



STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION
Prepared February 13, 2023

- ISSUE:** Discussion of Policy and Content Amendments to be Incorporated into the 2024-20244 Tukwila Comprehensive Plan Update, and Review of Schedule Constraints
- STAFF:** Nora Gierloff, AICP, DCD Director
Nancy Eklund, AICP, Long Range Planning Manager
Neil Tabor, AICP, Senior Planner
- ATTACHMENTS:** 2023 PC Work Program (Draft)

BACKGROUND

This agenda item is to brief the Planning Commission on updates in requirements of the Periodic Update of the City’s [Comprehensive Plan](#), that is required to be adopted by September¹ 2024.

Staff briefed the Planning Commission on the general background of the 2024-2044 comprehensive plan update at their June 23, 2022, meeting. This update serves to provide further detail on additional requirements of the update and the anticipated consolidation and restructuring of the Plan to both comply with regulatory requirements and to simplify the plan to make it more concise and usable for the public, Council, boards, commissions, and staff.

Compliance of the Plan Update with Regulatory Requirements

The 2024 update to the Comprehensive Plan is required to comply with goals, policies, and other standards from the [Washington Department of Commerce](#)², Puget Sound Regional Council’s (PSRC) [Vision 2050](#) and King County’s adopted [Countywide Planning Policies](#). In this update cycle, topic areas that require new or significantly updated policy language, and possibly regulations and standards include:

¹ GMA Comprehensive Plan updates are required to be adopted by December 31, 2024, but because 2024 is a budget year for the Council, the plan must be forwarded to the Council for adoption no later than September 2024, to allow them time to work on the budget.

² This is the Checklist that Tukwila must complete to ensure compliance with the state Growth Management Act requirements.

- Integrating equity in land use and policy decisions across elements.
- Planning for, and demonstrating how the City will accommodate housing affordable across different income ranges.
- Addressing Climate Change in measurable actions.
- Adopting reasonable measures to address how the City will achieve adopted 2044 jobs and housing targets.

Consolidation and Streamlining of Plan Format

The City’s current Comprehensive Plan is 322 pages, with background documents that range in size from 25 pages to more than 300 pages. Many of the policies are redundant or repetitive. The implementation strategies frequently do not clearly relate to achieving a specific goal or policy, are not assigned to individual departments for accountability, do not have a timeline for execution, or are not achievable or measurable (e.g., “Implement the Strategic Plan”; “Continue to apply Development Regulations”). Ideally, the Plan can be taken off the shelf by an existing or future resident or business, and it will convey clearly and succinctly the city’s clear values, direction, and work program.

In order to help convey the City’s intentions and priorities for the future, staff recommends consolidating land use-related data, goals, and policies into a single Land Use element. This will involve incorporating the various subarea and center plans. It will also make the City’s plan more consistent with GMA’s intent that land use information is presented in an organized manner in a single element. Similarly, staff is looking to consolidate the Residential Neighborhoods Plan into the Housing element, and other elements that more appropriately address policies found there, such as policies relating to the character of the built environment, or policies pertaining to businesses located within residential areas. This restructuring is intended to better streamline the document to place goals and policies in more logical locations and increase the usability of the document for residents, developers, staff, and the public. See the following table for the general plan of consolidation.

In addition, we will be looking to consolidate policies, so they are, overall, less repetitive and more specific. We are examining the feasibility of developing a policy matrix/index to include in the document. Given the range of policy guidance with which the City must comply, a matrix demonstrating how the City complies and where specific policies can be found will help elected officials, staff and others navigate the policy requirements in the Plan. A quick assessment of the Plan’s existing policies suggests that only a small percentage are completely consistent with the guidance (~15%). Another 30% or so are *generally* consistent and could correlate with the guidance with a slight modification. The remainder of required policies (~55%) will need to be incorporated into the plan.

Updating Process with the Planning Commission

At the last Planning Commission meeting, we briefly discussed the upcoming schedule (draft) for the Planning Commission’s review of the Plan elements (attached). The Commission will need to review changes proposed to (almost) all of the elements and will conduct at least two Board of Architectural Review public hearings for projects currently under review. The sequence of topics may vary somewhat since some of the element updates are being led by, or depend on, input from other City departments. In

addition, we have not yet been able to hire a consultant for the full comprehensive plan, and they will have their input on when some of these elements will be ripe for Planning Commission discussion.

Between now and when it will be necessary to hold a Planning Commission Public Hearing on the draft plan next spring (2024), there are +/-13 months. Over that time period, we have proposed retaining the once-a-month Commission meeting schedule for all but two months, September and October, when the Commission will meet the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Keeping to this schedule is critically dependent on the ability of the Commission to be expeditious in its review and discussion of the various elements. The Planning Commission Chair has asked that Commissioners provide staff with any questions or comments about the PC packet no later than noon on the Tuesday preceding the meeting. This will require Commissioners to read their packets prior to that Tuesday. This way, staff can come to the meetings prepared to address any issues or questions the commissioners have identified. If we are unable to stay relatively abreast of the elements needing review, we will need to revisit the Commission’s once-a-month meeting schedule.

Comprehensive Plan Format	
Existing Elements	Proposed Elements (and Background Reports)
Community Image and Identity (18 pp) ³	Community Image and Identity (“ <i>Community Character</i> ”? - may include parts of Residential Neighborhoods)
Economic Development (12 pp)	Economic Development
Tukwila International Boulevard District (28 pp)	Land Use (to include parts of subarea, center, and Residential Neighborhoods elements)
Tukwila South (8 pp)	
Southcenter - Tukwila's Urban Center (16 pp)	
Manufacturing / Industrial Center (10 pp)	
Housing (13 pp)	Housing (to include parts of Residential Neighborhoods)
Residential Neighborhoods (19 pp)	
Natural Environment (28 pp)	Natural Environment (to include portion of new Climate Change discussion)
Shoreline (25 pp)	Shoreline
Parks, Recreation and Open Space (21 pp)	Parks, Recreation and Open Space
Utilities (22 pp)	Utilities
Capital Facilities (18 pp)	Capital Facilities
Transportation (30 pp)	Transportation
Roles and Responsibilities (14 pp)	Roles and Responsibilities

NEXT STEPS

Staff is beginning updates of the various elements and will be bringing those to the Commission for consideration over the year. The City will be releasing a Request for Qualifications for consultant assistance within the week and hopes to have identified a consultant team by mid-March.

³ The number of pages in each element is provided for information.

REQUESTED ACTION

While no action is needed at this time, the Planning Commission may want to commit to each other and staff that every effort will be made to move through the items on each agenda efficiently so that all can avoid having to attend meetings more frequently than once a month.

2023/1Q 2024 Planning Commission Work Program

Meeting day	Topic	
February	9	
	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bylaws ▪ 2024 Update – New Requirements/ Changes needed/ Policy & Content Gap Analysis ▪ Update Approach (Consolidate & Simplify)
March	9	
	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vallum Townhomes (BAR) ▪ Middle Housing Project Overview + Racially Disparate Impacts
April	13	
	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Middle Housing Findings (MAKERS) ▪ Housing Intro ▪ Outreach Status
May	11	
	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation Plan Status (element update lead by PW) ▪ Economic Development (lead by Econ Dev) ▪ Introduction
June	8	
	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Middle Housing Ordinance Discussion (MAKERS) ▪ Economic Development (lead by Econ Dev)
July	13	
	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outreach summary to date ▪ Community Image ▪ PROS
August	10	
	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land Use ▪ Any possible 2023 Code updates required (Housekeeping or Legislative requirements)
September	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vintage (BAR) TBD
	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land Use / Subarea Discussion ▪ Housing