



STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION Prepared February 28, 2024

HEARING DATE:	March 14, 2024
FILE NUMBERS:	L24-0014 E24-0001
APPLICANT:	City of Tukwila
REQUEST:	2024 Comprehensive Plan Update – The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the goals and policies for all plan elements. This update is part of the periodic review and update of the Plan required by the Washington Growth Management Act.
LOCATION:	Policies apply throughout the City of Tukwila
NOTIFICATION:	Hearing Notice was published in the Seattle Times and posted on the City of Tukwila website on February 29, 2024.
SEPA DETERMINATION:	An environmental determination on the proposed amendments will be issued prior to City Council consideration of the Plan update in the fall of 2024.
STAFF:	Nancy Eklund, AICP, Long Range Planning Supervisor and Neil Tabor, AICP, Senior Planner

BACKGROUND

The City of Tukwila's Comprehensive Plan, first adopted in 1995, establishes goals and policies that guide the community as it grows and changes over time. Its goals and policies lay out the community's long range vision. The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) gives Tukwila the opportunity to amend the Comprehensive Plan once a year for non-emergencies. The Comprehensive Plan has been amended to keep up with changing direction, requirements, and to respond to successful private applications to amend the plan. The updated plan will address the 2024 to 2044 planning period.

In addition to these regular amendments, the state Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that counties and cities periodically conduct a thorough review of their plan and development regulations to bring them up to date with any relevant changes in the GMA and to respond to changes in land use and population growth in periodic updates. The last required periodic update was completed in 2015. By the end of 2024, the City of Tukwila is required to complete a periodic review and update of its Comprehensive Plan including amending, or introducing new policies to comply with requirements set forth by the Department of Commerce, Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and King County.

The 2015 Tukwila Comprehensive Plan included a total of 15 “elements.” To comply with regulatory requirements, streamline the plan to enhance readability, and create intuitive groupings of goals and policies, the 2015 elements have been amended. Some elements have been consolidated and collapsed into one element and other elements have been renamed and refocused slightly¹. Some changes have been made to eliminate redundancy between elements, although many of the goals and policies have been moved into new elements without changes, or with only minor changes. A full overview of element changes is provided below.

Table 1

2015 Update Elements:	2024 Update Elements:
(Removed Element)	<u>New Element</u>
Community Image and Identity	<u>Community Character</u> (combines Community Image and Identity and Roles and Responsibilities)
Economic Development	<u>Land Use</u> (consolidates Tukwila International Boulevard District and Tukwila South elements)
Housing	<u>Regional Centers</u> (consolidates the Southcenter and Manufacturing/Industrial Center elements)
Natural Environment	Housing (incorporates Residential Neighborhoods element)
Shoreline	Economic Development
Parks, Recreation and Open Space	Natural Environment
(Residential Neighborhoods)	Shoreline
(Tukwila International Boulevard District)	Parks, Recreation, and Open Space
(Tukwila South)	Transportation
(Southcenter - Tukwila's Urban Center)	Utilities
(Manufacturing/Industrial Center)	Capital Facilities
Utilities	
Transportation	
Capital Facilities	
(Roles and Responsibilities)	

The final Comprehensive Plan will include the elements listed above, which include a general summary of existing conditions and the goals and policies, a background report that provides more existing conditions information, and Implementation Strategies that list how City staff, programs, and priorities will implement the Plan’s goals and policies.

¹ The Growth Management Act requires that Comprehensive Plans include a Land Use Element. Historically, Tukwila has not had a Land Use Element, and complied with GMA requirements by including the mandated information throughout elements in the Plan. To improve the utility of the Plan and for consistency with other jurisdictions, the City has developed a new Land Use Element with this Plan update.

OUTREACH

Staff conducted significant public outreach with the community and key stakeholders prior to any policy development of the plan occurring. This process helped ensure key concerns of the community were captured and would be reflected and addressed in the final document. The [Community Engagement Plan](#) for the Update was presented to the City Council in June 2023.

The City sponsored a variety of engagement opportunities intended to involve community members who may not be able, or inclined, to participate through traditional outreach methods. Some examples of outreach included contracting with community-based organizations to gather input on topics of interest, hosting an online engagement hub, holding stakeholder interviews, tabling at locations around the City at different times of day, speaking with high school classes, presenting to boards and commissions, reaching out to community groups, and hosting several open houses. Translation services were provided where possible to better capture the diversity of Tukwila voices.

A list of events and general summary of the types of comments received is provided in Attachment L.

Themes From Public Outreach

A range of themes arose through the comprehensive plan outreach process that described what was important to community members and what they would like to see address or represented in the plan update. Comments ranged widely, but some of the most prevalent topics heard were:

- Need for affordable housing
- Need for different types of housing
- Need for housing that addresses a range of circumstances: family size, disability, multigenerational families, seniors, new homebuyers
- Need for increased development near transit locations
- Concern about ensuring environmental protection and addressing environmental pollution
- Need for more job creation
- Need for the City's long-term financial stability
- Concern about the City preparing for climate change
- Desire to retain tree cover in City
- Need for increased transportation options (esp., transit, non-motorized)
- Need for community safety
- Concerns over parking availability
- Recognition that Tukwila's diversity is of value

REVIEW PROCESS

The Planning Commission began discussion of the Comprehensive Plan Update at the end of 2022 (resources for the plan's development: local staff and grant funding). In the early months of 2023, the Commission was presented materials concerning:

- New requirements for local housing planning: [January 26, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#).

- The approach recommended for the update of the plan (compliance with regulatory requirements; and consolidation and streamlining of the Plan format): [February 23, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#).
- A background on housing issues in Tukwila (housing unit composition, housing affordability in Tukwila and the region; standards guiding housing development in Tukwila and region; and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) guidance recommended in 2021 Tukwila Housing Strategies Plan): [March 23, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#).
- A deeper dive on the requirements of the housing-related legislative requirements of 2023, and a discussion about what middle housing is and its potential for development in Tukwila: [April 27, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#).
- A presentation from the Puget Sound Regional Council focusing on the role of elected and appointed officials in developing comprehensive plans that will shape communities' futures: [May 25, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#).
- A presentation on the outcome of a middle housing study in Tukwila and discussion about the racially disparate impacts of existing and proposed housing policies and regulations; and discussion about the approach being used and information gathered to develop the City's Economic Development Strategy: [June 22, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#).
- A discussion about the Middle Housing findings, including recommendations for code updates: [July 27, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#).
- Further discussion on issues surrounding land use, housing, and reasonable measures: [October 5, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#).

Beginning in August 2023 and continuing through February 2024, the Planning Commission has been reviewing the proposed amendments to the individual elements of the plan. As noted earlier, the emphasis of this update of the City's 2015 Comprehensive Plan is to ensure out-of-date information is made current and that the Plan complies with state and regional regulatory requirements, is streamlined to enhance its readability, and incorporates public input. This update has created one new element (Land Use), consolidated and collapsed some elements into a single element, and renamed and refocused other elements.

Throughout this process, staff worked with the Planning Commission to present the draft elements, highlight changes, take feedback from Commissioners, the public, and staff, and integrate changes to refine the draft elements, with a particular focus on goals and policies.

State and Regional Guidance

The Draft Tukwila Plan goals and policies have been developed to ensure consistency with guidance found from the following entities. Where these required goals and policies have been added to the draft Plan, they are generally noted in footnotes. This guidance is provided through the following:

- [GMA Laws](#); other [GMA guidance](#)
- [Commerce Department Checklist](#)
- [Puget Sound Regional Council, Vision 2050, Goals and Policies](#)
- [King County Countywide Planning Policies](#) (last amended 2023)

The March 14, 2024, Planning Commission public hearing will culminate in review of the various elements, and provide a formal opportunity for the public to comment on draft goals and policies.

Materials and Format

Goal and policy materials are organized in this summary by element and include a clean copy showing all proposed changes integrated into the text. Any references to state or regional policy requirements or carryover from 2015 policies are noted in footnotes. Draft elements showing changes proposed and changes from the 2015 draft (where possible) are posted for public review on the [Comprehensive Plan](#) website.

Backup documents referenced in this report are largely found in the City's Digital records system. Planning Commission meetings are also available in video format here: <https://tukwila.vod.castus.tv/vod>

PROPOSED CHANGES TO GOALS AND POLICIES

The Planning Commission will consider proposed amendments to the goals and policies of the following elements:

Community Character

The *Community Character Element (Attachment A)* is a consolidation of the *Community Image and Identity Element* and the *Roles and Responsibilities Element*. Collectively, this element addresses: community design; the City's regard for its past and present, and the value placed on cultural diversity; the role and expectations of City government, including benefits derived by participating in regional decision-making; and the health and well-being of community members, including community safety and preparedness for emergencies.

Documents used in Planning Commission's review of the *Community Character Element* can be found in the meeting packets linked below:

- [February 8, 2024, Planning Commission Packet](#)
- [February 22, 2024, Planning Commission Packet](#)

Land Use

The *Land Use Element (Attachment B)* is a new element in this update of the comprehensive plan and carries over many of the policies previously appearing in the *Tukwila International Boulevard District* and *Tukwila South Elements*. This element includes requirements adhering to regional requirements, directing growth in a responsible manner, comprehensive plan land use designations, and intentions for growth within specific subareas of the city. Attachment B includes proposed goals and policies, a copy of the proposed future land use map, and the goals and policies showing changes requested by the Commission at their recent February 22, 2024, meeting.

Documents used in Planning Commission Review of the *Land Use Element* can be found in the meeting packets linked below:

- [January 25, 2024, Planning Commission Packet](#)

- [February 8, 2024, Planning Commission Packet](#)
- [February 22, 2024, Planning Commission Packet](#)

Regional Centers

The *Regional Centers Element (Attachment C)* centralizes policies previously found in the *Southcenter – Tukwila’s Urban Center* and *Manufacturing/Industrial Center Elements*. Proposed goals and policies are largely consistent with those found within the 2015 update of the comprehensive plan, and 2024 requirements found in regional guidance.

Documents used in Planning Commission Review of the *Regional Centers Element* can be found in the October 5, 2023, meeting linked below:

- [October 5, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#)

Housing

The *Housing Element (Attachment D)* proposes significant updates related primarily to equity, updates to legislation around middle housing, ensuring housing affordability, promoting new housing production, and housing targets affordable to specific income levels. To better frame updated requirements and goals of the element, the element was restructured to better group relevant policies under new goal language and centralize policies around their intended impact. Some of the policies were relocated from the *Residential Neighborhoods Element*

Documents used in Planning Commission Review of the *Housing Element* can be found in the December 14, 2023, meeting linked below:

- [December 14, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#)

Economic Development

In 2023, the City accepted a Tukwila [Economic Development Strategy](#). The *Economic Development Element (Attachment E)* reflects the focus of that Strategy and integrates those goals and policies with other elements in the Comprehensive Plan. The main goals of the *Economic Development Element* include:

- A Vibrant, Diverse and Resilient Economy
- A Safe, Desirable, and Healthy Community with a Positive Identity
- Prosperity and Opportunity for Businesses, Workers, and Residents
- A Supportive Environment for Business and Entrepreneurs
- A Community that Values Diversity and Access to Opportunity

Documents used in Planning Commission Review of the *Economic Development Element* can be found in the September 28, 2023, meeting linked below:

- [September 28, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#)

Natural Environment

The *Natural Environment Element (Attachment F)* proposes several changes addressing modifications in how the City protects and manages its natural resources, in addition to including policies addressing climate change and equity reflected in the King County Countywide Planning Policies. Natural Environment policies address local conditions such as water resources, quantity, and quality; wetlands, fish, and wildlife habitat conservation; flood control; urban forestry; and community stewardship towards those resources. The proposed language expands existing policies that address how the City can better prepare for, and deter, the impacts of climate change. In addition, the policies address issues of climate justice, and the need to include the full community in making decisions about the environment that affects all.

Documents used in Planning Commission Review of the *Natural Environment Element* can be found in the November 9, 2023, meeting linked below:

- [November 9, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#)

Shoreline

The *Shoreline Element (Attachment G)* reflects the goals and policies that were approved by the City and the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) in the City of Tukwila Shoreline Master Program adopted in 2020. While there are a few minor corrections that could be made in the *Shoreline Element*, the DOE will need to approve those changes and no approval has been received yet. The *Shoreline Element* has not been amended since the adoption of the 2015 plan.

Documents used in Planning Commission Review of the *Shoreline Element* can be found in the November 9, 2023, meeting linked below:

- [November 9, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#)

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Updates to the *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Element (Attachment H)* mirror goals and policies in the 2020-adopted Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. Minor changes in the element are proposed to ensure consistency between the 2020 PROS plan, and the 2024 PROS goals and policies. In addition, where appropriate, King County Countywide Planning Policies have been included to ensure that equity considerations are also addressed in the *PROS Element* (these have been identified in footnotes). The Parks Commission reviewed the proposed goals and policies prior to the Planning Commission's consideration of the element.

Documents used in Planning Commission Review of the *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element* can be found in the August 24, 2023, meeting linked below:

- [August 24, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#)

Transportation

The *Transportation Element (Attachment I)* is used to ensure that adequate transportation infrastructure is provided to accommodate future land use growth as required by the Growth

Management Act. In this update, goals and policies have been updated to include key themes of equity, safety, connectivity, adaptability, and climate justice. Updates to the *Transportation Element* will also prepare for future amendments such as the City's first Multi-Modal Level of Service (MMLOS) standard, incorporating multiple modes of travel into transportation network planning and analysis, as well as safety improvements to be identified through the Local Road Safety Plan.

Documents used in Planning Commission Review of the *Transportation Element* can be found in the February 22, 2024, meeting linked below:

- [February 22, 2024, Planning Commission Packet](#)

Utilities

The *Utilities Element (Attachment J)* addresses both City-operated utilities and utilities not operated by the City that serve City residents. The goals and policies in the proposed element are very similar to those in the adopted 2015 Utilities Element. Most of the changes necessary are the result of new regional emphasis on stormwater management and Low Impact Development (LID), policies addressing how the City can be prepared for climate change impacts, and recognition that City services need to be provided equitably across the community. These changes have been highlighted with footnotes.

Documents used in Planning Commission Review of the *Utilities Element* can be found in the September 28, 2023, meeting linked below:

- [September 28, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#)

Capital Facilities

The *Capital Facilities Element (Attachment K)* policy changes reflect the addition of King County Countywide Planning policies that address equity and climate change issues, new City Finance or Public Works procedures, or new terminology or language clarifications. In some cases, policies were deleted that represent internal operational policies rather than Comprehensive Plan-level policies.

Documents used in Planning Commission Review of the *Capital Facilities Element* can be found in the September 28, 2023, meeting linked below:

- [September 28, 2023, Planning Commission Packet](#)

REQUESTED ACTION

Staff is requesting that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation for adoption of the draft comprehensive plan goals and policies, with any suggested modifications, to the City Council for their further review and adoption.

ATTACHMENTS

A	Community Character	Proposed Goals and Policies
B	Land Use	Proposed Goals and Policies Proposed Goals and Policies (showing changes since 2/22/24 Planning Commission meeting) Proposed Future Land Use Map
C	Regional Centers	Proposed Goals and Policies
D	Housing	Proposed Goals and Policies
E	Economic Development	Proposed Goals and Policies
F	Natural Environment	Proposed Goals and Policies
G	Shoreline	Proposed Goals and Policies
H	Parks, Recreation, and Open Space	Proposed Goals and Policies
I	Transportation	Proposed Goals and Policies
J	Utilities	Proposed Goals and Policies
K	Capital Facilities	Proposed Goals and Policies
L	Comments Summary	