms. Bowers previously worked at Thurston County responsible for regional planning efforts and will join the City on December 2, 2024.

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PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no public comments.

PUBLIC HEARING:

**DEVELOPMENT CODE
ADMINISTRATION** Chair Robbins outlined the format for the public hearing and public testimony.

(ORDINANCE NO. O2024-005): Chair Robbins opened the public hearing at 7:12 p.m.

Manager Medrud provided background on the proposed changes to Development Code Administration.

In May 2023, Governor Inslee signed Senate Bill 5290 modifying the Washington State Land Use Permit Act to increase time limits and predictability of local project development application reviews. The act provides regulatory requirements for all project reviews under the Growth Management Act for applicable cities and counties to standardize rules across the state. The effective date of the new law is January 1, 2025 requiring the City to adopt an ordinance replacing existing provisions to meet new state requirements by the end of the year.

The public hearing is an opportunity for the community to provide comments on the proposed ordinance. The scope of the ordinance is to modify Title 14 Development Code Administration, as well as modifying other provisions in the Tumwater Municipal Code.

A new provision included in the ordinance is the introduction of three types of land use permit applications. Currently, Title 14 lacks any provisions addressing different types of applications. Type I applications are land use permits that do not require environmental review, such as property with no critical areas that would trigger a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review, such as a tree permit or short plat. Type II permits are similar to Type I except environmental review is required. Both types of permits are administratively approved by the Director of Community Development who serves as the final authority in terms of issuing a decision. An appeal process is embedded in the ordinance for all permit types. Type III permits are land use permits that require a hearing before the hearing examiner. The hearing examiner issues the final decision, which is appealable to Thurston County Superior Court.

The City's review process is initiated through a preapplication process of either a feasibility review (optional) or a preapplication meeting with the Development Review Committee. The intent of the process is to identify with the applicant all potential permits the project may be

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required to obtain and all submittal requirements. The step is important because it assists in expediting the permit review process for a project. The second part of the process is the submittal of the application. The type of application determines the required materials for submittal to assist staff in issuing a determination that the application is complete. The next step is application review and dependent on the type of application, a notice of application is issued.

Rules are established to ensure application materials are transmitted to affected jurisdictions or agencies with time limits for comments. SEPA review is also part of the application review process. Following completion of application review, a decision is issued. The permit decision process depends on the type of project. The last step of the process is the permit appeal process.

The new structure of Title 14 replaces the existing structure of Title 14. The proposal is intended to be more intuitive. The most important change is the definition of project permit. SB 5290 amended the definitions in the RCW to eliminate building permits from the list of definitions, which is important as the new requirements for land use-related permits are defined as any action that requires approval from Title 18, Title 17, and Title 16. Title 15 includes provisions applicable to buildings and construction guided by another set of RCW requirements for building permits with a separate process. Previously, Title 14 included building permits and other types of permits that were imbedded in other sections of the code. The proposal limits Title 14 provisions moving forward.

Another important change in the new law is the number of days the City can review particular types of applications. Additionally, a monetary penalty is applied if the City fails to meet timelines of either a 10% or 20% refund to the applicant. The definition of time limits was revised to reflect the clock beginning the day of application submittal to the date a decision is issued.

Other revisions include consolidation of public noticing requirements into one section. The proposal outlines situations that might alter a proposal substantially. All permit application expirations are consolidated in one section of the code, as well as adding language addressing land use code interpretations. Currently, the City employs a process that is not codified; however, in most jurisdictions director decisions or other administrative actions are standard processes.

Manager Medrud reviewed the four application types:

- Type I applications do not require SEPA review. Examples include boundary line adjustments, critical area requests for

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determination of applicability, final plats, home occupation permits, land clearing permits, lot consolidations, plat time extensions, preliminary short plats, preliminary SEPA threshold determinations (if Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required), reasonable use exemptions, shoreline exemptions, sign permits, temporary use permits, tree permits, and variances (administrative).

- Type II are Type I permits requiring SEPA environmental review.
- Type III permits require a hearing examiner decision. Examples are binding site plans (phased), conditional use permits, planned unit developments, plat alternations with hearing, plat vacations, preliminary plats, replats, shoreline conditional use permits, shoreline substantial development permits, shoreline variances, site-specific rezones not requiring a comprehensive plan amendment, and variances (zoning).
- Type IV permits are development code amendments, comprehensive plan map and text amendments, development agreements, rezones requiring comprehensive plan amendments, and shoreline master program amendments.

Manager Medrud reviewed Table 14.04.020(A) Decision and Appeal Authority describing the final decision and appeal authorities for each land use permit application type. He reviewed public noticing requirements based on the type of permit.

Table 14.04.030 Land Use Permit Application Review Times for each permit type include:

- Type I - 65 days
 - Final Plat: 30 days (TMC 17.24.050)
- Type II - 100 days
- Type III – 170 days

Preliminary Plat: 90 days (RCW 58.17.140)

Manager Medrud reviewed the application review process, which reflects many changes based on new state law. One change is for SEPA and Land Use reviews to occur concurrently. Should an applicant require multiple permits to construct a project, all applications are combined under one review with the timeline at the higher level. A section was added for that provision.

Additional revisions not involving Title 14 include the City's hearing examiner code. Some changes are proposed for the type of cases the hearing examiner would consider. Another change is to the City's multifamily tax exemption section. Under state law, a contract is approved as part of the multifamily tax exemption either by the City

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Council or administratively. Currently, a multifamily tax exemption is approved by the Community Development Director except for the contract which is approved by the City Council. New state law enables the Community Development Director to approve the contract, which is included in the proposed ordinance. The proposed change does not preclude the Council's ability to continue discussions on the overall multifamily exemption program scheduled to expire at the end of 2026 in the City.

Within the buildings and construction section, a major change is requiring a SEPA determination and land use approvals before applying for a complete building permit application. Provisions are included enabling the Director to waive requirement to allow for the submittal concurrently. A new section was included on how to determine completeness of a project. Within the zoning section, the proposal both updates and adds a new chapter on site plan review. A new section to Chapter 18.60 on text amendments and rezones addresses the approval process of the Commission.

Staff recommends the Commission forward a recommendation to the City Council approving the ordinance with pending changes. Staff received one letter from the public, which was emailed to the Commission earlier in the day. The issues addressed in the comment letter require more review by the City Council and staff. Staff recommends approval of the ordinance pending the outcome of that review by the Council.

With there being no public comments, Chair Robbins closed the public hearing at 7:36 p.m.

MOTION:

Commissioner Staff moved, seconded by Commissioner Varela, to recommend the City Council approve Ordinance No. O2024-005 pending further review of the comment letter dated November 11, 2024 from Chris Carlson. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

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

Sustainability Coordinator Jones Wood presented draft goals for the Climate Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Following finalization of the goals, the document will be released for public review. The draft document includes all goals, policies, and implementation actions.

The draft adheres to the requirements in House Bill 1181 requiring the City to adopt a climate change element that includes both climate mitigation and climate resilience sub-elements, as well as consideration of environmental justice throughout the element.

Community engagement to date includes establishment of a Climate

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Policy Advisory Team comprised of members of affected communities, key stakeholders, residents, and interested parties. The team meets frequently and provides feedback. An open house was hosted at ASHHO with approximately 60 individuals attending. An online open house was hosted from August 15, 2024 to October 31, 2024 offering the same information as the in-person open house.

Other outreach has included information presented to the Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Community Workgroup, meetings with Thurston Climate Action Team's (TCAT) community organizer, hosting informational tables at the Thurston County Food Bank to encourage participation in the online open house, sharing information with the South Sound Asian and Pacific Islanders Coalition, and updating the City's website and social media posts on ways to participate in the update process for the Comprehensive Plan.

Coordinator Jones Wood cited an example of a goal, policy, and action:

Goal: Increase preparedness for acute climate impacts and improve population and system resilience to climate hazards.

Policy: Develop resources to mitigate the risks posed by extreme heat.

Action: Explore the feasibility of implementing and maintaining a program to distribute cooling units and install heat pumps, prioritizing households with residents (e.g., low-income seniors) most vulnerable to extreme temperature events.

The Climate Element includes four overarching goals:

- Ensure environmental justice by providing all residents an equitable opportunity to learn about climate impacts, influence policy decisions, and take actions to enhance community resilience.
- Increase the City's capacity to implement climate action priorities.
- Address the fact that changing weather and climate patterns driven by human-generated emissions will impact every aspect of life in Tumwater, and plan for impacts such as increased heat, wildfire, and flooding while working to reduce local emissions.
- Create a vibrant city that fosters entrepreneurship, active transportation, sense of place, and provides a safe environment for our coming climate challenges.

Coordinator Jones Wood invited feedback and suggestions on the overarching goals. No comments were offered by Commissioners.

Coordinator Jones Wood reported the state requires the Resilience Sub-

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Element to include at least one goal for each of the 10 sectors:

- Agriculture & Food Systems
- Buildings & Energy
- Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Emergency Management
- Health & Well-being
- Ecosystems
- Transportation
- Waste Management
- Water Resources
- Zoning & Development

The Resilience Sub-Element combines sectors into categories with assigned goals:

- Buildings & Energy, Health & Well-being, Emergency Management, & Cultural Resource:
 - Ensure that buildings and energy infrastructure, including generation and transmission, can accommodate renewable energy opportunities, keep the community safe, and can withstand and recover from extreme weather and natural hazards worsened by climate change.
 - Increase preparedness for acute climate impacts and improve population and system resilience to climate hazards.
 - Preserve, protect, and sustain cultural sites and resources in alignment with the values and needs of Tribes, traditional stewards, and frontline communities.

Commissioner Varela asked about efforts between the City and Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to discuss options or plans for reducing the number of power outages caused by wind and severe weather storms. Manager Medrud replied that any development of a certain size is required to underground utilities to help reduce and eliminate power outages. City Operations staff are coordinating frequently with PSE staff for vegetation management in right-of-ways. Coordinator Jones Wood reported on ongoing conversations with PSE staff for solar-plus storage feasibility assessments for City Hall and the Tumwater Library. A solar-plus storage feasibility assessment will be initiated for both fire stations for back-up power. Back-up power at the library is important because the library serves as the City's only heating and cooling shelter. The main fire station also serves as the City's Emergency Operations Center and battery back-up storage would reduce the need to run fossil-fueled generators.

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Manager Medrud added that staff is also meeting with PSE to discuss options for expediting the review process for repairs to some of its infrastructure that has been damaged over time.

Chair Robbins asked about any outreach to tribes for the Resilience Sub-Element with respect to requests or concerns. Coordinator Jones Wood advised that a tribal consultation process was undertaken for the Comprehensive Plan update. A response was received from the Nisqually Indian Tribe. The Mayor is working with the Tribal Chair to coordinate meetings. Additionally, a Squaxin Island Tribe member is a member of the Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative Community Workgroup.

Manager Medrud said the tribes also receive notices of development reviews and notice of applications. The City typically receives comments from the Squaxin Island Tribe and the Nisqually Indian Tribe on cultural resources. The Climate Resilience Sub-Element goals align with recognizing and protecting cultural resources.

- Ecosystems, Zoning & Development, Economic Development, and Transportation:
 - With climate, growth, and environmental changes in mind, identify and elevate the protection of key habitats, ecosystem services, and wildlife corridors.
 - Ensure that zoning and development decisions support compact urban development and system-wide resilience, including a resilient local economy.
 - 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.
- Water Resources, Waste Management & Agriculture, & Food Systems:
 - Protect water quality and availability.
 - Expand local food justice in ways that address climate impacts and increase access to nourishing, affordable, culturally appropriate, and climate-friendly foods while encouraging waste reduction in all building and business types (including deconstruction).

Coordinator Jones Wood noted that language was recommended for inclusion in the Resilience Sub-Element goal that speaks to rights for water for residents; however, it was not included because the City is legally required to serve all customers.

Coordinator Jones Wood advised that the Thurston Climate Mitigation

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Plan includes 72 actions accepted by the City Council in 2021 to guide efforts for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled. Many of the actions will be revised to include more emissions reductions than in the current plan to achieve net-zero established by the state by 2050. Not all 72 actions will be included in the sub-element; however, many actions will be updated to reflect current requirements.

Chair Robbins inquired as to whether the extent of any gaps has been identified. Coordinator Jones Wood said the current requirement is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 85% by 2050 to achieve net-zero and compensate the difference through payment of offsets. However, the planet's atmosphere would not experience a reduction through offsets. The goal pertains to the boundaries of Tumwater except it does not account for consumption as the state does not utilize a consumption-based emissions inventor; however, agriculture, manure management, tree cover loss, forestland conversions, and other actions are included that affect emissions within the City's boundaries.

Coordinator Jones Wood reviewed preliminary draft goals for the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Sub-Element.

The Commission will be briefed on actions, policies, and more specific details on implementation of higher-level goals. Staff review continues on the draft versions followed by posting on the City's website for public comments.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is scheduled on November 26, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT: **Commissioner Staff moved, seconded by Commissioner Varela, to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

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

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Dana Bowers, Associate Planner
DATE: September 9, 2025
SUBJECT: Food System Plan – Resolution No. R2025-015

1) Recommended Action:

Set a public hearing date of September 23, 2025, for Resolution No. R2025-015.

2) Background:

To address community concerns about food insecurity at the local level, the City Council included the preparation of a Food System Plan in the 2024 and 2025 Long Range Planning Work Program.

City staff have been working with a consultant to prepare a plan that develops a strategy to promote providing healthy food for all members of the community, reducing food waste, and supporting food production and processing.

The plan identifies strengths and gaps in the current food system, defines goals and policies to direct the work, and creates a strategy to support improving local food systems. Implementation will focus on eliminating barriers, addressing gaps in the current system, producing solutions to implement at appropriate scale, and identifying how to maintain and update resource materials with jurisdictional and community partners.

3) Alternatives:

☐ None

4) Attachments:

- A. Staff Memorandum
- B. Resolution No.R2025-015
- C. Food Systems Plan
- D. Presentation

STAFF REPORT

Date: September 9, 2025
To: Planning Commission
From: Dana Bowers, Associate Planner



Resolution No. R2025-015 Food System Plan

1 – Background

The City Council approved the development of a Food System Plan as part of the 2024 and 2025 Long Range Planning Work Programs. The intent of the Plan is to review the current food landscape in Tumwater and create a strategy to improve outcomes for the community. The City hired Rebeca Potasnik as a consultant to assist with the development of the Plan.

Because the scope of food security is broad, the project focuses on developing strategies that focus on improving outcomes for the following goals:

- How to provide healthy food for all members of the community;
- Reduce food waste; and
- Support local food production and processing.

The Planning Commission was briefed on the Plan on November 26, 2024, and conducted work sessions on February 11, 2025, April 22, 2025, and July 8, 2025.

The purpose of the September 9, 2025, work session is to review Resolution No. R2025-015 and the Food System Plan and to schedule a public hearing on September 23, 2025, to receive community input on the resolution and the plan.

2 – Methodology

All steps in developing the Food Systems Plan followed the principles below, which align with Tumwater's Vision and Values:

- **Equity.** A food system should support food security with an emphasis on those community members that experience the greatest inequities.
- **Sustainability.** A balance between environmental health, economic profitability, and social equity creates a resilient food system that meets current food needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- **Stability.** All community members should have reliable access to sufficient, safe, appropriate, and nutritious food, even in the face of unexpected challenges.
- **Resiliency.** The food system should maintain its functionality and continue to provide food security and nutrition under various adverse conditions.
- **Efficacy.** The audience for the plan is Tumwater, therefore, the objectives and actions in this plan will be the areas where this level of government can have the most impact.

3 – Challenges and Opportunities

Seven sectors were selected to provide a comprehensive yet streamlined framework for analyzing the food system in the Community Food Assessment. More information about each sector can be found in the Assessment. They follow established models from other food system assessments, while being adapted to Tumwater’s local context. This structure captures the full cycle of the food system in a way that is relevant for city action and consistent with best practices. Challenges were identified for each of the sectors as a basis to identify needs and create goals for the Plan and are included in Chapter 2 of the Plan.

The chart below provides a summary of the challenges identified in each sector from Chapter 2 of the Plan and the opportunities that can alleviate the challenges from the Opportunities in Chapter 3. Consideration of the challenges should be considered with the key developments and current collaborations & resources in Chapter 2 of the Plan. In a similar manner, the opportunities should be considered with their specific goals and policies to provide the necessary context.

In some cases, there are no opportunities assigned because the identified challenge is not within the City of Tumwater’s authority to change or influence. Also, one of the limitations of this format is that while many opportunities align directly with a specific challenge, some respond more broadly to multiple cross-cutting challenges identified in the Plan. As such, not every opportunity has a one-to-one pairing in the chart, though all are grounded in the Community Food Assessment findings.

A. Land Use & Conservation

Challenges	Opportunities
Housing markets favor single family developments, increasing the value of land with access to utilities in urban growth areas and driving the pressure for development.	3.1.2. Explore partnerships to improve access to land, water, and infrastructure for food producers by supporting shared-use models, facilitating connections to underutilized private or public land, and leveraging programs such as land leases and technical assistance.
High farmland costs in the region create barriers for new and beginning farmers.	<p>1.4.3. Explore including food access as a design consideration for new developments including access to food retailers and spaces for urban agriculture/community gardens.</p> <p>3.1.3. Review existing land use regulations to identify barriers that disproportionately limit food production opportunities for low-income households and those on smaller lots.</p> <p>3.1.9. Explore opportunities to connect culinary entrepreneurship and food system innovation with arts and cultural events and technology funding streams, including vertical farming and agritourism.</p> <p>3.2.1. Partner with the Community Farm Land Trust and Thurston County to explore mechanisms such as urban growth area swaps and farmland easements for conserving high-value agricultural land adjacent to Tumwater's Urban Growth Area, while supporting farmland transitions to new farmers from diverse backgrounds.</p>
The Growth Management Act prioritizes dense development in urban areas to protect rural area, which does not always readily accommodate food production in urban zones.	<p>3.2.2. Promote and expand access to food production on suitable underutilized lands within city limits by supporting programs such as those offered by community-based organizations, where feasible, and consistent with land use and environmental constraints.</p> <p>3.4.6. Consider local policy options, such as permit fee reductions, for food producers operating at small scale or using conservation practices.</p>

Challenges	Opportunities
Tumwater must continually navigate tensions between competing urban land use needs for housing, industrial and commercial development, conservation, and agriculture.	<p>1.4.4. Explore opportunities to allow temporary or pop-up food distribution sites (e.g., food share hubs, mutual aid stands, gleaning events) through clear guidelines and permitting processes that balance flexibility with neighborhood and safety considerations.</p> <p>3.2.1. Partner with the Community Farm Land Trust and Thurston County to explore mechanisms such as urban growth area swaps and farmland easements for conserving high-value agricultural land adjacent to Tumwater’s Urban Growth Area, while supporting farmland transitions to new farmers from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>3.2.3. Consider reviewing and amending development regulations to allow small-scale farm stands, including in residential neighborhoods, to support local growers and increase access to fresh food.</p> <p>1.4.1. Encourage walkable and bikeable neighborhoods with access to fresh food outlets, including farmers markets and grocery stores to reduce food deserts.</p> <p>3.2.4. Map locations where city-owned or managed resources (e.g., land, water access, infrastructure) are currently used for food production. Use this data to inform land use planning, resource allocation, and future urban agriculture initiatives.</p>

B. Processors & Producers

Challenges	Opportunities
High farmland costs limit access for new and beginning farmers.	<p>1.3.1. Engage with Thurston Conservation District to support community garden expansion, GIS studies for urban agriculture land identification, soil testing, and code review.</p> <p>3.1.7. Develop a comprehensive toolkit for aspiring and current local food producers, including farmstands, community gardens, p-patches, and backyard poultry—detailing permit requirements, best practices, available resources, and contacts for technical assistance.</p>

Challenges	Opportunities
Access to affordable water remains a significant barrier for urban farms and gardens.	<p>1.5.1. Advocate for regional funding and coordinate cross-jurisdictional planning, investments, and grant applications for shared infrastructure.</p> <p>3.1.2. Explore partnerships to improve access to land, water, and infrastructure for food producers by supporting shared-use models, facilitating connections to underutilized private or public land, and leveraging programs such as land leases and technical assistance.</p> <p>3.1.4. Support water access and explore potential rate reductions for urban agriculture, community gardens, and school gardens such as stormwater fee waivers, fire hydrant access, and subsidized or waived system development charges—recognizing their role in strengthening food security, fostering education and community resilience, supporting local economies, and contributing to emergency preparedness.</p>
Tariffs may increase the cost or reduce availability of critical farming inputs.	

Challenges	Opportunities
Agricultural employers report difficulty hiring and retaining workers.	<p>3.5.1. Foster workforce development and support new farmers by continuing to support educational activities through the Tumwater School District, including the Tumwater FRESH Program at Isabella Bush Park, alongside partnerships with New Market Skills Center and South Puget Sound Community College to build a skilled food and agriculture workforce.</p> <p>3.5.2. Foster workforce development and encourage new farmers by supporting programs such as Thurston Conservation District’s FarmLink and Farm My Yard programs and creating pathways for new farmers to access land, training, and technical support.</p> <p>3.5.3. Foster workforce development and support new farmers by supporting community-based organizations and existing commercial kitchens, such as Enterprise for Equity, ASHHO, and Our Community Kitchen, to offer business incubation and mentorship opportunities for beginning food processors and producers.</p> <p>3.5.4. Promote the economic viability of small-scale farming by supporting efforts to make small-scale and urban farming financially sustainable by exploring ways to reduce regulatory barriers, promoting cooperative models, connecting growers with local markets and procurement opportunities, and exploring access to business support services, microgrants, and relevant state or federal funding.</p> <p>3.5.5. Promote the economic viability of small-scale farming by encouraging creative models such as agritourism, culinary arts partnerships, and vertical farming that align with local zoning and community values.</p>

Challenges	Opportunities
Small-scale farmers often lack access to subsidies, which are typically tied to acreage or production volume, and time-intensive application processes often outweigh the benefit.	1.3.1. Engage with Thurston Conservation District to support community garden expansion, GIS studies for urban agriculture land identification, soil testing, and code review.
Many processors and producers lack access to affordable cold storage, which limits the ability to scale or diversify their operations.	1.5.1. Advocate for regional funding and coordinate cross-jurisdictional planning, investments, and grant applications for shared infrastructure. 3.1.1. Collaborate with local, regional, and state partners, such as those involved in the Craft and Warehouse districts, to support and promote opportunities for local producers to access and expand markets.

C. Retail & Distribution

Challenges	Opportunities
Food costs have increased, and fresh local food is harder to access.	1.3.2. Expand partnerships for edible landscaping and urban fruit and nut tree planting in public spaces including parks and along pedestrian corridors with scheduled community care and harvest days. 1.3.3. Build relationships with homeowner associations to better understand their needs and to provide support for rule changes that would allow home food gardens and remove barriers to climate-resilient landscaping which conserves water for food production. 1.5.4. Support existing pop-up food distribution efforts as part of community emergency response capacity.

Challenges	Opportunities
The Tumwater Farmers Market is under-resourced, with limited operation and an outdated web presence.	<p>1.1.5. Use Tumwater’s communication channels to increase access to and visibility of food assistance programs (e.g., food banks/pantries, SNAP, Market Match, SUN Bucks) and to promote food bank satellite locations and donations.</p> <p>3.4.5. Strengthen local markets through support of local food hubs by educating and engaging the community with the model and explore providing distribution sites on city-owned property.</p>
Federal programs like Farm to School face funding uncertainties.	
Cold storage capacity remains limited across the distribution network.	<p>1.5.1. Advocate for regional funding and coordinate cross-jurisdictional planning, investments, and grant applications for shared infrastructure.</p> <p>1.5.2. Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by collaborating with Thurston County Emergency Management to integrate food security into disaster preparedness plans including identification of nearest non-impacted supply chains and ensuring food storage, recovery, and redistribution plans are part of emergency response frameworks.</p> <p>3.3.1. Support regional partnerships to develop shared-use food infrastructure, such as processing, cold storage, and commercial kitchen facilities, by leveraging city assets and pursuing state, federal, and philanthropic funding opportunities. Evaluate the feasibility of repurposing existing sites in Tumwater, including underutilized or public facilities, where appropriate.</p> <p>3.3.2. Explore strategic investments and partnerships with food hubs to expand regional aggregation and distribution capacity that supports small- and mid-scale producers and improves food access.</p>

Challenges	Opportunities
Direct-to-consumer retailers, such as farmers markets, food hubs, and farms, face barriers to accepting electronic benefit transfer (EBT), including administrative burdens and technology costs.	<p>3.1.1. Collaborate with local, regional, and state partners, such as those involved in the Craft and Warehouse districts, to support and promote opportunities for local producers to access and expand markets.</p> <p>3.4.8. Encourage farm-to-table connections by collaborating with regional food system partners to support initiatives that help local restaurants, bakeries, caterers, and butchers access regional ingredients. This may include promotional campaigns, networking events, or technical assistance</p>

D. Waste Reduction & Recovery

Challenges	Opportunities
Enforcement of the Organics Management Law relies on self-reporting, with no immediate penalties for non-compliance.	<p>2.1.4. Promote food waste reduction among local businesses through campaigns that highlight cost savings, environmental benefits, and compliance with Washington’s commercial organics recycling requirements—while encouraging participation from businesses of all sizes, including those not subject to the mandate.</p> <p>2.3.1. Ensure composting systems are used at all Tumwater public facilities and programs.</p>

Challenges	Opportunities
Leadership changes have slowed regional coordination on food waste diversion and rescue initiatives.	<p>1.5.1. Advocate for regional funding and coordinate cross-jurisdictional planning, investments, and grant applications for shared infrastructure.</p> <p>1.5.3. Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by developing and coordinating policies and staffing models for rapid response food systems during future crises, including sourcing, safety, and volunteer mobilization.</p> <p>2.1.3. Collaborate with regional partners to develop and distribute customized educational materials and mailers to residents and businesses focused on source reduction.</p> <p>2.2.1. Participate in and promote Food Waste Prevention Week and related events at the Tumwater and regional level.</p> <p>2.3.3. Reinvigorate regional food rescue initiatives by identifying historic and resident-led models and new opportunities.</p> <p>2.3.4. Support the creation of a regional, centralized database or platform to connect food waste producers with organizations that can redistribute food to those in need.</p>
Inadequate cold storage capacity limits food rescue operations.	<p>1.5.1. Advocate for regional funding and coordinate cross-jurisdictional planning, investments, and grant applications for shared infrastructure.</p>

Challenges	Opportunities
Edible food is often discarded due to cost or logistical barriers when supply chains fail.	<p>1.5.1. Advocate for regional funding and coordinate cross-jurisdictional planning, investments, and grant applications for shared infrastructure.</p> <p>1.5.3. Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by developing and coordinating policies and staffing models for rapid response food systems during future crises, including sourcing, safety, and volunteer mobilization.</p> <p>2.2.4. Include food waste prevention as a component of relevant grant funding criteria such as neighborhood matching grants.</p> <p>2.2.5. Offer workshops on food storage, preservation, and meal planning to help individuals and businesses reduce food waste.</p> <p>3.3.2. Explore strategic investments and partnerships with food hubs to expand regional aggregation and distribution capacity that supports small- and mid-scale producers and improves food access.</p>
Packaging contamination prevents some food waste from being composted.	<p>2.1.2. Partner with Thurston County Public Works and food assistance organizations to reduce edible food waste at transfer stations by creating clear donation guidance and outreach for truckers and other supply chain actors, addressing common barriers like time pressure, lack of information, and logistical challenges.</p> <p>2.3.2. Partner with Thurston County Public Works to educate businesses and residents on proper composting practices to reduce contamination and increase participation.</p>
Short meal periods in K–12 schools lead to uneaten food and higher waste.	<p>2.1.1. Support local schools to reduce food waste by providing a minimum of 20 minutes of seated lunch time, which improves nutrition and reduces plate waste.</p>

Challenges	Opportunities
Food diversion in schools often depends on individual staff initiatives rather than system-wide practices.	1.2.2. Promote partner led, community-based initiatives such as cooking classes, gardening workshops, and nutrition education tailored to underserved populations.
Most Tumwater schools rely on reheating and serving pre-prepared meals which produce more packaging waste than scratch cooking.	3.4.1. Educate and engage the community on the value of local food by coordinating public education efforts highlighting the health, environmental, and economic benefits of local food systems, including the role of regenerative agriculture in climate resilience and carbon sequestration.

E. Access & Security

Challenges	Opportunities
Rising food prices strain household budgets and food access.	<p>1.1.3. Support farmers to become certified to accept EBT/SNAP benefits from customers.</p> <p>1.1.6. Continue to support food access through senior meal programs, city-sponsored events, and youth programs where allowable, and prioritize the inclusion of fresh, seasonal, and culturally relevant local foods, particularly in services benefiting low-income or vulnerable populations.</p> <p>1.4.4. Explore opportunities to allow temporary or pop-up food distribution sites (e.g., food share hubs, mutual aid stands, gleaning events) through clear guidelines and permitting processes that balance flexibility with neighborhood and safety considerations.</p> <p>1.5.4. Support existing pop-up food distribution efforts as part of community emergency response capacity.</p> <p>3.4.7. Assess opportunities to align City purchasing practices where applicable with values-based criteria such as local sourcing, environmental sustainability, and equity. Where Tumwater’s procurement is limited, promote public awareness of these values through communications and support similar efforts by partner agencies, when feasible.</p>

Awareness of available resources and programs is low.

1.1.2. Work with regional partners to make free and subsidized community garden plots available citywide and prioritize funding for low-income households.

1.1.5. Use Tumwater’s communication channels to increase access to and visibility of food assistance programs (e.g., food banks/pantries, SNAP, Market Match, SUN Bucks) and to promote food bank satellite locations and donations.

1.4.2. Support siting the Tumwater Farmers Market near a community gathering area.

1.4.5. Develop and maintain a GIS map of free food pantries, neighborhood-based food distribution sites, food bank satellites, and other free food distribution sites to support coordination, identify service gaps, and improve visibility for those seeking food assistance.

1.5.6. Map existing food production, storage, and distribution resources within Tumwater to support internal planning and emergency response coordination.

1.5.7. Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by supporting increased financial resources for community-led organizations working to enhance food security in Tumwater and the surrounding region.

2.2.2. Offer community compost giveaways and food waste education events through the Department of Parks and Recreation and other community programs.

2.2.3. Create and promote engaging social media campaigns and signage to inform the public about food waste prevention best practices and available composting programs

3.1.5. Facilitate networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities among local growers, processors, and market operators to strengthen community connections and business viability.

3.1.7. Develop a comprehensive toolkit for aspiring and current local food producers, including farmstands, community gardens, p-patches, and backyard poultry—detailing permit

Challenges	Opportunities
	requirements, best practices, available resources, and contacts for technical assistance.
Culturally appropriate food options are limited.	3.1.7. Develop a comprehensive toolkit for aspiring and current local food producers, including farmstands, community gardens, p-patches, and backyard poultry—detailing permit requirements, best practices, available resources, and contacts for technical assistance.
Donations from large food companies may include highly processed or near-expired items, which do not always meet nutritional or cultural needs.	
Regional food assistance efforts lack coordination.	<p>1.5.1. Advocate for regional funding and coordinate cross-jurisdictional planning, investments, and grant applications for shared infrastructure.</p> <p>1.5.2. Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by collaborating with Thurston County Emergency Management to integrate food security into disaster preparedness plans including identification of nearest non-impacted supply chains and ensuring food storage, recovery, and redistribution plans are part of emergency response frameworks.</p> <p>1.5.3. Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by developing and coordinating policies and staffing models for rapid response food systems during future crises, including sourcing, safety, and volunteer mobilization.</p> <p>1.5.5. Assess cold storage needs and explore opportunities to expand infrastructure such as shared-use refrigeration at community centers, food hubs, or partner facilities—while supporting efforts to increase capacity and ensure reliable access during emergencies.</p>

Challenges	Opportunities
Thurston County Food Bank patrons in Tumwater report needing more staples like milk, eggs, and fresh produce.	<p>1.1.1. Partner with the Thurston County Food Bank to establish a satellite brick-and-mortar food bank in Tumwater near the new Tumwater Community Center.</p> <p>1.5.4. Support existing pop-up food distribution efforts as part of community emergency response capacity.</p>
Limited hours, days, and locations of assistance programs can be barriers.	<p>1.1.4. Work with interest groups to identify and address barriers to consistent scheduling to support increased weekly operations of the Tumwater Farmers Market during its core season and explore off-season openings.</p>
Many small farms and markets face administrative and technical barriers to accepting Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), limiting access for individuals who rely exclusively on federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.	<p>3.1.1. Collaborate with local, regional, and state partners, such as those involved in the Craft and Warehouse districts, to support and promote opportunities for local producers to access and expand markets.</p> <p>3.4.4. Strengthen local markets and values-aligned public purchasing by identifying existing barriers and exploring mechanisms and partnerships to support the Tumwater Farmers Market's scale and sustainability, such as operational funding, expanded schedules, improved signage, and vendor subsidies.</p>

F. Public Health & Nutrition

Challenges	Opportunities
The Tumwater School District lacks a central kitchen; each school handles its own food preparation and storage. Infrastructure limitations in individual school kitchens constrain their ability to incorporate fresh, locally sourced foods.	1.5.1. Advocate for regional funding and coordinate cross-jurisdictional planning, investments, and grant applications for shared infrastructure.
Meal programs often struggle to integrate donated or rescued food while meeting nutrition standards.	<p>3.3.1. Support regional partnerships to develop shared-use food infrastructure, such as processing, cold storage, and commercial kitchen facilities, by leveraging city assets and pursuing state, federal, and philanthropic funding opportunities. Evaluate the feasibility of repurposing existing sites in Tumwater, including underutilized or public facilities, where appropriate.</p> <p>3.3.2. Explore strategic investments and partnerships with food hubs to expand regional aggregation and distribution capacity that supports small- and mid-scale producers and improves food access.</p>
Rising food prices make it harder for people with low incomes to afford fresh, nutrient-dense, local foods.	<p>1.2.3. Continue to support funding for Tumwater school garden maintenance and education.</p> <p>1.3.2. Expand partnerships for edible landscaping and urban fruit and nut tree planting in public spaces including parks and along pedestrian corridors with scheduled community care and harvest days.</p> <p>3.4.7. Assess opportunities to align City purchasing practices where applicable with values-based criteria such as local sourcing, environmental sustainability, and equity. Where Tumwater's procurement is limited, promote public awareness of these values through communications and support similar efforts by partner agencies, when feasible.</p>

Challenges	Opportunities
Language barriers limit access to nutritional information, food sources, and program details.	<p>1.2.2. Promote partner led, community-based initiatives such as cooking classes, gardening workshops, and nutrition education tailored to underserved populations.</p> <p>1.3.2. Expand partnerships for edible landscaping and urban fruit and nut tree planting in public spaces including parks and along pedestrian corridors with scheduled community care and harvest days.</p>
Many processed foods contain increasingly high levels of sugar and sodium, which can negatively impact health and condition people's taste preferences to crave more salt and sugar in their diets.	<p>1.2.1. Integrate food, gardening, and nutrition learning opportunities into city sponsored programming with incentives to participate, such as classes offered through the Department of Parks and Recreation and at community events.</p>

G. Education & Workforce

Challenges	Opportunities
School gardens often lack stable funding and rely on volunteers, including non-staff community members.	<p>1.2.3. Continue to support funding for Tumwater school garden maintenance and education.</p>

Challenges	Opportunities
Youth lack exposure to local, seasonal foods in school cafeterias. The Tumwater School District's lack of a central kitchen limits scratch cooking, food preparation flexibility, and the ability to process and store local ingredients, contributing to reliance on heat-and-serve meals and restricting nutrition quality. These challenges are compounded by a federal reimbursement rate that has not kept pace with rising food costs.	<p>1.2.1. Integrate food, gardening, and nutrition learning opportunities into city sponsored programming with incentives to participate, such as classes offered through the Department of Parks and Recreation and at community events.</p> <p>3.4.2. Educate and engage the community on the value of local food by celebrating local food and producers through storytelling, city-sponsored events, informational signage, and communications platforms—focusing on systems and practices rather than promoting specific businesses.</p> <p>3.4.3. Raise awareness of the broader impacts of food choices by educating residents about the social, environmental, and economic costs of industrial food systems and the value of local purchasing. Strategies may include community events such as a local food or film festival, themed messaging on city social media and newsletters, and interactive booths at public gatherings like the Tumwater Farmers Market or Arbor Day celebrations, for example.</p>
Regional farm employers face persistent labor shortages caused by seasonal work, low wages, and a lack of qualified or interested applicants.	<p>3.4.2. Educate and engage the community on the value of local food by celebrating local food and producers through storytelling, city-sponsored events, informational signage, and communications platforms—focusing on systems and practices rather than promoting specific businesses.</p>

4 – Timeline

Meeting	Date
Planning Commission Public Hearing	September 23, 2025
City Council Work Session	October 14, 2025
City Council Consideration	November 3, 2025

SEPA review will not be required for this plan as the plan is considered a procedural action per 197-11-800 (19) WAC.

RESOLUTION NO. R2025-015

A RESOLUTION of the City Council of the City of Tumwater, Washington, adopting the 2025 Food System Plan.

WHEREAS, the City of Tumwater believes that access to food is fundamental to community health and well-being; and

WHEREAS, Sustainable Thurston, which was adopted by the Thurston Regional Planning Council in 2013, sets a goal to support local food systems to increase community resilience, health, and economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS, the Thurston County Countywide Planning Policies support nurturing urban agricultural and food-oriented businesses to build a vital, diverse, and strong local economy, including job opportunities that support community and household resilience, health, and well-being; and

WHEREAS, a goal of Tumwater's Strategic Priorities and Goals 2025 – 2026 is to develop innovative partnerships and strategies with community human and social services organizations to improve service delivery to people in need, including senior citizens, low-income residents, and others; and

WHEREAS, Tumwater's Comprehensive Plan includes policies and actions that promote access to healthy food, including diverse meal options and fresh produce; and

WHEREAS, the City Council approved 2024 and 2025 long range planning work programs that directed staff to prepare a Tumwater Food System Plan that focused on how to provide healthy food to the community, reduce food waste, support local food processing, eliminate barriers, address gaps in the current system, produce solutions to implement at appropriate scale, and identify how to maintain and update resource materials through jurisdictional and community partners; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission had a briefing on the Plan on November 26, 2024, and work sessions on February 11, 2025, April 22, 2025, and July 8, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the General Government Committee had briefings about the Plan on November 13, 2024, March 18, 2025, and May 14, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the City Council had a work session on the Plan on July 8, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission had a work session on the resolution on September 9, 2025, and held a public hearing on September 23, 2025; and

WHEREAS, following the public hearing and deliberations, the Planning Commission recommended adoption of the Plan by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the City Council discussed the Planning Commission's recommendation at a work session on October 14, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the 2025 Food System Plan is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, supports the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Tumwater, and will benefit the public.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TUMWATER AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Acceptance. The 2025 Food System Plan, attached hereto as Exhibit "A", is hereby adopted.

Section 2. Ratification. Any act consistent with the authority and prior to the effective date of this Resolution is hereby ratified and affirmed.

Section 3. Severability. The provisions of this Resolution are declared separate and severable. The invalidity of any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section, or portion of this Resolution or the invalidity of the application thereof to any person or circumstance, shall not affect the validity of the remainder of the Resolution, or the validity of its application to other persons or circumstances.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption and signature as provided by law.

RESOLVED this ____ day of _____, 2025.

CITY OF TUMWATER

Debbie Sullivan, Mayor

ATTEST:

Melody Valiant, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Karen Kirkpatrick, City Attorney

City of Tumwater

Food System Plan



Power House Ranch produce at Tumwater Farmers Market, photo by Kelly Marie Dawson

Adopted _____, 2025 by Resolution No. 2025-015



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1. INTRODUCTION

This Food System Plan addresses food insecurity at the local level by focusing on how to do the following three things:

1. Provide healthy food for all members of the community.
2. Reduce food waste.
3. Support local food production and processing.

The plan identifies the most impactful activities for Tumwater in addressing core food insecurity issues, eliminating barriers, addressing gaps in the current system, and offering appropriately scaled solutions implemented at the municipal level through collaborations between the City and community partners.

Methodology & Approach

This plan was developed grounded in the principles of equity, sustainability, stability, resiliency, and efficacy.

- Equity. A food system should support food security with an emphasis on those community members that experience the greatest inequities.
- Sustainability. A balance between environmental health, economic profitability, and social equity creates a resilient food system that meets current food needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- Stability. All community members should have reliable access to sufficient, safe, culturally appropriate, and nutritious food, even in the face of unexpected challenges.
- Resiliency. The food system should maintain its functionality and continue to provide food security and nutrition under various adverse conditions.
- Efficacy. The audience for the plan is Tumwater, therefore, the objectives and actions in this plan will be the areas where the City can have the most impact.

A Community Food Assessment was conducted to provide an understanding of the current local conditions and identify the most impactful activities for Tumwater in achieving its goals. The assessment examined existing conditions, challenges, and opportunities within Tumwater's food system by engaging with 53 subject matter experts that were interviewed or surveyed. Subject matter experts were chosen to holistically represent Tumwater's current food system including natural, physical/built, political, and social aspects.

Interviews were conducted with guiding questions, allowing conversations to follow different directions depending on the interviewee's perspective. The survey was conducted online. Appendix A contains a complete list of the subject matter experts and Appendix B provides the survey and interview questions.

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The assessment and plan development also included a review of literature spanning municipal and regional planning documents, as well as reports, academic articles, websites, and toolkits related to food systems, land use, and public health. A complete list of materials is provided as Appendix C.

The assessment is organized into seven sector summaries:

1. Land Use & Conservation
2. Processors & Producers
3. Retail & Distribution
4. Waste Reduction & Recovery
5. Access & Security
6. Public Health & Nutrition
7. Education & Workforce

Each sector summary includes Key Challenges, Key Developments, and Current Collaborations & Resources. These seven sectors were selected to provide a comprehensive yet streamlined framework for analyzing the food system. They follow established models from other food system assessments, while being adapted to Tumwater's local context. This structure captures the full cycle of the food system in a way that is relevant for city action and consistent with best practices.

The final section of the plan is organized around Tumwater's three overarching goals and offers policies and opportunities informed by the Community Food Assessment findings.

What is a Food System?

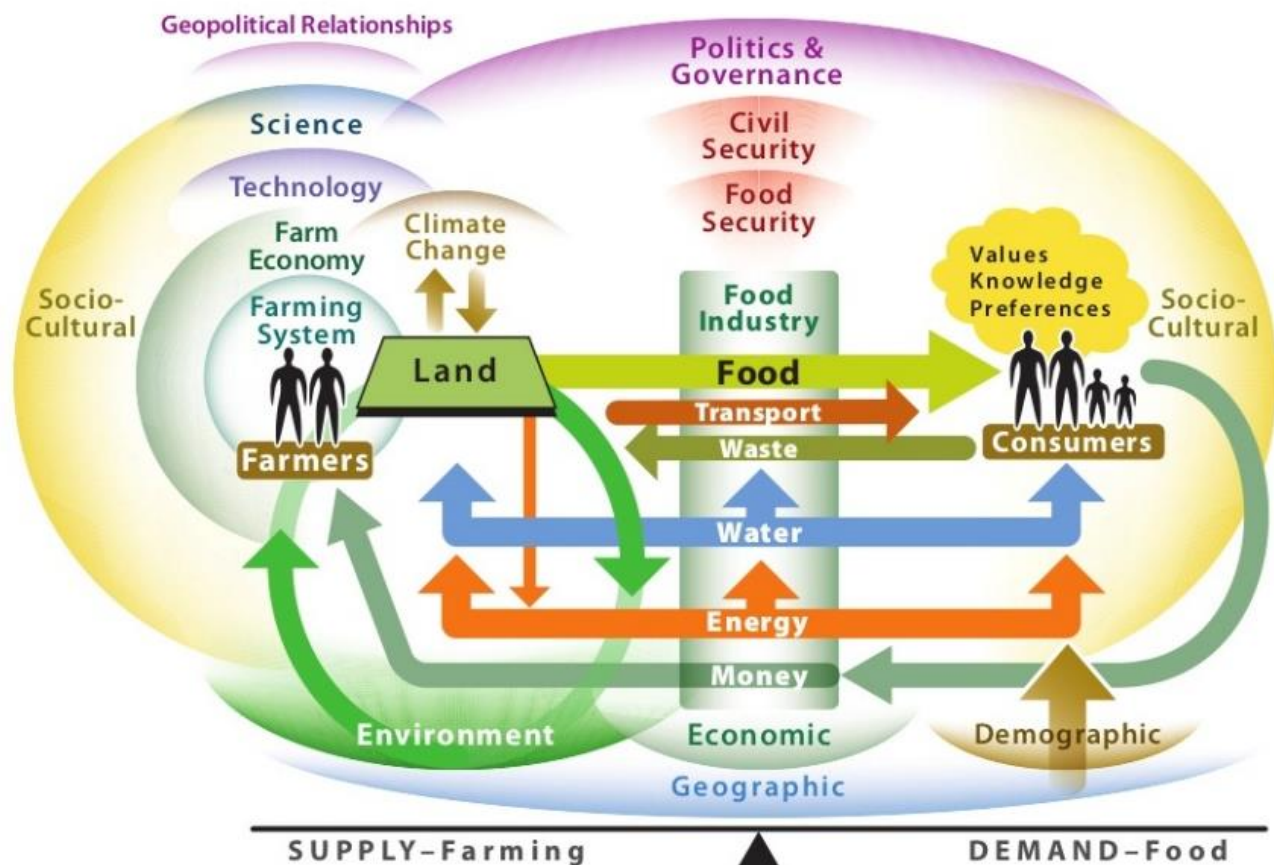
The food system is an interconnected web of inputs, activities, and actors involved in producing, processing, distributing, consuming, and disposing of food. Figure 1 illustrates the complexity and interrelationships within that system. Importantly, our modern food system does not adhere to jurisdictional boundaries, as food moves across cities, counties, states, and countries before it reaches consumers.

In this context, the definition of "local" becomes both important and nuanced. The term can vary widely depending on the entity using it. For example, Tumwater School District's Food Services Department uses a definition aligned with the United States Department of Agriculture, the major funder of school meals. In this instance, "local" means food sourced from anywhere within Washington State. By contrast, farmers markets and food hubs often define "local" more narrowly, based on a handful of surrounding counties. These definitions can be visualized as concentric circles expanding outward, shaped by product availability and the proximity of farms, processors, and producers.

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Figure 1. The Interrelation of Food System Components.



Source: Future of Food and Farming, UK Government, designed by shiftN

Recognizing the need for a strong and resilient food system, Tumwater has incorporated discussion of the local food system into elements of its 2025 Comprehensive Plan update. The inclusion of a Climate Element—new as of December 2024—demonstrates a commitment to sustainability through greenhouse gas reduction and climate resilience strategies. These are essential for ensuring the long-term health and stability of both local and regional food systems. The Conservation Element will emphasize community collaboration to improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate, and sustainably produced food, ensuring that all community members can reliably access nutritious food.

Recent History of Regional Collaboration

A resilient food system requires regional collaboration. Shared planning, infrastructure, and partnerships help Tumwater and community organizations make a greater impact, especially for those most affected by food insecurity. Over the past 18 years, efforts across Thurston County have brought together diverse partners with goals to build a food system that is equitable, sustainable, stable, and resilient.

Community Food Summit (2011): In 2007, local nonprofits—including Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB), Thurston County Food Bank, Sustainable South Sound, Left Foot Organics, and the Gleaners Coalition—

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joined with The Evergreen State College and area farmers to launch the Hunger Free Thurston County Coalition and Food Bank Growers Network. These efforts culminated in the 2011 Community Food Summit, a two-day event that presented findings from a regional food assessment and launched working groups that laid the foundation for future collaboration. Out of this event grew the Thurston Thrives Food Action Team, the Thurston Asset Building Coalition Food Hub, and the Sustainable Thurston Food System Council.

Thurston Asset Building Coalition Food Hub (2012): The Thurston Asset Building Coalition formed a Food Hub to strengthen the local food economy, increase access to healthy food, and promote environmental stewardship. It connected multi-sector partners to support economic stability for low-income households.

Thurston Thrives Food Action Team (2013): Launched by Thurston County Public Health & Social Services, Thurston Thrives used a collective impact model to address public health. The Food Action Team focused on food, nutrition, equity, and health, and developed a Strategy Map presented to the County Board of Health in 2013.

Sustainable Thurston Food System Council (2011–2014): As part of the Sustainable Thurston planning process, the Thurston Regional Planning Council convened a Local Food Systems Panel to inform its regional sustainability plan. Their 2012 White Paper built on recommendations from the Community Food Summit and led to the creation of the Sustainable Thurston Plan in 2014. The Thurston Food System Council emerged from this process as a grassroots body tasked with advancing the plan's food goals, though it lacked dedicated funding or staffing.

South Sound Food System Network (2016–present): To reduce duplication and align efforts, the Thurston Asset Building Coalition Food Hub, Thurston Thrives Food Action Team, and the Thurston Food System Council merged to form the South Sound Food System Network in 2016. Early leadership included GRuB, Thurston Economic Development Council, Washington Department of Health, and Senior Services for South Sound, with participation from over 30 organizations. South Sound Food System Network is currently staffed through Thurston Asset Building Coalition with state support, though funding is uncertain after June 2025. Recently, the Network has experienced lower participation and a narrower focus on food security rather than broader system goals.

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2. SECTOR SUMMARIES

Land Use & Conservation

Tumwater is situated on land traditionally stewarded by Indigenous peoples through active management of oak and camas prairies—among the most biodiverse and culturally significant ecosystems in the Pacific Northwest. These prairies, shaped by generations of human-ecological relationships, support a wide array of food and medicinal plants such as camas, bracken fern rhizomes, hazelnuts, berries, and acorns from Garry oak trees. Seasonal camas harvests are not only vital food-gathering events but also moments of cultural connection. Intentional fire has been used to maintain prairie landscapes and sustain habitats for grazing animals like deer and elk. Today, between two to three percent of these unique ecosystems remain.

Land use decisions directly influence the foundations of a healthy and resilient food system. In Tumwater, land is under increasing pressure from the competing needs of housing, commercial and industrial growth, and environmental conservation. These decisions affect the availability of space for local food production, and the preservation of vital ecological and cultural resources.

Key Developments

- Regenerative agriculture contributes to climate solutions by drawing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and sequestering it in the soil.
- From 2012 to 2022, Thurston County lost 27% of its farmland—shrinking from 76,638 acres to 55,943 acres—and 17% of its farms.
- Walkable urban environments and localized food supply chains enhance resilience by improving equitable access to fresh foods, reducing emissions, and supporting local economies.

Key Challenges

- Housing markets favor single family developments, increasing the value of land with access to utilities in urban growth areas and driving the pressure for development.
- High farmland costs in the region create barriers for new and beginning farmers.
- The Growth Management Act prioritizes dense development in urban areas to protect rural area, which does not always readily accommodate food production in urban zones.
- Tumwater must continually navigate tensions between competing urban land use needs for housing, industrial and commercial development, conservation, and agriculture.

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Current Collaborations & Resources

- The **Community Farm Land Trust** preserves farmland through community ownership models, long-term leases, and conservation easements, ensuring long-term affordability and land access for farmers in the South Puget Sound.
- The **Thurston Conservation District** supports landowners with technical assistance and conservation planning that promotes soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat.
- The **Natural Resources Conservation Service** provides financial and technical support through programs like Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Stewardship Program (EQUIP) helping local landowners implement conservation practices that build climate resilience and support sustainable agriculture.

Processors & Producers

The people and businesses who grow, forage, raise, and process food in and around Tumwater are the foundation of the local food system. The makeup of producers in Tumwater area includes small-scale farmers, ranchers, food processors, urban farmers, foragers, and community gardeners. Their efforts contribute to food access, economic resilience, and environmental sustainability. Despite operating at different scales, many processors and producers face similar challenges and opportunities as they work to feed the community.

In 2010, the Tumwater City Council amended urban agriculture regulations (Ordinance O2010-029), making it easier for residents to raise and sell food within city limits. Chickens, rabbits, bees, are allowed on most lots. Miniature livestock are allowed on residential lots over 5,000 square feet and larger animals are permitted on parcels over two acres within city limits.

Tumwater's 2019 Economic Development Plan highlighted the importance of expanding the craft food and beverage sector in Goal #5. This goal emphasizes not just brewing and distilling, but also the need to strengthen connections across the supply chain—from growers and processors to markets and manufacturers.

Key Developments

- Tumwater is home to two major developments supporting craft food and beverage production: the **Craft District** on Capitol Boulevard and the **Warehouse District** on Old Highway 99. The Craft District, part of a state-funded Innovation Partnership Zone, includes Heritage Distilling, South Puget Sound Community College's Craft Brewing and Distilling Program, and retail outlets. The Warehouse District features local businesses like Matchless Brewing, Triceratops Brewing, Spud's Produce Market, and 8 Arms Bakery.
- The **Southwest Washington Regional Agricultural Business & Innovation Park** in Tenino is beginning to open its first phase. Focused on value-added agriculture, the Ag Park supports food-related manufacturing, processing, storage, and packaging. Project partners include the Thurston

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Economic Development Council, City of Tenino, and Dragonwheel Investment Group with support from Washington State University Extension, Port of Olympia, Northwest Agricultural Business Center, and Thurston County.

- **Colvin Ranch** is establishing a USDA-certified meat processing facility at the Ag Park, addressing a longstanding bottleneck for local livestock producers. Once operational, the facility will serve regional ranchers with a planned capacity of up to 100 animals per week, enhancing the regional meat supply chain, improving local food access, and reducing the environmental impact associated with long-distance animal transport.
- The Tumwater School District operated a small farm at Tumwater's Isabella Bush Park through a program for high school students called **FRESH (Farm Rooted Education for Sustainability & Health)**. Tumwater provides the farmland, a barn, and water at no cost to the school district. Since 2020, FRESH has produced over 13,000 pounds of food for seniors, low-income students' families, and the Thurston County Food Bank. As of this writing, the program is scheduled to end in July 2025 due to the school district's budget cuts.

Key Challenges

- High farmland costs limit access for new and beginning farmers.
- Access to affordable water remains a significant barrier for urban farms and gardens.
- Tariffs may increase the cost or reduce availability of critical farming inputs.
- Agricultural employers report difficulty hiring and retaining workers.
- Small-scale farmers often lack access to subsidies, which are typically tied to acreage or production volume, and time-intensive application processes often outweigh the benefit.
- Many processors and producers lack access to affordable cold storage, which limits the ability to scale or diversify their operations.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- Tumwater currently has one **community garden** with 20 plots, located at Tumwater United Methodist Church. The **Parks and Recreation Department** has a grant program to provide funding to support the expansion of community gardens in Tumwater.
- **Northwest Agriculture Business Center** provides technical assistance to agricultural businesses, including farms and food businesses in Thurston County.
- **Native Grown & Gathered** offers marketing and technical support to Native American food producers and businesses.
- **Our Community Kitchen** and **LOC-OLY Grown**, two commercial kitchens on Olympia's west side, support small-scale food entrepreneurs with prep stations, equipment, and cold/dry storage. Our Community Kitchen also offers group purchasing opportunities.

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- Access to farmland and farmland loss are high-priority issues for Thurston Conservation District, which has worked county-wide since 2014 with the **South Sound FarmLink** program and since 2023, in Olympia with the **Farm My Yard** program. Innovative urban agriculture options similar to Farm My Yard may serve Tumwater's needs for increased urban food production.
- In addition to technical assistance for landowners, the **Thurston Conservation District** offers community garden support to governments, public agencies, organizations, and individuals through the **Community Garden Support Network**.

Retail & Distribution

Retail and distribution are essential for strengthening Tumwater's local food economy and improving access to fresh, locally produced food. The City's focus on cultivating a strong craft food and beverage sector aligns with broader economic and land use goals. Tumwater's 2019 Economic Development Plan includes fostering community-oriented retail, especially grocery-anchored centers (Goal #8), and supporting the full craft food and beverage supply chain (Goal #5), from growers to markets.

Key Developments

- Food hubs connect small and mid-sized producers with institutional and retail buyers by aggregating, distributing, and marketing local products. These services help farms access stable markets, like schools, grocery stores, and food banks, while streamlining local sourcing for buyers. The region now has two food hubs: Southwest Washington Food Hub and South Sound Fresh.
- The Warehouse and Craft Districts provide retail and distribution space for local food and beverage producers.

Key Challenges

- Food costs have increased, and fresh local food is harder to access.
- The Tumwater Farmers Market is under-resourced, with limited operation and an outdated web presence.
- Federal programs like Farm to School face funding uncertainties.
- Cold storage capacity remains limited across the distribution network.
- Direct-to-consumer retailers, such as farmers markets, food hubs, and farms, face barriers to accepting electronic benefit transfer (EBT), including administrative burdens and technology costs.

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Current Collaborations & Resources

- The **Tumwater Farmers Market** operates June–September 2nd and 4th Sundays, at Peter G. Schmidt Elementary School (11 AM–3 PM).
- The **Community Farm Land Trust** publishes the ***Fresh from the Farm Guide***, a free printed and electronic regional farm map and directory connecting consumers with farms, community supported agriculture (CSAs), markets, and food banks in a four-county region.
- **Farm to School**, a federal program implemented by the Washington State Department of Agriculture and regional partners, supports local food sourcing and garden-based learning. Tumwater School District does not currently participate.
- **Harbor Wholesale**, located in Lacey, is the largest independent food distributor on the West Coast. While not solely focused on local producers, its extensive warehousing, cold storage, and logistics infrastructure plays a key role in regional food distribution and could offer opportunities for partnership or logistical support to local processors and suppliers.
- **South Sound Fresh** serves Thurston and Mason Counties from its Olympia location. It works with over 50 producers and offers an online marketplace for consumers.
- The **Southwest Washington Food Hub**, a program of the Southwest Washington Growers Co-op, supports more than 30 producers in a six-county region.

Waste Reduction & Recovery

Reducing food waste offers numerous benefits.

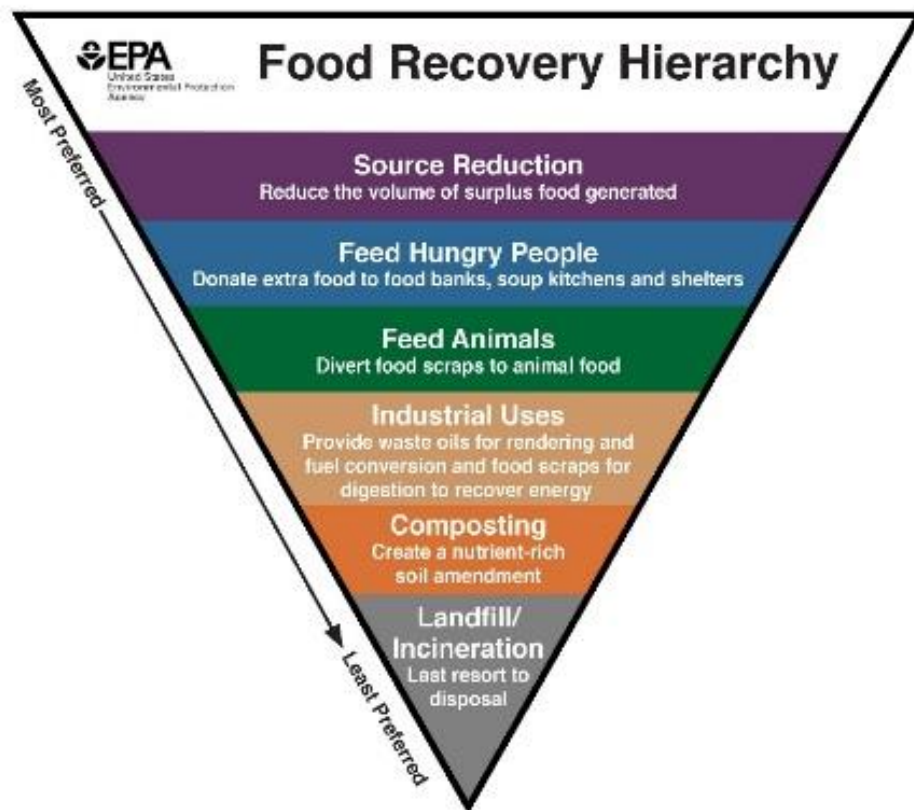
1. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction. Diverting food from landfills reduces methane production.
2. Resource Conservation. Preventing food waste conserves the water, energy, and labor used in production.
3. Economic Savings. Households and businesses reduce costs associated with food production, transport, and disposal.
4. Improved Food Security. Surplus food can be redirected to those in need.
5. Soil Health. Composting food waste reduces landfill reliance and enriches soil through nutrient recycling.

The food recovery hierarchy prioritizes waste reduction strategies with landfill as the last resort.

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Figure 2: Food Recovery Hierarchy



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency

Key Developments

- Washington's Organics Management Law (2022) mandates phased-in organic waste separation for businesses as part of the state's climate strategy:
 - 2024: Applies to businesses generating 8+ yards/week of food or yard waste
 - 2025: Threshold lowers to 4+ yards/week
 - 2026: Applies to businesses generating 96+ gallons/week

Key Challenges

- Enforcement of the Organics Management Law relies on self-reporting, with no immediate penalties for non-compliance.
- Leadership changes have slowed regional coordination on food waste diversion and rescue initiatives.
- Inadequate cold storage capacity limits food rescue operations.
- Edible food is often discarded due to cost or logistical barriers when supply chains fail.

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- Packaging contamination prevents some food waste from being composted.
- Short meal periods in K–12 schools lead to uneaten food and higher waste.
- Food diversion in schools often depends on individual staff initiatives rather than system-wide practices.
- Most Tumwater schools rely on reheating and serving pre-prepared meals which produce more packaging waste than scratch cooking.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- **LeMay Pacific Disposal** is Tumwater’s primary hauler, partnering with **Brady Trucking** and **Silver Springs Organics** for composting.
- The **Solid Waste Advisory Committee**, which includes a Tumwater representative from the City Council, advises Thurston County’s five-year Solid Waste Management Plan.
- **Thurston Conservation District** offers technical support for composting and other food waste reduction education.
- The **Thurston County Food Bank** rescues surplus food from retailers and restaurants and operates a gleaning program to harvest excess crops from local farms.
- The **Use Food Well Washington Plan**, created under state law (RCW 70A.205.715), outlines 30 recommendations to reduce food waste and its impacts.
- The **Washington Center for Sustainable Food Management**, launched in 2024, supports statewide food waste diversion and coordinates efforts under the Use Food Well plan.

Access & Security

Food security means reliable, consistent access to enough nutritious, culturally appropriate food to lead healthy, active lives without relying on emergency food or coping strategies like skipping meals or scavenging. *Food insecurity* arises when that access is limited due to insufficient resources, availability, or social barriers.

The latest Washington State Food Security Survey conducted August to October 2024 shows that food insecurity remains high among low-income households and those relying on food assistance. Groceries and housing were the most frequently cited financial hardships, with protein-rich and perishable foods such as meat, eggs, and fresh produce being the hardest to afford. The expiration of pandemic-era support programs, combined with rising food costs, has worsened financial strain.

In 2023, 14 percent of Tumwater residents received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. This federal program delivered through Electronic Benefit Transfer cards provides about \$187 per month per person in 2025, approximately \$6.16 per day. Benefits are based on the assumption that households spend 30 percent of their net income on food, and the program fills the gap between that

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amount and the United States Department of Agriculture's low-cost Thrifty Food Plan. While the federal government covers benefit costs, states share administrative costs.

Washington State's Market Match program offers additional incentives for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program, and Senior Nutrition participants when they buy fresh produce at participating markets and stores.

The Thurston County Food Bank does not have a walk-in location in Tumwater, but its main warehouse is in Tumwater near the Interstate 5 and State Route 101 interchange. Thurston County Food Bank operates five satellite pantries in Tumwater. Some satellites use a shopping model where patrons choose their grocery items, and some use a drive-through model where patrons receive a pre-packaged assortment of groceries.

- South Puget Sound Community College (shopping model)
- Mt. View Church (drive-through)
- North Star Church of God (shopping)
- Tumwater United Methodist Church (drive-through)
- Tumwater Senior Center (shopping)

Clients receive 25–35 pounds of food per visit including shelf-stable items, protein, dairy, deli, and produce. Thurston County Food Bank also offers mobile programs like United States Department of Agriculture-funded senior boxes, home delivery, food rescue, local purchasing, and gleaning.

Figure 3. Food Sources by Value and Weight.



Source: Thurston County Food Bank.

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Key Developments

- SNAP's benefit formula assumes 30% of net income goes toward food, but high housing and living costs often reduce actual food spending.
- Thurston County Food Bank 's demand is growing faster than the local population.
- Mutual aid models, like Little Free Pantries, expanded during the pandemic and continued to operate.
- Shifting federal policy priorities have introduced uncertainty around future food security funding.

Key Challenges

- Rising food prices strain household budgets and food access.
- Awareness of available resources and programs is low.
- Culturally appropriate food options are limited.
- Donations from large food companies may include highly processed or near-expired items, which do not always meet nutritional or cultural needs.
- Regional food assistance efforts lack coordination.
- Thurston County Food Bank patrons in Tumwater report needing more staples like milk, eggs, and fresh produce.
- Limited hours, days, and locations of assistance programs can be barriers.
- Many small farms and markets face administrative and technical barriers to accepting Electronic Benefit Transfer, limiting access for individuals who rely exclusively on federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- The **Old Town Center** provides weekday lunches for seniors at no cost or suggested donation, now prepared by **Senior Services of South Sound**. Participation increased following a federal grant. The center also hosts a monthly Thurston County Food Bank food distribution serving 30–40 seniors, with demand rising post-pandemic.
- The **Tumwater Senior Council** provides a monthly lunch at Tumwater Historical Park from March through October each year.
- The **Food Source Foundation** supports mutual aid efforts in Tumwater, including **Souper Sunday – Tumwater**, a community-based food sharing initiative launched via Facebook in April 2025.
- **Senior Services for South Sound** operates the federally funded Senior Nutrition Program. The program serves 2,500 clients annually with hot and frozen meals, including 400 **Meals on Wheels**

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participants. Meals are tailored to health needs and prioritize local sourcing. Tumwater is a program partner.

- The **Olympia Kiwanis Club** runs three gardens producing over 20,000 pounds of donated food annually for Thurston County Food Bank.
- **Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB)** installs free backyard gardens for low-income households and offers continued support via workshops, a seed library, and peer learning.
- **Little Free Pantries**, modeled on book-sharing libraries via a community cupboard, offer self-serve access to food and personal care items in several Tumwater locations, including Mountain View Church, Western Plaza Mobile Home Park, and an expanded version on Hoadly Loop that incorporates a pop-up tent.
- **Centro Integral Educativo Latino de Olympia (CIELO)** hosts monthly food distributions in high demand—often running out of food within an hour—underscoring ongoing unmet community needs.
- **Catholic Community Services** operates **The Community Kitchen** in downtown Olympia, serving lunch and dinner meals Monday through Saturday throughout the year.
- The **Union Gospel Mission** in downtown Olympia offers three meals daily Monday through Friday, one meal on Saturday, and two meals on Sunday year-round.

Public Health & Nutrition

Nutrition is a key component of preventive public health and contributes to healthier communities. Unfortunately, many people have limited knowledge about nutrition, cooking skills, seasonal eating, accessing or preparing fresh foods, and incentive and assistance programs. Lack of adequate food can affect physical and mental health. Children who grow up in homes without enough food are at an increased risk of illness and experiencing academic and psychosocial problems. Nutritional deficiencies and family stress both contribute to these outcomes.

The Tumwater School District serves approximately 3,800 lunches and 1,500 breakfasts each school day. During the summer months, it continues to provide meals, serving around 250 students daily at designated school sites. In the 2023–2024 school year, the district received \$177 per student in combined federal and state meal funding, with 97% of that funding coming from federal sources. For the 2025–2026 fiscal year, 33.24% of students are eligible for the Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Program, an increase of 3.5% from the previous year.

Key Developments

- The Tumwater School District has experienced a 30% rise in food costs over four years. Federal reimbursements have not kept pace, and the state’s contribution varies based on the share of students eligible for subsidized meals. The district must cover any shortfalls.

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- In the past 15–20 years, school kitchens have been redesigned with smaller spaces and limited equipment, shifting meal service away from scratch cooking. Today, most Tumwater schools rely on reheating and serving pre-prepared meals due to infrastructure and staffing constraints.

Key Challenges

- The Tumwater School District lacks a central kitchen; each school handles its own food preparation and storage. Infrastructure limitations in individual school kitchens constrain their ability to incorporate fresh, locally sourced foods.
- Meal programs often struggle to integrate donated or rescued food while meeting nutrition standards.
- Rising food prices make it harder for people with low incomes to afford fresh, nutrient-dense, local foods.
- Language barriers limit access to nutritional information, food sources, and program details.
- Many processed foods contain increasingly high levels of sugar and sodium, which can negatively impact health and condition people's taste preferences to crave more salt and sugar in their diets.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- **SNAP-Ed**, the educational arm of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), provides nutrition education and budgeting tools through partners like the Thurston County Food Bank and WSU Extension.
- **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program** supports pregnant and postpartum parents and young children with nutrition education, healthy foods, breastfeeding support, and referrals. The program is managed by the Washington State Department of Health and receives federal funding.
- Community organizations like **GRuB** and the **Olympia Food Co-op** offer free and low-cost classes and workshops on nutrition, cooking, gardening, foraging, and preparing wild foods and medicines.

Education & Workforce

Education and workforce development are essential to building a resilient and inclusive local food system. Tumwater's 2019 Economic Development Plan prioritizes growing the craft food and beverage sector by developing a Center of Excellence in partnership with local education providers. This initiative supports producers, manufacturers, and markets while creating training and career pathways. The Plan also encourages recruiting educational institutions to strengthen Tumwater's economic base and

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community vitality. Together, these goals lay the groundwork for food system education that supports local business, community health, and economic opportunity.

Key Developments

- K–12 education can proactively support food security and food literacy. School gardens and greenhouses at local schools in Tumwater teach environmental stewardship, food origins, and seasonal eating. These programs help reduce food waste and foster appreciation for the local food economy.
- Teaching cooking and food preservation builds self-sufficiency and improves access to nutritious, affordable food.
- Workplace wellness programs, like those offered through the Southwest Washington Food Hub of which Tumwater has participated, connect workplaces to fresh, locally grown foods and family farms to improve employee health and wellbeing and support the regional food system.

Key Challenges

- School gardens often lack stable funding and rely on volunteers, including non-staff community members.
- Youth lack exposure to local, seasonal foods in school cafeterias. The Tumwater School District's lack of a central kitchen limits scratch cooking, food preparation flexibility, and the ability to process and store local ingredients, contributing to reliance on heat-and-serve meals and restricting nutrition quality. These challenges are compounded by a federal reimbursement rate that has not kept pace with rising food costs.
- Regional farm employers face persistent labor shortages caused by seasonal work, low wages, and a lack of qualified or interested applicants.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- **Pacific Mountain Region Agriculture Workforce Development Asset Inventory** is a living document maintained by Washington State University (WSU) Thurston County Extension, detailing resources for agricultural workforce development—spanning training, capital, infrastructure, and education from K–12 to nonprofit providers.
- **QUEST (Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy & Training)** a regional partnership led by Thurston Economic Development Council, WSU Extension, GRuB, and others—created a report in 2024 focused on strengthening the agricultural workforce through business engagement, community outreach, and employment training. The partnership is no longer active, although follow-up from the report is still in process.
- **South Puget Sound Community College** is an award-winning, top community college which offers food, beverage arts, and hospitality programs in culinary arts, baking and pastry, and craft brewing/distilling.

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- The **Evergreen State College's Organic Farm** operates as a learning laboratory for their agriculture program.
- **New Market Skills Center**, located in Tumwater, provides high school technical training across 12 districts, including a Culinary Arts Program with an operating deli.
- **ASHHO Cultural Community Center**, located in Tumwater, hosts a paid, 12-week culinary and hospitality job training program.
- **FRESH (Farm Rooted Education for Sustainability & Health)** is a GRuB-inspired, hands-on program that operates a small farm at the Tumwater's Isabella Bush Park for Tumwater High School students, especially those facing adversity. Tumwater provides the farmland, barn, and water at no cost. Students earn credit and gain job skills through farm and classroom work. Since 2020, FRESH has produced over 13,000 pounds of food for seniors, low-income students' families, and the Thurston County Food Bank. As of this writing, the program is scheduled to end in July 2025 due to Tumwater School District budget cuts.
- **Enterprise for Equity, Thurston Economic Development Council**, and the **Thurston Chamber of Commerce** offer business development resources for aspiring and existing food system entrepreneurs.
- **Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB)** is a non-profit with a small urban farm located on Olympia's west side, serving all of Thurston County and beyond. They work at the intersection of food, education, and health systems. GRuB provides career pathways and education in agriculture and wild foods and medicines for youth, veterans, educators, people with low incomes, and Black and Indigenous communities.

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3. FOOD SYSTEM GOALS & OPPORTUNITIES

This section presents the heart of the Tumwater Food System Plan: a set of goals, policies, and actionable opportunities designed to strengthen Tumwater’s food system in alignment with community values and identified needs. Informed by input from subject matter experts, review of relevant plans and policies, and best practices from across the region, these recommendations are grounded in the realities of what Tumwater can influence, lead, or support. While the preceding Community Food Assessment outlines the current conditions and key challenges, this section offers a path forward to be accomplished over the next 20 years in parallel with the Comprehensive Plan.

Each goal is supported by a set of policies that reflect Tumwater’s potential roles. Under each policy, a series of opportunities is identified. These are not mandates, but potential actions Tumwater could consider over time, depending on available resources, partnerships, and evolving community needs.

The structure of this section is intended to support flexible implementation. Some opportunities may be short-term and low-cost, while others may require longer timelines, inter-agency collaboration, or new funding mechanisms. Together, they offer a community-shaped framework to guide the Tumwater’s future planning, investment, and decision-making related to creating a food system grounded in the principles of equity, sustainability, stability, resiliency, and efficacy.

Goal 1: Provide access to fresh, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all members of the community.

Access to nutritious, culturally appropriate food is a foundational element of a resilient, healthy community. In Tumwater, food access is shaped by factors such as household income, proximity to stores or markets, housing stability, access to transportation, and awareness of information and available services. Goal 1 identifies opportunities to reduce barriers to food access and strengthen food assistance and networks. Tumwater’s role in this work focuses on coordination, communication, and supportive policy to ensure that everyone, particularly the most vulnerable residents, can reliably access healthy food, and that all Tumwater neighborhoods are included in future improvements to the local food environment.

Policies and Opportunities

- 1.1 Expand access to healthy, culturally relevant, and affordable food from both local and non-local sources across all neighborhoods.**
 - 1.1.1 Partner with the Thurston County Food Bank to establish a satellite brick-and-mortar food bank in Tumwater near the new Tumwater Community Center.
 - 1.1.2 Work with regional partners to make free and subsidized community garden plots available citywide and prioritize funding for low-income households.
 - 1.1.3 Support farmers to become certified to accept EBT/SNAP benefits from customers.

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- 1.1.4 Work with interest groups to identify and address barriers to consistent scheduling to support increased weekly operations of the Tumwater Farmers Market during its core season and explore off-season openings.
 - 1.1.5 Use Tumwater's communication channels to increase access to and visibility of food assistance programs (e.g., food banks/pantries, SNAP, Market Match, SUN Bucks) and to promote food bank satellite locations and donations.
 - 1.1.6 Continue to support food access through senior meal programs, city-sponsored events, and youth programs where allowable, and prioritize the inclusion of fresh, seasonal, and culturally relevant local foods, particularly in services benefiting low-income or vulnerable populations.
- 1.2 Enhance public education and outreach related to the local food system.**
- 1.2.1 Integrate food, gardening, and nutrition learning opportunities into city sponsored programming with incentives to participate, such as classes offered through the Department of Parks and Recreation and at community events.
 - 1.2.2 Promote partner led, community-based initiatives such as cooking classes, gardening workshops, and nutrition education tailored to underserved populations.
 - 1.2.3 Continue to support funding for Tumwater school garden maintenance and education.
- 1.3 Increase opportunities for individual and community self-reliance.**
- 1.3.1 Engage with Thurston Conservation District to support community garden expansion, GIS studies for urban agriculture land identification, soil testing, and code review.
 - 1.3.2 Expand partnerships for edible landscaping and urban fruit and nut tree planting in public spaces including parks and along pedestrian corridors with scheduled community care and harvest days.
 - 1.3.3 Build relationships with homeowner associations to better understand their needs and to provide support and remove barriers that would allow home food gardens and climate-resilient landscaping which conserves water for food production.
- 1.4 Ensure supportive infrastructure, zoning, and land use policies.**
- 1.4.1 Encourage walkable and bikeable neighborhoods with access to fresh food outlets, including farmers markets and grocery stores to reduce food deserts.
 - 1.4.2 Support siting the Tumwater Farmers Market near a community gathering area.
 - 1.4.3 Explore including food access as a design consideration for new developments including access to food retailers and spaces for urban agriculture/community gardens.

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- 1.4.4 Explore opportunities to allow temporary or pop-up food distribution sites (e.g., food share hubs, mutual aid stands, gleaning events) through clear guidelines and permitting processes that balance flexibility with neighborhood and safety considerations.
- 1.4.5 Develop and maintain a GIS map of free food pantries, neighborhood-based food distribution sites, food bank satellites, and other free food distribution sites to support coordination, identify service gaps, and improve visibility for those seeking food assistance.

1.5 Strengthen regional food system collaboration.

- 1.5.1 Advocate for regional funding and coordinate cross-jurisdictional planning, investments, and grant applications for shared infrastructure.
- 1.5.2 Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by collaborating with Thurston County Emergency Management to integrate food security into disaster preparedness plans including identification of nearest non-impacted supply chains and ensuring food storage, recovery, and redistribution plans are part of emergency response frameworks.
- 1.5.3 Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by developing and coordinating policies and staffing models for rapid response food systems during future crises, including sourcing, safety, and volunteer mobilization.
- 1.5.4 Support existing pop-up food distribution efforts as part of community emergency response capacity.
- 1.5.5 Assess cold storage needs and explore opportunities to expand infrastructure such as shared-use refrigeration at community centers, food hubs, or partner facilities—while supporting efforts to increase capacity and ensure reliable access during emergencies.
- 1.5.6 Map existing food production, storage, and distribution resources within Tumwater to support internal planning and emergency response coordination.
- 1.5.7 Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by supporting increased financial resources for community-led organizations working to enhance food security in Tumwater and the surrounding region.

Goal 2: Reduce food waste.

In 2021, the Washington State Department of Ecology released the Use Food Well Washington Plan, a statewide strategy identifying 30 prioritized actions to prevent food waste, rescue surplus food, and recycle food scraps. Tumwater's Food System Plan draws inspiration from this framework and aligns with many of its core objectives, particularly those that local subject matter experts brought forward that mirrored these state level goals and are relevant to local government roles. This alignment

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positions Tumwater to engage with regional and state partners in coordinated food waste reduction efforts and may strengthen future opportunities for collaborative funding or pilot programs.

Policies and Opportunities

2.1 Prevent food waste at all stages of the food system.

- 2.1.1 Support local schools to reduce food waste by providing a minimum of 20 minutes of seated lunch time, which improves nutrition and reduces plate waste.
- 2.1.2 Partner with Thurston County Public Works and food assistance organizations to reduce edible food waste at transfer stations by creating clear donation guidance and outreach for truckers and other supply chain actors, addressing common barriers like time pressure, lack of information, and logistical challenges.
- 2.1.3 Collaborate with regional partners to develop and distribute customized educational materials and mailers to residents and businesses focused on source reduction.
- 2.1.4 Promote food waste reduction among local businesses through campaigns that highlight cost savings, environmental benefits, and compliance with Washington's commercial organics recycling requirements—while encouraging participation from businesses of all sizes, including those not subject to the mandate.

2.2 Partner with Thurston County to increase community-wide food waste education and engagement.

- 2.2.1 Participate in and promote Food Waste Prevention Week and related events at the Tumwater and regional level.
- 2.2.2 Offer community compost giveaways and food waste education events through the Department of Parks and Recreation and other community programs.
- 2.2.3 Create and promote engaging social media campaigns and signage to inform the public about food waste prevention best practices and available composting programs.
- 2.2.4 Include food waste prevention as a component of relevant grant funding criteria such as neighborhood matching grants.
- 2.2.5 Offer workshops on food storage, preservation, and meal planning to help individuals and businesses reduce food waste.

2.3 Expand food recovery and redistribution systems.

- 2.3.1 Ensure composting systems are used at all Tumwater public facilities and programs.
- 2.3.2 Partner with Thurston County Public Works to educate businesses and residents on proper composting practices to reduce contamination and increase participation.

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- 2.3.3 Reinvigorate regional food rescue initiatives by identifying historic and resident-led models and new opportunities.
- 2.3.4 Support the creation of a regional, centralized database or platform to connect food waste producers with organizations that can redistribute food to those in need.

Goal 3: Support local food processing and production.

Local food producers and processors are critical to building a sustainable, resilient regional food system. Supporting this sector strengthens food security, drives local economic development, reduces reliance on long supply chains, and supports climate adaptation. However, small-scale producers and processors face barriers such as limited land access, zoning and permitting challenges, infrastructure gaps, and unstable market access. This goal identifies solutions where Tumwater has influence to help create the conditions that allow local food enterprises to thrive and enhance the economic viability of the local food system.

Policies and Opportunities**3.1 Reduce barriers and provide incentives for local growers and processors.**

- 3.1.1 Collaborate with local, regional, and state partners, such as those involved in the Craft and Warehouse districts, to support and promote opportunities for local producers to access and expand markets.
- 3.1.2 Explore partnerships to improve access to land, water, and infrastructure for food producers by supporting shared-use models, facilitating connections to underutilized private or public land, and leveraging programs such as land leases and technical assistance.
- 3.1.3 Review existing land use regulations to identify barriers that disproportionately limit food production opportunities for low-income households and those on smaller lots.
- 3.1.4 Support water access and explore potential rate reductions for urban agriculture, community gardens, and school gardens such as stormwater fee waivers, fire hydrant access, and subsidized or waived system development charges—recognizing their role in strengthening food security, fostering education and community resilience, supporting local economies, and contributing to emergency preparedness.
- 3.1.5 Facilitate networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities among local growers, processors, and market operators to strengthen community connections and business viability.
- 3.1.6 Explore ways to support local direct-to-consumer programs, such as bakery shares (subscription-based access to baked goods) and produce pickup sites, to diversify market options for producers and consumers.

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- 3.1.7 Develop a comprehensive toolkit for aspiring and current local food producers, including farmstands, community gardens, p-patches, and backyard poultry—detailing permit requirements, best practices, available resources, and contacts for technical assistance.
- 3.1.8 Explore opportunities to connect culinary entrepreneurship and food system innovation with arts and cultural events and technology funding streams, including vertical farming and agritourism.
- 3.2 Support access to land for local food production by historically underserved and aspiring farmers, and coordinate with partners to conserve agriculturally viable lands in appropriate areas.**
 - 3.2.1 Partner with the Community Farm Land Trust and Thurston County to explore mechanisms such as urban growth area swaps and farmland easements for conserving high-value agricultural land adjacent to Tumwater’s Urban Growth Area, while supporting farmland transitions to new farmers.
 - 3.2.2 Promote and expand access to food production on suitable underutilized private and public or quasi-public lands within city limits by supporting programs such as those offered by community-based organizations, where feasible, and consistent with land use and environmental constraints.
 - 3.2.3 Consider reviewing and amending development regulations to allow small-scale farm stands, including in residential neighborhoods, to support local growers and increase access to fresh food.
 - 3.2.4 Map locations where city-owned or managed resources (e.g., land, water access, infrastructure) are currently used for food production. Use this data to inform land use planning, resource allocation, and future urban agriculture initiatives.
- 3.3 Strengthen local food system infrastructure.**
 - 3.3.1 Support regional partnerships to develop shared-use food infrastructure, such as processing, cold storage, and commercial kitchen facilities, by leveraging city assets and pursuing state, federal, and philanthropic funding opportunities. Evaluate the feasibility of repurposing existing sites in Tumwater, including underutilized or public facilities, where appropriate.
 - 3.3.2 Explore strategic investments and partnerships with food hubs to expand regional aggregation and distribution capacity that supports small- and mid-scale producers and improves food access.
- 3.4 Promote local food purchasing and community engagement.**
 - 3.4.1 Educate and engage the community on the value of local food by coordinating public education efforts highlighting the health, environmental, and economic benefits of

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local food systems, including the role of regenerative agriculture in climate resilience and carbon sequestration.

- 3.4.2 Educate and engage the community on the value of local food by celebrating local food and producers through storytelling, city-sponsored events, informational signage, and communications platforms—focusing on systems and practices rather than promoting specific businesses.
- 3.4.3 Raise awareness of the broader impacts of food choices by educating residents about the social, environmental, and economic costs of industrial food systems and the value of local purchasing. Strategies may include community events such as a local food or film festival, themed messaging on city social media and newsletters, and interactive booths at public gatherings like the Tumwater Farmers Market or Arbor Day celebrations, for example.
- 3.4.4 Strengthen local markets and values-aligned public purchasing by identifying existing barriers and exploring mechanisms and partnerships to support the Tumwater Farmers Market’s scale and sustainability, such as operational funding, expanded schedules, improved signage, and vendor subsidies.
- 3.4.5 Strengthen local markets through support of local food hubs by educating and engaging the community with the model and providing distribution sites on city-owned property.
- 3.4.6 Consider local policy options, such as permit fee reductions, for food producers operating at small scale or using conservation practices.
- 3.4.7 Assess opportunities to align City purchasing practices where applicable with values-based criteria such as local sourcing, environmental sustainability, and equity. Where Tumwater’s procurement is limited, promote public awareness of these values through communications and support similar efforts by partner agencies, when feasible.
- 3.4.8 Encourage farm-to-table connections by collaborating with regional food system partners to support initiatives that help local restaurants, bakeries, caterers, and butchers to access regional ingredients. This may include promotional campaigns, networking events, or technical assistance.

3.5 Increase local food production capacity.

- 3.5.1 Foster workforce development and support new farmers by continuing to support educational activities through the Tumwater School District, including the Tumwater FRESH Program at Isabella Bush Park, alongside partnerships with New Market Skills Center and South Puget Sound Community College to build a skilled food and agriculture workforce.

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- 3.5.2 Explore partnerships to foster workforce development and encourage new farmers by supporting Thurston Conservation District's FarmLink and Farm My Yard programs and creating pathways for new farmers to access land, training, and technical support.
- 3.5.3 Foster workforce development and support new farmers by supporting community-based organizations and existing commercial kitchens, such as Enterprise for Equity, ASHHO, and Our Community Kitchen, to offer business incubation and mentorship opportunities for beginning food processors and producers.
- 3.5.4 Promote the economic viability of small-scale farming by supporting efforts to make small-scale and urban farming financially sustainable by exploring ways to reduce regulatory barriers, promoting cooperative models, connecting growers with local markets and procurement opportunities, and exploring access to business support services, microgrants, and relevant state or federal funding.
- 3.5.5 Promote the economic viability of small-scale farming by encouraging creative models such as agritourism, culinary arts partnerships, and vertical farming that align with local zoning and community values.

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LIMITATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUED WORK

Tumwater's decision to develop a Food System Plan reflects growing awareness of the importance of local food systems to public health, economic resilience, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. This Plan provides a strong starting point for advancing these goals.

However, the scope of this work was necessarily constrained by a modest budget and a limited timeline. The methodology was intentionally designed to align with these parameters, including a targeted number of subject matter expert interviews and a streamlined review of existing planning documents and research. More expansive engagement, particularly with additional food system stakeholders and communities most impacted by food insecurity, would provide valuable insights that were beyond the current project's scope.

The community needs assessment offers a non-exhaustive inventory of existing conditions, programs, and partnerships. Given the rapidly shifting political landscape at the federal level and constrained state and federal budgets, policies impacting local food systems are in active flux. As such, some elements of this assessment may become outdated quickly, and opportunities identified in this Plan may require adjustment as conditions continue to evolve.

Similarly, the Goals, Policies, and Opportunities outlined in this Plan reflect what could be developed and vetted within the available resources. A more comprehensive set of opportunities could be proposed with additional time, staffing, and sustained community input. Many other jurisdictions that have engaged in food system planning have done so over the course of multiple years and often benefit from the involvement of standing bodies such as regional food policy councils or interdepartmental task forces.

The scope of this planning effort also called for the inclusion of key performance indicators and a method for maintaining and updating resource materials. While some suggested metrics and monitoring approaches are implied in the Goals, Policies, and Opportunities, this Plan does not yet offer a fully developed key performance indicators framework or system for resource tracking. These are important next steps that will require additional input and coordination from Tumwater staff and partners. Establishing shared accountability structures, such as a cross-departmental team or regional advisory group, could help define appropriate performance measures, develop a reporting mechanism, and determine how updates to resource materials are collected and shared over time.

As Tumwater continues this important work, it is recommended that the City consider this Plan a foundational document and explore mechanisms to support ongoing learning, refinement, and implementation, such as establishing a stakeholder advisory group, commissioning deeper analyses of key issue areas, and engaging in broader public input processes. Regional collaboration may also support alignment, resource sharing, and long-term impact across jurisdictions.

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APPENDIX A – SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

Aherlow Kasjaka	Thurston Asset Building Coalition
Alyssa Jones Wood	City of Tumwater, Water Resources & Sustainability
Amanda Musser	WSU Extension Thurston County SNAP-Ed
Amanda Romero	Thurston County Public Works
Anita de Boer	Tunawerth LLC
Annie Salafsky	WSU Extension Thurston County, Southwest Washington Growers Cooperative
Bob Gibson	Tumwater School District, Food Services
Carissa Miller	Withywindle Valley Farm
Cathy Visser	True for You Nutrition, LLC.
Chris Hyde	The Food Source Foundation
Christine Ciancetta	WA State Department of Health
Cristian Salazar	Centro Integral Educativo de Olympia (CIELO)
Daniel Amodeo-Chavez	United Way of Thurston County
Deborah Williams	Tumwater Community Garden
Diane Torres	Centro Integral Educativo de Olympia (CIELO)
Hope Springer	Thurston County Public Works
Jake Yancey	Tracking Y Ranch
Jaspar Quinton	Catholic Community Services
Jen Ownbey	8 Arms Bakery
Jennifer Colvin	Colvin Ranch
Jennifer Crain	Slow Food Greater Olympia
Judy Jones	Thurston County Food Bank
Katie Rains	Washington State Dept of Agriculture
Kim Gaffi	Consultant, co-founder GRuB
Kristen Maring	Tumwater High School, FRESH
Kyle Taylor Lucas	Tenants United at Western Plaza Mobile Home Park & Urban Indians Northwest
LeeAnn Perry	Little Free Pantry
Loretta Seppanen	Slow Food Greater Olympia and Community Farm Land Trust member
Mackenzie McCall	Farmer, South Sound Food System Network, formerly with Thurston County Food Bank
Maegan Cote	Mt. View Church
Maggie Brown	Thurston County Public Works
Margaret Garrett	Educational Service District 101
Marilyn Sitaker	WSU Thurston County Extension, Southwest Washington Food Hub
Megumi Sugihara	Everyone's Food Sovereignty Alliance
Meredith Arseneau	Educational Service District 113
Michaela Winkley	Thurston County Food Bank
Mitch Lewis	Summit Farms, Tumwater Farmers' Market
Morgan Hartline	Washington State Dept of Health

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Nora White	Thurston Conservation District
Peter Epperson	Retired, formerly with regional public and nonprofit service organizations
Peter Guttchen	Formerly with Thurston County Public Works, WA Dept of Ecology
Rebekah Graham	Thurston County Food Bank
Robby Rutledge	Rutledge Family Farm
Senior Council	City of Tumwater, Old Town Center
Shawn Crimmins	City of Tumwater, Fire Department
Shelly Willis	Family Education & Support Services (FESS)
Stephanie Penland	Senior Services of South Sound
Theresa Kimball	Wild Fun Farm
Tina Sharp	Thurston Economic Development Council
Tina Wagner	Thurston Conservation District
TJ Johnson	Urban Futures Farm, Thurston Conservation District
Todd Anderson	City of Tumwater, Parks & Recreation
Treacy Kreger	Vern's Foods, Our Community Kitchen, South Sound Fresh

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APPENDIX B – SURVEY & INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**Survey Instrument**

These questions were set up as text boxes in an online survey tool. Any question could be skipped.

1. How would you describe your role in our local food system (for example: grower, distributor, processor, retailer, advocate, member of a community organization, chef, educator, waste manager, policymaker, etc.)? Please include your title and the name of your business or organization if applicable.
2. What do you think is the biggest challenge people face when trying to get local, nutritious food?
3. What unmet needs, challenges, or barriers do you see in your role or in your sector of the local food system?
4. What new issues or changes are happening in your part of the food system?
5. How do things like prices, demand, or outside markets affect your part of the food system?
6. In your view, how has climate change or climate change mitigation impacted the work you do in the food system?
7. How do you or your sector of the food system approach food-related waste?
8. How does food-related waste management impact your part of the food system?
9. What opportunities or ideas do you see for improving the way food is grown, shared, eaten, or disposed of in our area?
10. Do you currently collaborate with other organizations or individuals in the local food system? If yes, please list and/or describe these collaborations.
11. Do you feel there are any current policies or practices in Tumwater that make it easier or harder to have a strong local food system? If so, please describe.
12. What new policies or practices could Tumwater implement to support a better local food system?
13. Have you seen any great ideas or successful programs in other places that you think could work here in Tumwater?
14. Is there anything else you would like us to know about Tumwater's food system or your experiences/ideas?

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Interview Questions

These questions were used as a general framework to guide conversations.

1. When you think about our local food system, what comes to mind?
2. How would you describe your role in the local food system?
3. What is the biggest barrier to accessing local, nutritious food?
4. What are some emerging issues in your sector of the food system?
5. What unmet needs, challenges, or barriers do you see in your sector of the food system?
6. How is your sector impacted by external market forces?
7. How is your sector impacted by climate change?
8. How has your sector been affected by waste management practices?
9. What are the biggest upcoming or current opportunities for improving our local food system that you know about?
10. What policies or practices are currently in place in Tumwater that hinder a thriving local food system from your sector's perspective?
11. What policies or practices could we enact in Tumwater to support a thriving local food system from your sector's perspective?
12. Are there any best practices you have seen in other places you would like to see replicated in Tumwater?
13. Is there anyone else you think I should speak to?

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APPENDIX C – REFERENCES

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Food System Plan: Draft Goals, Policies, & Opportunities

Planning Commission

September 9, 2025

Rebeca Potasnik
rebeca.potasnik@gmail.com
360-977-0476



Guiding Principles

Equity - A food system should support food security with an emphasis on those community members that experience the greatest inequities.

Sustainability - A balance between environmental health, economic profitability, & social equity creates a resilient food system that meets current food needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Stability - All community members should have reliable access to sufficient, safe, appropriate, & nutritious food, even in the face of unexpected challenges.

Resiliency - The food system should maintain its functionality & continue to provide food security & nutrition under various adverse conditions.

Efficacy - The audience for the plan is the City of Tumwater, therefore, the objectives & actions in this plan will be the areas where this level of government can have the most impact.



**Goal 1: Provide access to fresh,
nutritious, culturally appropriate
food for all members of the
community.**



1.1 Expand access to healthy, culturally relevant, & affordable food from both local & non-local sources across all neighborhoods.

- 1.1.1 Partner with the Thurston County Food Bank to establish a satellite brick-and-mortar food bank in Tumwater near the new Tumwater Community Center.
- 1.1.2 Work with regional partners to make free and subsidized community garden plots available citywide and prioritize funding for low-income households.
- 1.1.3 Support farmers to become certified to accept EBT/SNAP benefits from customers.
- 1.1.4 Work with interest groups to identify and address barriers to consistent scheduling to support increased weekly operations of the Tumwater Farmers Market during its core season and explore off-season openings.
- 1.1.5 Use Tumwater's communication channels to increase access to and visibility of food assistance programs (e.g., food banks/pantries, SNAP, Market Match, SUN Bucks) and to promote food bank satellite locations and donations.
- 1.1.6 Continue to support food access through senior meal programs, city-sponsored events, and youth programs where allowable, and prioritize the inclusion of fresh, seasonal, and culturally relevant local foods, particularly in services benefiting low-income or vulnerable populations.



1.2 Enhance public education & outreach related to the local food system.

- 1.2.1 Integrate food, gardening, and nutrition learning opportunities into city sponsored programming with incentives to participate, such as classes offered through the Department of Parks and Recreation and at community events.
- 1.2.2 Promote partner led, community-based initiatives such as cooking classes, gardening workshops, and nutrition education tailored to underserved populations.
- 1.2.3 Continue to support funding for Tumwater school garden maintenance and education.



1.3 Increase opportunities for individual & community self-reliance.

- 1.3.1 Engage with Thurston Conservation District to support community garden expansion, GIS studies for urban agriculture land identification, soil testing, and code review.
- 1.3.2 Expand partnerships for edible landscaping and urban fruit and nut tree planting in public spaces including parks and along pedestrian corridors with scheduled community care and harvest days.
- 1.3.3 Build relationships with homeowner associations to better understand their needs and to provide support and remove barriers that would allow home food gardens and climate-resilient landscaping which conserves water for food production.



1.4 Ensure supportive infrastructure, zoning, & land use policies.

- 1.4.1 Encourage walkable and bikeable neighborhoods with access to fresh food outlets, including farmers markets and grocery stores to reduce food deserts.
- 1.4.2 Support siting the Tumwater Farmers Market near a community gathering area.
- 1.4.3 Explore including food access as a design consideration for new developments including access to food retailers and spaces for urban agriculture/community gardens.
- 1.4.4 Explore opportunities to allow temporary or pop-up food distribution sites (e.g., food share hubs, mutual aid stands, gleaning events) through clear guidelines and permitting processes that balance flexibility with neighborhood and safety considerations.
- 1.4.5 Develop and maintain a GIS map of free food pantries, neighborhood-based food distribution sites, food bank satellites, and other free food distribution sites to support coordination, identify service gaps, and improve visibility for those seeking food assistance.



1.5 Ensure supportive infrastructure, zoning, & land use policies.

- 1.5.1 Advocate for regional funding and coordinate cross-jurisdictional planning, investments, and grant applications for shared infrastructure.
- 1.5.2 Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by collaborating with Thurston County Emergency Management to integrate food security into disaster preparedness plans including identification of nearest non-impacted supply chains and ensuring food storage, recovery, and redistribution plans are part of emergency response frameworks.
- 1.5.3 Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by developing and coordinating policies and staffing models for rapid response food systems during future crises, including sourcing, safety, and volunteer mobilization.
- 1.5.4 Support existing pop-up food distribution efforts as part of community emergency response capacity.



1.5 Ensure supportive infrastructure, zoning, & land use policies.

- 1.5.5 Assess cold storage needs and explore opportunities to expand infrastructure such as shared-use refrigeration at community centers, food hubs, or partner facilities—while supporting efforts to increase capacity and ensure reliable access during emergencies.
- 1.5.6 Map existing food production, storage, and distribution resources within Tumwater to support internal planning and emergency response coordination.
- 1.5.7 Improve emergency preparedness and climate resilience by supporting increased financial resources for community-led organizations working to enhance food security in Tumwater and the surrounding region.



Goal 2: Reduce food waste.

2.1 Collaborate on strategies to prevent food waste at all stages of the food system.

- 2.1.1 Support local schools to reduce food waste by providing a minimum of 20 minutes of seated lunch time, which improves nutrition and reduces plate waste.
- 2.1.2 Partner with Thurston County Public Works and food assistance organizations to reduce edible food waste at transfer stations by creating clear donation guidance and outreach for truckers and other supply chain actors, addressing common barriers like time pressure, lack of information, and logistical challenges.
- 2.1.3 Collaborate with regional partners to develop and distribute customized educational materials and mailers to residents and businesses focused on source reduction.
- 2.1.4 Promote food waste reduction among local businesses through campaigns that highlight cost savings, environmental benefits, and compliance with Washington's commercial organics recycling requirements—while encouraging participation from businesses of all sizes, including those not subject to the mandate.



2.2 Partner with Thurston County to increase community-wide food waste education & engagement.

- 2.2.1 Participate in and promote Food Waste Prevention Week and related events at the Tumwater and regional level.
- 2.2.2 Offer community compost giveaways and food waste education events through the Department of Parks and Recreation and other community programs.
- 2.2.3 Create and promote engaging social media campaigns and signage to inform the public about food waste prevention best practices and available composting programs.
- 2.2.4 Include food waste prevention as a component of relevant grant funding criteria such as neighborhood matching grants.
- 2.2.5 Offer workshops on food storage, preservation, and meal planning to help individuals and businesses reduce food waste.



2.3 Expand food recovery & redistribution systems.

- 2.3.1 Ensure composting systems are used at all Tumwater public facilities and programs.
- 2.3.2 Partner with Thurston County Public Works to educate businesses and residents on proper composting practices to reduce contamination and increase participation.
- 2.3.3 Reinvigorate regional food rescue initiatives by identifying historic and resident-led models and new opportunities.
- 2.3.4 Support the creation of a regional, centralized database or platform to connect food waste producers with organizations that can redistribute food to those in need.



Goal 3: Support local food processing & production.



3.1 Reduce barriers and provide incentives for local growers & producers.

- 3.1.1 Collaborate with local, regional, and state partners, such as those involved in the Craft and Warehouse districts, to support and promote opportunities for local producers to access and expand markets.
- 3.1.2 Explore partnerships to improve access to land, water, and infrastructure for food producers by supporting shared-use models, facilitating connections to underutilized private or public land, and leveraging programs such as land leases and technical assistance.
- 3.1.3 Review existing land use regulations to identify barriers that disproportionately limit food production opportunities for low-income households and those on smaller lots.
- 3.1.4 Support water access and explore potential rate reductions for urban agriculture, community gardens, and school gardens such as stormwater fee waivers, fire hydrant access, and subsidized or waived system development charges—recognizing their role in strengthening food security, fostering education and community resilience, supporting local economies, and contributing to emergency preparedness.



3.1 Reduce barriers and provide incentives for local growers & producers.

- 3.1.5 Facilitate networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities among local growers, processors, and market operators to strengthen community connections and business viability.
- 3.1.6 Explore ways to support local direct-to-consumer programs, such as bakery shares (subscription-based access to baked goods) and produce pickup sites, to diversify market options for producers and consumers.
- 3.1.7 Develop a comprehensive toolkit for aspiring and current local food producers, including farmstands, community gardens, p-patches, and backyard poultry—detailing permit requirements, best practices, available resources, and contacts for technical assistance.
- 3.1.8 Explore opportunities to connect culinary entrepreneurship and food system innovation with arts and cultural events and technology funding streams, including vertical farming and agritourism.



3.2 Support access to land for local food production by historically underserved & aspiring farmers, & coordinate with partners to conserve agriculturally viable lands in appropriate areas.

- 3.2.1 Partner with the Community Farm Land Trust and Thurston County to explore mechanisms such as urban growth area swaps and farmland easements for conserving high-value agricultural land adjacent to Tumwater's Urban Growth Area, while supporting farmland transitions to new farmers.
- 3.2.2 Promote and expand access to food production on suitable underutilized private and public or quasi-public lands within city limits by supporting programs such as those offered by community-based organizations, where feasible, and consistent with land use and environmental constraints.
- 3.2.3 Consider reviewing and amending development regulations to allow small-scale farm stands, including in residential neighborhoods, to support local growers and increase access to fresh food.
- 3.2.4 Map locations where city-owned or managed resources (e.g., land, water access, infrastructure) are currently used for food production. Use this data to inform land use planning, resource allocation, and future urban agriculture initiatives.



3.3 Strengthen local food system infrastructure.

- 3.3.1 Support regional partnerships to develop shared-use food infrastructure, such as processing, cold storage, and commercial kitchen facilities, by leveraging city assets and pursuing state, federal, and philanthropic funding opportunities. Evaluate the feasibility of repurposing existing sites in Tumwater, including underutilized or public facilities, where appropriate.
- 3.3.2 Explore strategic investments and partnerships with food hubs to expand regional aggregation and distribution capacity that supports small- and mid-scale producers and improves food access.



3.4 Promote local food purchasing and community engagement.

- 3.4.1 Educate and engage the community on the value of local food by coordinating public education efforts highlighting the health, environmental, and economic benefits of local food systems, including the role of regenerative agriculture in climate resilience and carbon sequestration.
- 3.4.2 Educate and engage the community on the value of local food by celebrating local food and producers through storytelling, city-sponsored events, informational signage, and communications platforms—focusing on systems and practices rather than promoting specific businesses.
- 3.4.3 Raise awareness of the broader impacts of food choices by educating residents about the social, environmental, and economic costs of industrial food systems and the value of local purchasing. Strategies may include community events such as a local food or film festival, themed messaging on city social media and newsletters, and interactive booths at public gatherings like the Tumwater Farmers Market or Arbor Day celebrations, for example.



3.4 Promote local food purchasing and community engagement.

- 3.4.4 Strengthen local markets and values-aligned public purchasing by identifying existing barriers and exploring mechanisms and partnerships to support the Tumwater Farmers Market's scale and sustainability, such as operational funding, expanded schedules, improved signage, and vendor subsidies.
- 3.4.5 Strengthen local markets through support of local food hubs by educating and engaging the community with the model and providing distribution sites on city-owned property.
- 3.4.6 Consider local policy options, such as permit fee reductions, for food producers operating at small scale or using conservation practices.



3.4 Promote local food purchasing and community engagement.

- 3.4.7 Assess opportunities to align City purchasing practices where applicable with values-based criteria such as local sourcing, environmental sustainability, and equity. Where Tumwater's procurement is limited, promote public awareness of these values through communications and support similar efforts by partner agencies, when feasible.
- 3.4.8 Encourage farm-to-table connections by collaborating with regional food system partners to support initiatives that help local restaurants, bakeries, caterers, and butchers to access regional ingredients. This may include promotional campaigns, networking events, or technical assistance.



3.5 Form partnerships to increase local food production capacity.

- 3.5.1 Foster workforce development and support new farmers by continuing to support educational activities through the Tumwater School District, including the Tumwater FRESH Program at Isabella Bush Park, alongside partnerships with New Market Skills Center and South Puget Sound Community College to build a skilled food and agriculture workforce.
- 3.5.2 Explore partnerships to foster workforce development and encourage new farmers by supporting Thurston Conservation District's FarmLink and Farm My Yard programs and creating pathways for new farmers to access land, training, and technical support.
- 3.5.3 Foster workforce development and support new farmers by supporting community-based organizations and existing commercial kitchens, such as Enterprise for Equity, ASHHO, and Our Community Kitchen, to offer business incubation and mentorship opportunities for beginning food processors and producers.



3.5 Form partnerships to increase local food production capacity.

- 3.5.4 Promote the economic viability of small-scale farming by supporting efforts to make small-scale and urban farming financially sustainable by exploring ways to reduce regulatory barriers, promoting cooperative models, connecting growers with local markets and procurement opportunities, and exploring access to business support services, microgrants, and relevant state or federal funding.
- 3.5.5 Promote the economic viability of small-scale farming by encouraging creative models such as agritourism, culinary arts partnerships, and vertical farming that align with local zoning and community values.



TO: Planning Commission
 FROM: Brad Medrud, Community Development Director
 DATE: September 9, 2025
 SUBJECT: 2025 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update – Plan Introduction

1) Recommended Action:

This is a discussion item about the Plan Introduction and the adoption schedule for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan periodic update.

2) Background:

On a ten-year cycle, the City is required to conduct a Growth Management Act periodic update of its Comprehensive Plan and related development regulations. For the current cycle, the City is required to complete work on the periodic update by December 31, 2025.

The updated Comprehensive Plan will address diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the Plan. [2025 Comprehensive Plan Update | City of Tumwater, WA](#) contains links to guidance material and information about the update.

The intent of this briefing is to present the draft Plan Introduction and discuss the upcoming Comprehensive Plan and development code update adoption schedule.

Staff would like to get input on the following:

- Given the size and the complexity of the Comprehensive Plan and Development Code update ordinance, what are the most important things that you would like staff to focus on to help your discussions?
 - For the joint work sessions with the City Council and the Planning Commission, what are the key areas that you would like to have as the focus for your discussions and how can staff help facilitate those discussions?
-

3) Alternatives:

☐ None.

4) Attachments:

- A. Staff Report
- B. Presentation
- C. Plan Introduction
- D. Plan Introduction – Appendix A County-Wide Planning Policies

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 9, 2025
 To: Planning Commission
 From: Brad Medrud, Community Development Director



2025 Comprehensive Plan Update – Plan Introduction and Schedule

On a ten-year cycle, Tumwater is required to conduct a Growth Management Act periodic update of its Comprehensive Plan and related development regulations. For the current cycle, Tumwater is required to complete work on the periodic update by December 31, 2025.

The updated Comprehensive Plan will address diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the Plan and incorporate many of the State required changes addressing housing, climate change, and other topics.

The intent of the Planning Commission meeting on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, is to discuss the Plan Introduction and structure of the upcoming adoption schedule.

1 – Intent and Structure of the Plan Introduction

The Plan Introduction is intended to address the components of the Comprehensive Plan that are applicable across all the Plan's Elements. A separate User Guide will be available that provides a graphic road map to the entire Plan.

Chapter 1 Foundation of the Plan

Chapter 1 provides a short background to the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan, how it is based on the City's vision, mission, and values, as well as the goals of the Growth Management act and the Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies. It also explains the Plan amendment and update processes, the ongoing Plan review program, as well as how public participation and intergovernmental coordination will be addressed.

Chapter 2 Overall Plan Goals

Chapter 2 discusses the overarching Comprehensive Plan goals related to engagement, coordination, community vibrancy, equity, climate resilience, fiscal stewardship, and environmental protection and enhancement.

Appendix A Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies

Appendix A contains the Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies as updated by the County Board of Commissioners in March 2025.

Appendix B Ordinance No. O2025-010

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Appendix B will contain a copy of the final, adopted Ordinance No. O2025-010.

2 – Update Schedules

The schedules below are for three separate ordinances that will be brought forward in the Fall of 2025 and Winter of 2026:

1. 2025 Comprehensive Plan amendment (2026-27 Capital Facilities Plan) (Ord. No. O2025-009)
2. 2025 Comprehensive Plan update (Ord. No. O2025-010)
3. 2025 Development Code update (Ord. No. O2025-011)

There will be a second Development Code update brought forward in the first half of 2026 that will address the code changes that support the Comprehensive Plan update but are not specifically required to be adopted by December 31, 2025.

The 2025 Comprehensive Plan amendment, which will address the 2026-27 Capital Facilities Plan, will go through the ordinance review and adoption process first, so that it is adopted before the end of 2025. The content of the 2026-27 Capital Facilities Plan reflects the work completed as part of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update.

Discussion and adoption of the ordinances for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan and Development Code updates will occur on the same timeline and at the same meetings.

The two updates have two joint work sessions scheduled with the City Council and Planning Commission. The first work session on November 24, 2025, will occur before the Planning Commission hearing on the ordinances in early December 2025, and is intended to allow the Council and Commission to discuss the complete Plan update and updated development code. The second work session on January 13, 2026, is intended to allow the Planning Commission the opportunity to discuss their recommendations on the ordinances with the City Council.

As part of our discussion with the Planning Commission, staff would like input from the Planning Commission on the following questions:

- **Given the size and the complexity of the Comprehensive Plan and Development Code update ordinance, what are the most important things that you would like staff to focus on to help your discussions?**
- **For the joint work sessions with the City Council and the Planning Commission, what are the key areas that you would like to have as the focus for your discussions and how can staff help facilitate those discussions?**

A. 2025 Comprehensive Plan Amendments – Capital Facilities Plan (Ord. No. O2025-009)

1) SEPA Review

- September 15, 2025 – Complete SEPA Environmental Checklist

- September 19, 2025 – SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance Issued
- October 15, 2025 – End of SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance Comment Period

1) State Commerce Notice of Intent Process

- September 15, 2025 – File 60-Day Notice of Intent
- November 14, 2025 – End of 60-Day Notice of Intent

2) Planning Commission Review and Hearing

- September 23, 2025 – Briefing
- October 14, 2025 – Work session
- October 28, 2025 – Hearing

3) City Council Review and Consideration

- September 18, 2025 – Public Works Committee briefing
- November 12, 2025 – General Government Committee briefing
- November 25, 2025 – Work session
- December 2, 2025 – Consideration

B. 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update Adoption (Ord. No. O2025-010)

1) SEPA Review

- October 17, 2025 – Complete SEPA Environmental Checklist
- October 22, 2025 – SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance Issued
- November 12, 2025 – End of SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance Comment Period

2) State Commerce Notice of Intent Process

- October 17, 2025 – File 60-Day Notice of Intent
- December 17, 2025 – End of 60-Day Notice of Intent

3) Planning Commission Review and Hearing

- October 28, 2025 – Briefing
- November 10, 2025 – Work session
- November 24, 2025 – Joint City Council and Planning Commission work session

- December 9, 2025 – Hearing

4) City Council Review and Consideration

- January 13, 2026 – Joint City Council and Planning Commission work session
- January 27, 2026 – Work session
- February 17, 2026 – Consideration

C. 2025 Development Code Update Adoption (Ord. No. O2025-011)

1) SEPA Review

- October 17, 2025 – Complete SEPA Environmental Checklist
- October 22, 2025 – SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance Issued
- November 12, 2025 – End of SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance Comment Period

2) State Commerce Notice of Intent Process

- October 17, 2025 – File 60-Day Notice of Intent
- December 17, 2025 – End of 60-Day Notice of Intent

3) Planning Commission Review and Hearing

- October 28, 2025 – Briefing
- November 10, 2025 – Work session
- November 24, 2025 – Joint City Council and Planning Commission work session
- December 9, 2025 – Hearing

5) City Council Review and Consideration

- January 13, 2026 – Joint City Council and Planning Commission work session
- January 27, 2026 – Work session
- February 17, 2026 – Consideration

D. 2026 Development Code Update Adoption (Ord. No. O2026-0XX)

Will occur in the first half of 2026.

2025 Comprehensive Plan Update Plan Introduction and Schedule

*Balancing Nature and Community:
Tumwater's Path to Sustainable Growth*

Planning Commission, September 9, 2025



Intent

- Review the Plan Introduction
- Discuss the ordinance adoption schedule





Plan Introduction

Format for the Plan Introduction



Chapter 1 – Foundation of the Plan



Chapter 2 – Overall Plan Goals



Appendix A – Thurston County
County-Wide Planning Policies



Appendix B – Ordinance No.
02025-010



Foundation of the Plan

- Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan
- How it is based on the City's vision, mission, and values, as well as the goals of the Growth Management act and the Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies
- Plan amendment and update processes
- Ongoing Plan review program
- Public participation
- Intergovernmental coordination



Overall Plan Goals

A. Engagement

Goal PI-1 Continuously engage with the community and the region.

B. Coordination

Goal PI-2 Ensure coordination between Elements, Plans, and Subarea Plans of the Comprehensive Plan.



Overall Plan Goals

C. Community Vibrancy

Goal PI-3 Foster livability by evoking a sense of identity through arts, culture, and history and attracting and sustaining desired economic activity that supports the community by making investments that emphasize Tumwater as a welcoming place and enhance community building.



Overall Plan Goals

D. Equity

Goal PI-4 Ensure that all members of the community, especially those whose needs have been systematically neglected, are well served by making decisions and investments through an inclusive process which results in equitable outcomes.



Overall Plan Goals

E. Climate Resilience

Goal PI-5 Increase climate resiliency by promoting sustainability, reducing pollution, promoting healthy habitats, and supporting clean air and water.



Overall Plan Goals

F. Fiscal Stewardship

Goal PI-6 Make wise investments of public and private funds in community infrastructure and projects.

G. Environmental Protection and Enhancement

Goal PI-7 Protect and enhance the environment.





Update Adoption Schedule

Three Separate Ordinances

Three separate ordinances that will be brought forward in the Fall of 2025 and Winter of 2026:

1. 2025 Comprehensive Plan amendment (2026-27 Capital Facilities Plan) (Ord. No. 02025-009)
2. 2025 Comprehensive Plan update (Ord. No. 02025-010)
3. 2025 Development Code update (Ord. No. 02025-011)



2025 Comprehensive Plan Amendments – CFP

SEPA Review

- September 15, 2025 – October 15, 2025

State Commerce Notice of Intent Process

- September 15, 2025 – November 14, 2025

Planning Commission Review and Hearing

- September 23, 2025 – Briefing
- October 14, 2025 – Work session
- October 28, 2025 – Hearing



2025 Comprehensive Plan Amendments – CFP

City Council Review and Consideration

- September 18, 2025 – Public Works Committee briefing
- November 12, 2025 – General Government Committee briefing
- November 25, 2025 – Work session
- December 2, 2025 – Consideration



Input Requested

As part of our discussion, staff would like input from the Planning Commission on the following questions:

1. Given the size and the complexity of the Comprehensive Plan and Development Code update ordinance, what are the most important things that you would like staff to focus on to help your discussions?
2. For the joint work sessions with the City Council and the Planning Commission, what are the key areas that you would like to have as the focus for your discussions and how can staff help facilitate those discussions?



Comprehensive Plan and Development Code Update

SEPA Review

- October 17, 2025 – November 12, 2025

State Commerce Notice of Intent Process

- October 17, 2025 – December 17, 2025



Comprehensive Plan and Development Code Update

Planning Commission Review and Hearing

- October 28, 2025 – Briefings
- November 10, 2025 – Work sessions
- **November 24, 2025 – Joint City Council and Planning Commission work sessions**
- December 9, 2025 – Planning Commission hearings

Comprehensive Plan and Development Code Update

City Council Review and Consideration

- January 13, 2026 – Joint City Council and Planning Commission work sessions
- January 27, 2026 – Work sessions
- February 17, 2026 – Considerations



2026 Development Code Update

There will be a second Development Code update ordinance in the first half of 2026 to address the code changes that support the Comprehensive Plan update but are not specifically required to be adopted by December 31, 2025



Submitting Comments or Questions

Written comments or questions are welcome at any time during the periodic update process

- Update website: [2025 Comprehensive Plan Update](#)
- Periodic update email: compplan@ci.tumwater.wa.us
- City of Tumwater contact:
Community Development Department
555 Israel Road SW
Tumwater, WA 98501
Phone: 360-754-4180
Email: compplan@ci.tumwater.wa.us



Plan Introduction

City of Tumwater 2025 Comprehensive Plan

Balancing Nature and Community: Tumwater's Path to Sustainable Growth

DRAFT VERSION AUGUST 29, 2025

December 2025

Ordinance No. O2025-010





Plan Introduction

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Abbreviations Used in Document

CDD – Community Development Department

RCW – Revised Code of Washington



Plan Introduction

1. Foundation of the Plan

A. Background

The Plan Introduction is part of Tumwater's Comprehensive Plan, which was prepared in response to the state Growth Management Act

(Chapter 36.70A RCW). It is intended to provide the foundation for the Comprehensive Plan and its overarching goals.

B. Purpose and Scope of the Comprehensive Plan

The Plan serves as Tumwater's road map for accommodating growth in the City and its urban growth area from 2026 to 2045. The Tumwater Comprehensive Plan was prepared in

accordance with the requirements of the Growth Management Act (Chapter 36.70A RCW) and adopted Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies.

C. Vision, Mission, and Values

The following vision, mission, and values provide the overarching direction for the future of Tumwater and were developed by the City Council through Tumwater's Strategic Planning Process in 2025.

1) Vision – The Why

Tumwater of the future will be people-oriented and highly livable, with a strong economy, dynamic places, vibrant neighborhoods, a healthy natural environment, diverse and engaged residents, and a living connection to its history.

2) Mission – The What

In active partnership with our community, we provide courageous leadership and essential municipal services to cultivate a prosperous economy, a healthy natural environment, vibrant neighborhoods, and supportive social fabric.

3) Values

a) People

We respect the diverse people that make up the social fabric of our community and strive to be inclusive of all people. We value and seek to strengthen our vibrant neighborhoods, which are cornerstones of civic life and community identity. As we pursue our goals and the long-term sustainability of Tumwater organization, we value the contributions and diversity of our staff, support their continued personal and professional growth, and act to retain their expertise for the good of the community.

b) Environment

We act to preserve and enhance the natural environment and the social fabric of our community.

c) Opportunity

We seize opportunities to improve our community's social, environmental, and economic well-being. We endeavor to realize



Plan Introduction

positive opportunities in adverse situations and periods of change.

d) *Partnership*

We work collaboratively with residents, businesses, and community organizations. We also actively partner with other jurisdictions to address regional, state, and even broader issues.

e) *Learning*

We are a learning organization which strives to benefit from past experience, foresight, and innovation to seek new ways to enhance the community and improve City operations and services.

f) *Excellence*

We strive for excellence and integrity in providing City services. By providing quality services, being responsible and efficient stewards of public resources, and empowering employees to achieve excellence, we continue to build public trust and encourage civic involvement. We know that excellence does not have to come at the price of our sense of community or our small city character.

4) Strategic Focus Areas – The How

The following Tumwater strategic focus areas guide the realization of Tumwater’s vision.

The City’s Strategic Priorities and Goals 2025 – 2026 include the following focus areas:

- **Vibrant, Livable, and Inclusive Community** – Build a community recognized for quality, compassion, and humanity.
- **Environmental Stewardship** – Be a leader in environmental health and sustainability.
- **Community Mobility** – Create and maintain a transportation system safe for all modes of travel.
- **Health and Safety** – Provide and sustain quality public safety services.
- **Growth and Development** – Pursue and support targeted community and economic development.
- **Tumwater Excellence** – Refine and sustain a great organization.

D. Growth Management Act Goals

The State of Washington requires Tumwater to plan under the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.040).

The following fifteen Growth Management Act goals guide the development and adoption of Tumwater’s Comprehensive Plan and development regulations and are not listed in order of priority. Each Element of the Comprehensive Plan describes how it meets the goals applicable to its topic area.

1. **Urban growth.** *Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.*
2. **Reduce sprawl.** *Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.*
3. **Transportation.** *Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that*



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will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled, and are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.

4. **Housing.** *Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.*
5. **Economic development.** *Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.*
6. **Property rights.** *Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.*
7. **Permits.** *Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.*
8. **Natural resource industries.** *Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses.*
9. **Open space and recreation.** *Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.*
10. **Environment.** *Protect and enhance the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.*
11. **Citizen participation and coordination.** *Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.*
12. **Public facilities and services.** *Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.*
13. **Historic preservation.** *Identify and encourage the preservation of lands,*



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sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance.

- 14. Climate change and resiliency.** *Ensure that the City's Comprehensive Plans and development regulations adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate; support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled; prepare for climate impact scenarios; foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural*

hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and advance environmental justice.

- 15. Shorelines of the state.** *For shorelines of the state, the goals and policies of the shoreline management act as set forth in RCW 90.58.020 shall be considered an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan.*

E. County-Wide Planning Policies

The Growth Management Act requires that Tumwater's Comprehensive Plan be consistent with the Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies, as amended in 2025.

The adopted County-Wide Planning Policies are included in this document in their entirety in Appendix A. Relevant policies are also included in the introduction section of each Element.

F. Amendments and Updates

The Comprehensive Plan is subject to amendment to ensure internal and interjurisdictional consistency of the Comprehensive Plan and with the development regulations implementing the Comprehensive Plan. An evaluation of new conditions will be an integral part of the amendment process.

State law allows amendment of the Comprehensive Plan once annually, except in cases of emergency as determined by the City Council. The process Tumwater uses to amend the plan and development regulations implementing the plan is set forth in Chapter 18.60 Tumwater Municipal Code.

The Planning Commission and City Council will individually consider concurrently all proposed changes to the document accumulated over time since the last amendment, to ascertain the cumulative impact of the proposed changes.

The Comprehensive Plan may be amended outside of the normal annual amendment cycle if findings are adopted by the City Council demonstrating that the emergency meets all the following criteria:

1. The circumstances of the emergency request, if processed within the normal amendment cycle, will result in delays that contribute to significant imminent impact on the community in general, or a specific neighborhood; and
2. The emergency request relates to an issue or issues of a community or neighborhood-wide significance beyond the interests of a particular property owner, provided that an issue pertaining to an individual property may be considered if findings reveal that impacts to the community or specific



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neighborhood would result from the individual property.

The nature of the emergency and the proposed amendment shall be presented to the City

Council, which shall decide if the proposal qualifies as an emergency. Any proposal deemed an emergency should proceed ahead of the normal amendment schedule.

G. Ongoing Plan Review Program

The Comprehensive Plan is meant to be a flexible and easily used document. As Tumwater grows and changes, the Comprehensive Plan will need to be revised and amended to reflect new circumstances.

Tumwater will undertake a program of ongoing review to monitor the performance of its Comprehensive Plan goals, policies, and implementation actions. This will be done principally through the annual Comprehensive Plan amendment process.

H. Public Participation

Public participation in comprehensive planning is required both as a matter of law and policy. The public participation program affirms Tumwater's commitment to public involvement in the planning process.

Errors in exact compliance with the established procedures do not invalidate the Comprehensive Plan or development regulations.

The intent of the public participation program is to ensure that citywide and neighborhood planning is done with the contribution of all interested parties, including residents, property owners, business owners, neighborhood associations, and other community members. Tumwater will make every effort to involve the community in the processes to develop and update the Comprehensive Plan, subarea plans, zoning, and other development regulations.

1. Before the due date for submitting requests for Comprehensive Plan amendments, Tumwater will publish an article on Tumwater's media platforms and distribute it to local news media inviting amendment requests and informing the public of the deadline.
2. Proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations that affect the unincorporated urban growth area will be subject to public hearings by the Tumwater and Thurston County Planning Commissions, the Tumwater City Council, and the Thurston County Board of Commissioners.
3. Tumwater publications, mail, email, broadcast and print media, and the City's website and social media should be

Public participation and intergovernmental coordination procedures are set forth below to ensure conformance with the Growth Management Act. Specifically, these procedures are set forth to establish policy providing for early and continuous public participation in Tumwater's development and amendment of the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations implementing the plan.



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utilized by Tumwater to inform affected parties about current or proposed plans or regulations, as well as opportunities for participation in City decision processes.

4. Procedures for providing notice of public hearings are set forth in Chapter 18.60 Tumwater Municipal Code. The City should have proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations available to the

public for inspection at City Hall during regular business hours beginning on the first business day following the date the public hearing notice is published.

5. In addition to hearings and other formal opportunities for oral and written public comment, Tumwater should use various outreach techniques such as opinion surveys, speakers' programs, forums, workshops, open houses, hands-on events, and task forces.

I. Intergovernmental Coordination

Adjacent local jurisdictions, fire districts, school districts, public transit agencies, appropriate state agencies, Port of Olympia, The Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and the Squaxin Island Tribe will be mailed notices of draft Comprehensive Plan and development regulation amendment proposals prior to final adoption by the City Council.

The notice will contain a description of the amendments and methods for obtaining the draft proposal. Methods for providing input will also be included. Whenever possible, this notification process will be accomplished prior to Planning Commission consideration and in conjunction with the state agency notification requirements set forth in RCW 36.70A.106.



Plan Introduction

2. Overall Plan Goals

A. How to Read These Tables

The Plan Introduction's goals are not in priority order.

1) Department Leads

While the implementation of the Plan Introduction's goals are associated primarily with the Community Development Department

all the other Tumwater departments will be part of the comprehensive planning process to varying degrees.

2) Period

Each of the Plan Introduction's goals are for the term of the Comprehensive Plan.

A. Engagement

Goal PI-1 Continuously engage with the community and the region.

Community engagement and participation in the comprehensive planning process are both a Tumwater policy and a state requirement, ensuring that all members of the community have a voice in Tumwater's growth and development. Tumwater will engage all

members of the public in planning for Tumwater, so decisions made regarding the growth and development of Tumwater engage all parts of the community, reflect general community goals, and are sensitive to special interests of effected parties.

B. Coordination

Goal PI-2 Ensure coordination between Elements, Plans, and Subarea Plans of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Elements, Plans, and Subarea Plans that make up Tumwater's Comprehensive Plan are interconnected, so changes in one component could affect many other parts of the Plan.

As the Comprehensive Plan is updated and amended, Tumwater will make certain that all Elements, Plans, and Subarea Plans are reviewed and amended as needed when the Comprehensive Plan is updated and amended



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C. Community Vibrancy

Goal PI-3 Foster livability by evoking a sense of identity through arts, culture, and history and attracting and sustaining desired economic activity that supports the community by making investments that emphasize Tumwater as a welcoming place and enhance community building.

Building community through the Comprehensive Plan is more than buildings and infrastructure. It is important to recognize the role played the arts, culture, history, and economic development in the creation and maintenance of Tumwater's history and what makes the City unique.

The Comprehensive Plan's Economic Development Plan, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, and Land Use Element all play important roles in supporting this goal.

D. Equity

Goal PI-4 Ensure that all members of the community, especially those whose needs have been systematically neglected, are well served by making decisions and investments through an inclusive process which results in equitable outcomes.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended serve to all members of the Tumwater community. It is important that the Plan strive to create opportunities for members of the community regardless of age, race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, familial status, marital status, ethnic background, source of income use of federal housing assistance,

disability, veteran status, protected classes, or other arbitrary factors.

The Comprehensive Plan's Climate Element, Economic Development Plan and Housing Element play important roles in supporting this goal.

E. Climate Resilience

Goal PI-5 Increase climate resiliency by promoting sustainability, reducing pollution, promoting healthy habitats, and supporting clean air and water.



Plan Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan provides the goal and policy basis for how Tumwater will develop work programs over the next 20 years to address greenhouse gas reduction and climate resilience. While the goals and policies of each

of the Element of the Plan support this goal, the Climate, Conservation, and Land Use Elements will be the primary guides for how Tumwater will meet this goal.

F. Fiscal Stewardship

Goal PI-6 Make wise investments of public and private funds in community infrastructure and projects.

The Comprehensive Plan provides the goal and policy basis for how Tumwater will address development and redevelopment of the community over the next 20 years. The Plans goals and policies are used in turn to guide Tumwater's investments during this period through the City's budget, Capital Facilities Plan,

Transportation Improvement Plan, and project identified in system plans.

Public resources are finite and wise investment of such resources is essential for the financial health and the City's ability to serve its community.

G. Environmental Protection and Enhancement

Goal PI-7 Protect and enhance the environment.

Protecting and enhancing the environment and improving Tumwater's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water, while accommodating state required growth and development is a

fundamental component of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan's Climate, Conservation, and Land Use Elements play important roles in supporting this goal.



Plan Introduction

Appendix A Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies

The Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies as amended March 18, 2025, are attached as a separate document.

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Plan Introduction

Appendix B Ordinance No. O2025-010

Ordinance No. O2025-010, approved by the City Council on XXXX, 2026, is attached as a separate document.

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Appendix A

Thurston County
COUNTY-WIDE PLANNING POLICIES
March 18, 2025

These policies were adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on September 8, 1992. They were ratified earlier by each of the seven cities and towns within Thurston County. Those seven cities and towns are Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, Bucoda, Rainier, Tenino and Yelm. On August 2, 1993, representatives of Thurston County and the seven cities and towns met to clarify intent of policies 1.2 and 1.3 and to affirm long and short term Urban Growth boundaries established in 1988 around Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater. In 2002, policies were amended to be consistent with RCW 36.70A.215 (“Buildable Lands Program”). In 2015, the policies were amended to incorporate foundational principles and policies from Creating Places, Preserving Spaces, A Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region, December 2013. In 2025, the policies were amended to be consistent with RCW 36.70.210, incorporating tribal participation and coordination. Thurston County includes ceded lands of the Medicine Creek Treaty Tribes, including the Nisqually Indian Tribe, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Squaxin Island Tribe, and other tribal nations; as well as the ceded areas of and the Reservation Home Land of the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation. These tribes will be referred to in these policies as “tribes.”

Background: The Growth Management Act calls for the faster growing counties and cities within their borders to undertake new planning to prepare for anticipated growth. New parts are to be added to the Comprehensive Plans of these counties and cities, and those plans are to be coordinated and consistent. The framework for this coordination are county-wide planning policies, developed by each county, in collaboration with its cities towns, and tribes. These are Thurston County’s county-wide planning policies which will be used to frame how the Comprehensive Plans of Thurston County and the seven cities and towns will be developed and coordinated.

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I. GENERAL POLICIES

(Adopted November 10, 2015, Amended March 18, 2025)

The seven cities and towns within Thurston County commit to consulting with the tribes, and the agencies and departments on matters that directly affect the tribes, and to the following general policies:

- 1.1 Balance our needs today with those of future residents, to protect and enhance quality of life and in recognition that each generation is a trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.
- 1.2 Preserve and promote awareness of our historic, cultural, and natural heritage.
- 1.3 Collaborate with tribes to identify and protect tribal cultural resources.
- 1.4 Recognize tribal sovereignty and demonstrate respect for Tribal governmental authority.
- 1.5 Develop new ways to cultivate and support respectful civic engagement and participation by residents, and public, private, and nonprofit businesses and organizations, encouraging choices and offering information that contribute to individual, household, and community health and well-being.
- 1.6 Break down institutional barriers to communication and cooperation, fostering open communication and transparent processes that encourage community-wide participation.
- 1.7 Think broadly, regionally, and globally – act locally. Acknowledge the interdependence of communities both within and external to our region, recognizing the impacts of our region upon the world, as well as the impacts of the world upon our region.
- 1.8 Translate vision to policy and act on adopted local plans and policies. Consider the effects of decisions on achieving this vision, while balancing individual property rights with broader community needs and goals.
- 1.9 Monitor progress and shift course when necessary. Use meaningful, easy-to-understand methods to measure progress on key objectives. Respond and adapt to future social, economic, and environmental challenges.
- 1.10 Partner across topic areas and jurisdictional boundaries. While supporting local decision-making, encourage regional and cross-jurisdictional coordination, communication, and cooperation that increase our capacity to make decisions for the common good across jurisdiction boundaries.
- 1.11 Build and maintain distinct communities, preserving and enhancing the character and unique identities of the existing urban, suburban, and rural communities in a way that protects what matters most, while offering additional opportunities to improve on what can be better.
- 1.12 Meet basic human needs of clean water and air, healthy food, adequate housing, quality education, public safety, and equal access, regardless of socio-economic status.
- 1.13 Support education, employment, commercial opportunities, cultural, social, and recreational opportunities in appropriate places and at a scale that supports community health and well-being.
- 1.14 Champion energy efficiency and renewable energy strategies that contribute to energy independence, economic stability, reduced climate impacts, and long-term household and community health.
- 1.15 Protect the natural environment while acknowledging the interdependence of a healthy environment and a healthy economy.
- 1.16 Provide for adequate active and passive recreational opportunities.

- 1.17 Cooperate on utilities, transportation, and economic development issues.

II. URBAN GROWTH AREAS

(June 5, 1992, Adopted September 8, 1992, Amended November 10, 2015)

- 2.1 Urban growth within Thurston County is to occur only in designated urban growth areas.
- 2.2 The boundaries of designated urban growth areas must meet the following criteria:
 - a. Contain areas characterized by urban growth.
 - b. Be served by or planned to be served by municipal utilities.
 - c. Contain vacant land, or under-developed land with additional capacity, near existing urban areas that is capable of supporting urban development.
 - d. Be compatible with the use of designated resource lands and critical areas.
 - e. Follow logical boundaries.
 - f. Consider citizen preferences.
 - g. Be of sufficient area and densities to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the succeeding twenty-year period.
- 2.3 Amendments to the urban growth boundaries must use the following process:
 - a. Cities and towns will confer with the county about boundary location or amendment.
 - b. Proposed boundaries are presented to the Urban Growth Management (UGM) subcommittee of Thurston Regional Planning Council, which makes a recommendation directly to the Board of County Commissioners.
 - c. Following a public hearing, the Board of County Commissioners designates the boundaries and justifies its decision in writing.
 - d. Cities and towns not in agreement with the boundary designation may request mediation through the State Department of Commerce.
 - e. At least every 10 years, growth boundaries will be reviewed based on updated 20-year population projections.
 - f. Appeals of decisions made through this process are per the State Growth Management Act, RCW 36.70A.
- 2.4 Expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary must demonstrate consistency with:
 - a. All of the following criteria:
 - i. For South County jurisdictions: the expansion area can and will be served by municipal water and transportation in the succeeding 20 years. South County jurisdictions must demonstrate that the expansion can be served by sewage disposal measures that provide for the effective treatment of waste water in the succeeding 20 years.
 - ii. For North County jurisdictions: the expansion area can and will be served by municipal sewer, water, and transportation in the succeeding 20 years.
 - iii. Urbanization of the expansion area is compatible with the use of designated resource lands and with critical areas.
 - iv. The expansion area is contiguous to an existing urban growth boundary.
 - v. The expansion is consistent with these County-Wide Planning Policies.
 - b. One of the two following criteria:
 - i. There is insufficient land within the Urban Growth Boundary to permit the urban growth that is forecast to occur in the succeeding 20 years; or
 - ii. An overriding public interest demonstrating a public benefit beyond the area proposed for inclusion would be served by moving the Urban Growth Boundary

related to protecting public health, safety and welfare; enabling more cost-effective, efficient provision of sewer or water; and enabling the locally adopted Comprehensive Plans to more effectively meet the goals of the State Growth Management Act.

- 2.5 Reduction of the Urban Growth Boundary must demonstrate consistency with all of the following criteria:
- a. Sufficient land will remain within the reduced Urban Growth Boundary to permit the urban growth that is forecast to occur in the succeeding 20 years.
 - b. The reduced Urban Growth Boundary will include cost-effective sewer and water and transportation service areas, as applicable for each urban growth area.
 - c. Reduction of the Urban Growth Boundary is compatible with the use of the designated resource lands and with critical areas.

III. **PROMOTION OF CONTIGUOUS AND ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT, PROVISION OF URBAN SERVICES, AND PROTECTION OF RURAL AREAS** *(August 19, 1992, Adopted September 8, 1992, Amended November 10, 2015)*

- 3.1 Concentrate development in urban growth areas and protect rural areas by:
 - a. Accommodating the county's growth first and foremost in the urban growth areas and ensuring that development occurring in rural areas is rural in character.
 - b. Encouraging infilling first within those parts of the urban growth areas that are:
 - i. Already characterized by urban growth that has adequate existing public facilities and service capacities to serve such development,
 - ii. Second, in areas already characterized by urban growth that will be served adequately by a combination of both existing public services and facilities, that are provided by either public or private sources, and
 - iii. Third, in the remaining portions of the urban growth areas.
 - c. Phasing urban development and facilities outward from core areas.
 - d. Establishing mechanisms to ensure average residential densities sufficient to enable the county as a whole to accommodate its 20-year population projection.
 - e. Limiting growth in rural areas to prevent sprawl and the overburdening of rural services, maintain rural character, and protect the natural environment.
 - f. Prohibiting urban net densities in rural areas.
 - g. Designating rural areas for low intensity, non-urban uses that preserve natural resource lands, protect rural areas from sprawling, low-density development and assure that rural areas may be served with lower cost, non-urban public services and utilities.
 - h. Where urban services and utilities are not yet available, requiring development to be configured so urban growth areas may eventually infill and become urban.
 - i. Considering innovative development techniques.
- 3.2 Coordinate Urban Services, Planning, and Development Standards through:
 - a. Maximizing the use of existing infrastructure and assets, and leveraging the value of these in building vital, healthy, and economically viable communities.
 - b. Making public investments that further multiple community goals, target identified priorities, and leverage additional investment.
 - c. Considering both economies of scale and long-term maintenance cost when investing in infrastructure.
 - d. Providing and maintaining municipal services (water, sewer, solid waste, public safety, transportation, and communication networks) in a sustainable, and cost-effective manner.
 - e. Coordinating planning and implementation of policies regarding urban land use, parks, open space corridors, transportation, and infrastructure within growth areas. Developing compatible development standards and road/street level of service standards among adjoining jurisdictions.
 - f. Developing, and ensuring the enforcement of, agreements between Thurston County and the cities and towns within its borders, that ensure development occurring within unincorporated urban growth areas is consistent with city utility and storm water planning and conforms to the development standards and road/street level of service standards of the associated city or town.

- g. Phasing extensions of urban services and facilities concurrent with development and prohibiting extensions of urban services and facilities, such as sewer and water, beyond urban growth boundaries except to serve existing development in rural areas with public health or water quality problems.
 - h. Identifying, in advance of development, sites for schools, parks, fire, and police stations, major storm water facilities, greenbelts, open space, and other public assets. Acquisition of sites for these facilities shall occur in a timely manner and as early as possible in the overall development of the area.
- 3.3 Cooperate on annexations in order to accomplish an orderly transfer of contiguous lands within growth areas into the adjoining cities and towns. Cooperate on developing a streamlined and efficient process for annexation, while maintaining appropriate environmental review.
- 3.4 Provide capacity to accommodate planned growth by:
- a. Assuring that each jurisdiction will have adequate capacity in transportation, public and private utilities, storm drainage systems, municipal services, parks and schools to serve growth that is planned for in adopted local comprehensive plans; and
 - b. Protecting ground water supplies from contamination and maintaining ground water in adequate supply by identifying and reserving future supplies well in advance of need.

IV. JOINT COUNTY AND CITY PLANNING WITHIN URBAN GROWTH AREAS

(August 19, 1992, Adopted September 8, 1992, Amended November 10, 2015)

- 4.1 Thurston County and the cities and towns within its borders will jointly plan the unincorporated portions of urban growth areas.
- 4.2 Each city and town will assume lead responsibility for preparing the joint plan for its growth area in consultation with the county and adjoining jurisdictions.
 - a. The lead city or town and the county will jointly agree to the level and role of county involvement at the outset of the project, including the role of each jurisdiction's planning commission.
 - b. A scope of work, schedule and budget will be jointly developed and individually adopted by each jurisdiction.
 - c. The process will ensure participation by area residents and affected entities.
- 4.3 The jointly adopted plan or zoning will serve as the basis for county planning decisions and as the pre-annexation comprehensive plan for the city to use when annexations are proposed.
- 4.4 Each joint plan or zoning will include an agreement to honor the plan or zoning for a mutually agreeable period following adoption of the plan or annexation.
- 4.5 Nothing in these policies shall be interpreted to change any duties and roles of local governmental bodies mandated by state law; for example, statutory requirements that each jurisdiction's planning commission hold hearings and make recommendations on comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances.

V. SITING COUNTY-WIDE AND STATE-WIDE PUBLIC CAPITAL FACILITIES

(June 5, 1992, Adopted September 8, 1992, Amended November 10, 2015)

- 5.1 Cooperatively establish a process for identifying and siting within their boundaries public capital facilities of a county-wide and state-wide nature which have a potential for impact beyond jurisdictional boundaries. The process will include public involvement at early stages. These are facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, terminal facilities, state educational facilities, state or regional transportation facilities, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, and group homes.
- 5.2 Base decisions on siting county-wide and state-wide public capital facilities on the jurisdiction's adopted plans, zoning and environmental regulations, and the following general criteria:
 - a. County-wide and state-wide public capital facilities shall not have any probable significant adverse impact on lands designated as critical areas or resource lands; and
 - b. Major public facilities that generate substantial traffic should be sited near major transportation corridors.

VI. ANALYSIS OF FISCAL IMPACT

(August 19, 1992, Adopted September 8, 1992, Amended November 10, 2015)

- 6.1 Develop financing methods for infrastructure which minimize the taxpayer's overall burden and fairly divide costs between existing and new development.
- 6.2 Cooperatively explore a method to mitigate the fiscal impact on county government of annexation of significant developed commercial and industrial properties.
- 6.3 Cooperatively explore methods of coordinating financing of infrastructure in urban growth areas.

VII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

(June 5, 1992, Adopted September 8, 1992, Amended November 10, 2015)

- 7.1 Encourage an economy that is diverse, can adapt to changing conditions, and takes advantage of new opportunities.
- 7.2 Support the recruitment, retention, and expansion of environmentally sound and economically viable commercial, public sector, and industrial development and resource uses, including the provision of assistance in obtaining funding and/or technical assistance.
- 7.3 Provide in comprehensive plans for an adequate amount of appropriately located land, utilities, and transportation systems to support desirable economic development. Create and maintain regulatory certainty, consistency, and efficiency.
- 7.4 Acknowledge and look for opportunities to engage with regional economic drivers such as state government, the Port of Olympia, and Joint Base Lewis-McChord. Coordinate economic development efforts as well with other jurisdictions, the Economic Development Council, Chambers of Commerce, and other affected groups.
- 7.5 Build a vital, diverse, and strong local economy, including job opportunities that support community and household resilience, health, and well-being, by:
 - a. Supporting workforce training and offering opportunities for education and entrepreneurial endeavors.
 - b. Supporting creativity, arts, and culture.
 - c. Providing opportunities for a range of business types to succeed.
 - d. Emphasizing policies that support locally owned businesses including home-based, entrepreneurial, and nonprofit business and organizations.
 - e. Encouraging the development of local services for food, clothing, and other basic human needs.
 - f. Nurturing urban and rural agricultural and food-oriented businesses.
 - g. Protecting resource lands.
 - h. Encouraging the utilization and development of areas designated for industrial use, consistent with the environmental policies in these county-wide policies.
 - i. Connecting economic health with personal health and well-being and the advancement of environmental health.
 - j. Adding incentives for businesses to demonstrate their environmental sustainability including reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

VIII. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

(August 19, 1992, Adopted September 8, 1992, Amended November 10, 2015)

- 8.1 Increase housing choices to support all ranges of lifestyles, household incomes, abilities, and ages. Encourage a range of housing types and costs that are commensurate with the employment base and income levels of jurisdictions' populations, particularly for low, moderate and fixed income families.
- 8.2 Accommodate low and moderate income housing throughout each jurisdiction rather than isolated in certain areas.
- 8.3 Explore ways to reduce the costs of housing.
- 8.4 Establish and maintain a process to accomplish a fair share distribution of affordable housing among the jurisdictions.
- 8.5 Work with the private sector, Housing Authority, neighborhood groups, and other affected citizens, to facilitate the development of attractive, quality, low and moderate income housing that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and located within easy access to public transportation, commercial areas and employment centers.
- 8.6 Regularly examine and modify policies that pose barriers to affordable housing.
- 8.7 When possible, provide assistance in obtaining funding and/or technical assistance for the expansion or establishment of low cost affordable housing for low, moderate and fixed income individuals and families.

IX. TRANSPORTATION

(April 30, 1992, Adopted September 8, 1992, Amended November 10, 2015)

- 9.1 Increase transportation choices to support all ranges of lifestyles, household incomes, abilities, and ages.
- 9.2 Increase opportunities for riding transit, biking, walking, ridesharing, allowing and encouraging flexible work schedules, and teleworking.
- 9.3 Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and are coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
 - a. Local comprehensive plans will consider the relationship between transportation and land use density and development standards.
 - b. Local comprehensive plans and development standards should provide for local and regional pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
 - c. Improved transit service will be based on Intercity Transit's plans, informed by and consistent with the regional transportation plan and local comprehensive plans.
 - d. Transportation Demand Management plans and programs required by State law will be implemented as a key part of the region's transportation program.
 - e. Improvements to the regional road network will be consistent with local and regional transportation plans.
 - f. The regional transportation planning process is the primary forum for setting county-wide transportation policy.
- 9.4 The transportation element of each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan will be consistent with the land use element of that jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.
- 9.5 The transportation element of each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan will include level of service standards for all arterials and transit routes and services. Each jurisdiction will coordinate these level of service standards with all adjacent jurisdictions. Transit level of service standards will be consistent with Intercity Transit policies.
- 9.6 Each jurisdiction's transportation element will include an assessment of the impacts of the transportation plan and land use assumptions on the transportation systems of adjacent jurisdictions.
- 9.7 The transportation elements of comprehensive plans adopted by Thurston County and each city and town in the county will be consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan adopted by Thurston Regional Planning Council, in accordance with the provisions of the Washington State Growth Management Act.
- 9.8 The Regional Transportation Plan adopted by Thurston Regional Planning Council will be consistent with the land use elements of comprehensive plans adopted by Thurston County and the cities and towns within Thurston County and with state transportation plans. To ensure this, the Regional Transportation Plan will be reviewed and updated, if necessary, at least every two years for consistency with these plans.

- 9.9 All transportation projects within Thurston County that have an impact upon facilities or services identified as regional in the Regional Transportation Plan will be consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan.
- 9.10 Local and regional transportation plans will consider maritime, aviation, and rail transportation as an integral link to the area's regional transportation needs.

X. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

(August 19, 1992, Adopted September 8, 1992, Amended November 10, 2015, Amended March 18, 2025)

- 10.1 Recognize our dependence on natural systems and maintain a balance between human uses and the natural environment.
- 10.2 Establish a pattern and intensity of land and resource use that is in concert with the ability of land and resources to sustain such use, reduce the effects of the built environment on the natural environment, conserve natural resources, and enable continued resource use, through:
 - a. Land-use and transportation plans and actions that encourage compact development and concentrate development in urban growth areas.
 - b. Retrofitting existing infrastructure to reduce impacts of the built environment on the natural environment.
 - c. Planning for the amount of population that can be sustained by our air, land, and water resources without degrading livability and environmental quality.
 - d. Minimizing high noise levels that degrade residents' quality of life.
- 10.3 Protect the soil, air, surface water, and groundwater quality, including through:
 - a. Reducing dependence on the use of chemicals and other products that pollute and, when their use is necessary, minimizing releases to the environment.
 - b. Ensuring adequate clean water is available to support household and commercial needs while sustaining ecological systems through conservation, balancing of uses, and reuse.
 - c. Protecting ground and surface water, the rivers and creeks of Thurston County and the water of the Puget Sound from further degradation by adopting and participating in comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional programs to protect and monitor water resources for all uses, including fish habitat and passage.
 - d. Protecting and enhancing air quality.
- 10.4 Take action to conserve resources, increase use of renewable resources and decrease dependence on non-renewable resources by:
 - a. Reducing energy consumption and reliance on nonrenewable energy sources.
 - b. Encouraging the reuse and recycling of materials and products, and reduction of waste to the maximum extent practicable.
- 10.5 Acknowledge that changing weather and climate patterns will impact the human, natural, and built environments and plan for impacts such as increased wildfire, flooding and sea-level rise.
- 10.6 Protect and restore natural ecosystems, such as, forests, prairies, wetlands, surface and groundwater resources, that provide habitat for aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals.
- 10.7 Provide for public access to natural resource lands, while ensuring that uses and economic activity which are allowed within those lands are sustainable.
- 10.8 Provide for parks and open space and maintain significant wildlife habitat and corridors.
- 10.9 Where outdoor lighting is necessary, design the lighting to minimize the light pollution.

XI. COUNTY-WIDE POLICIES WHICH ESTABLISH A PROCESS TO DEVELOP FUTURE POLICIES

(August 10, 1992, Adopted September 8, 1992, Amended July 1, 2002, Amended November 10, 2015, Amended March 18, 2025)

- 11.1. Process to determine and assure sufficiency of Urban Growth Areas to permit projected urban population:
 - a. The state Office of Financial Management (OFM) growth management planning population projections for Thurston County will be used as the range of population to be accommodated for the coming 20 years.
 - b. Within the overall framework of the OFM population projections for the County, Thurston Regional Planning Council will develop countywide and smaller area population projections, pursuant to RCW 36.70A.110 and based on current adopted plans, zoning and environmental regulations and buildout trends.
 - c. A review and evaluation program pursuant to RCW 36.70A.215 (“Buildable Lands Program”) will be established. The evaluation and subsequent updates required under the Buildable Lands Program will follow timelines in the RCWs, subject to availability of State funding. This evaluation may be combined with the review and evaluation of county and city comprehensive land use plans and development regulations required by RCW 36.70A.130 (1), and the review of urban growth areas required by RCW 36.70A.130(3).
 - i. In the event of a dispute among jurisdictions relating to inconsistencies in collection and analysis of data, the affected jurisdictions shall meet and discuss methods of resolving the dispute.
 - ii. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to alter the land use power of any Thurston County jurisdiction under established law.
 - iii. Because inclusion of this policy is as a result of state mandated legislation, implementation of this policy shall be commensurate with state funding.
 - d. The Thurston Regional Planning Council will review the smaller area population projections to assure that the 20-year population is accommodated county-wide, and that urban growth areas are of sufficient area and densities to permit the projected urban population.
- 11.2 These county-wide policies will be reviewed upon the request of four jurisdictions.
- 11.3 Under the State Growth Management Act, authority for making changes to County-Wide Planning Policies (CWPPs) lies with counties. The State Growth Management Act also states that counties are required to consult with the cities, towns, and tribes within its borders regarding changes to the CWPPs. It is the role of the Thurston Regional Planning Council Urban Growth Management (UGM) Subcommittee to be the vehicle for this jurisdictional consultation process in Thurston County. Amendments to the Thurston County County-Wide Planning Policies must use the following process:
 - a. Proposed amendments are to be reviewed by the UGM Subcommittee, which consists of a representative from the Council of each of the cities, towns, and tribes in Thurston County and a representative from the Board of County Commissioners.
 - b. Technical assistance will be provided to the UGM Subcommittee by jurisdictional Planning Directors or their designated representatives.
 - c. It is the responsibility of the UGM Subcommittee members to coordinate with their respective Councils regarding amendments to the CWPPs and to do so prior to the UGM Subcommittee making its recommendation on the amendments to the Board of County Commissioners.

- d. The UGM Subcommittee will make a recommendation on the amendments to the CWPPs directly to the Board of County Commissioners.
- e. The Board of County Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the amendments to the CWPPs. This public hearing would allow cities, towns, and tribes within Thurston County an opportunity to comment directly to the Board of County Commissioners on the amendments.