

Citizen's Guide to the Tumwater City Plan 2036



2016 – 2036 Comprehensive Plan Update

Adopted December 20, 2016



INTRODUCTION

What is the City Plan?

In response to rapid growth in the state during the 1980s, in 1990 the Washington State Legislature required that the more populated and faster growing counties and cities in the state create **Comprehensive Plans** under the **Growth Management Act**. The City of Tumwater’s Comprehensive Plan, otherwise known as the **City Plan**, provides an outline for managing the City’s policymaking and investment decisions for the next 20 years. The City Plan has been in existence for more than 30 years. The most recent update to the City Plan addresses how the City’s expected growth from 2016 to 2036 will affect land use, housing, lands for public purposes, parks and recreation, conservation, transportation, utilities, economic development, and capital facilities. To make sure that the daily activities of City are productive and efficient, the City Plan is consistent with other city, county, and state plans.

“Comprehensive Plan” or “City Plan” refers to a long-range plan meant to guide public policy and development decisions that shape the physical, environmental, economic, and social character of the City.

Why update the City Plan?

There are many benefits to updating the City Plan. The City Plan:

- Provides citizens with an opportunity to review and update the goals and policies that guide the City’s future development.
- Gets all the different departments and services in the City to coordinate policies and programs.
- Provides decision makers with a comprehensive and long-term perspective to guide short-term actions and projects to reach the City’s goals.
- Gives prospective citizens and employers an overview of what the City is working to become.

“Development” in the context of the City Plan refers to the construction or redevelopment of buildings and other structures by property owners, private developers, or governing bodies such as the City, State, Port, or School Districts.

Tumwater and its associated urban growth area is expected to increase in population by 70% by 2035,¹ which is roughly 17,690 new residents, so it is important to figure out how that will affect the City and where all those people are going to live, work, shop, and learn.

What is in the City Plan?

The City Plan looks at the status of the City on a variety of topics ranging from housing to transportation to conservation to public and private services and uses input from the community to create goals and policies to lead the City in the direction the people want it to go. These goals range from increasing energy efficiency in new developments to protecting wetlands in the City.

What trends are driving the City Plan?

- Population in Tumwater is projected to grow by over 17,000 people (a 70% increase) by 2035
- Water consumption is increasing even with conservation strategies
- Electricity and gas consumption are projected to increase in all sectors
- Household sizes are getting smaller and the city's population is getting older
- Homes in Tumwater are becoming less affordable
- People are driving less and walking or biking more

How was the community involved in the 2016 Update?

Tumwater strives to involve the community as much as possible throughout its comprehensive planning processes. Through surveys, coffee talks, and Council, Commission, and Committee meetings, citizens discussed the City's goals for the future in relation to the City's vision and mission statements as well its four community goals.

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

Mission Statement: In active partnership with its citizens, the City of Tumwater provides leadership and essential municipal services to cultivate a

¹ The City of Tumwater started the update process in 2015 using data from 2015 and did not receive 2016 data until it was too late to incorporate in the update process.

prosperous economy, a healthy natural environment, vibrant neighborhoods, and supportive social fabric.

Community Goals



1. **Provide more transportation choices**

Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.



2. **Promote equitable, affordable housing**

Expand location and energy efficient housing choices to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.



3. **Enhance economic opportunity**

Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to worksites, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs.



4. **Value communities and neighborhoods**

Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods. Employ strategies like mixed-use development and redevelopment to increase community revitalization and efficiency of infrastructure investments.

How is the City Plan implemented?

The Plan recommends amendments to the Tumwater Municipal Code. The Municipal Code contains the regulations for zoning and subdivision in the City. Anything built in the City has to follow the Municipal Code as well as the City's development standards. In addition, the Capital Facilities Element of the City Plan has a list of projects intended for funding and completion by the City within the next six years.

ELEMENTS OF THE CITY PLAN

Land Use

There is a wide variety of land uses within Tumwater, such as housing, parks, industries, or grocery stores. The City’s Zoning Map shows where each use can be located and the Tumwater Municipal Code describes what requirements developers and landowners must follow. It is important to consider the effect of land use regulations on development so the City can support its current and future citizens.

Issues and Opportunities

Projected Population Increase

Tumwater is expecting a 70% increase in population by 2035. If managed properly, this influx of people could give the City an opportunity to create the density and economic demand necessary to provide public services more efficiently. With this in mind, the City has proposed a number of policies that encourage dense development to maximize the value of existing services, utilities, and infrastructure. These policies also balance the goal of density with that of protecting the character of established neighborhoods.

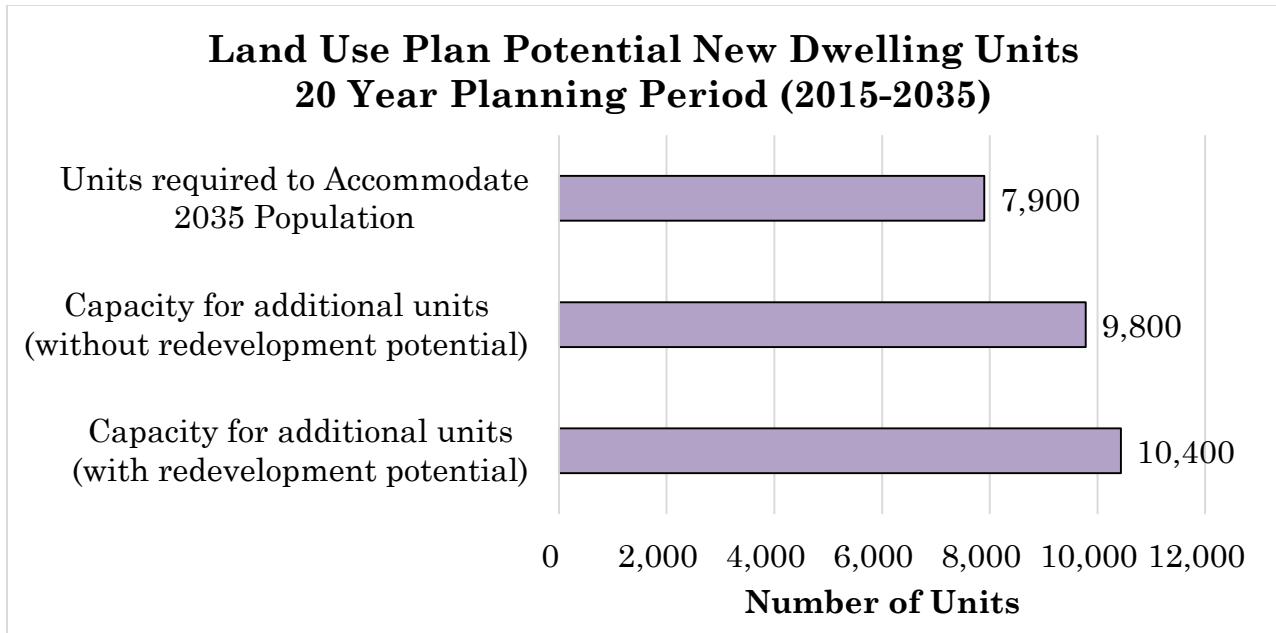
“Density” in the context of the City Plan means the amount of people would live or work within a specified area. It can also refer to the number of buildings within an area.

For example, Tumwater has a density of about 1,200 people per square mile or the density for a project could be four dwelling units per acre.

Tumwater and Urban Growth Area 20-Year Population Forecast				
	2015 Population (includes annexed areas)	2035 Population	Population Increase	% Increase 2015-2035
City of Tumwater	21,940	34,680	12,740	58%
City’s Urban Growth Area	3,250	8,200	4,950	152%
Combined Areas	25,190	42,880	17,690	70%

Increased Need for Housing

To accommodate the estimated 2035 population, approximately 7,900 new dwelling units will need to be built in the City. There is currently enough land in the City to build these units, but if preexisting buildings are redeveloped, there is increased capacity.



Implementation Strategies

- Encourage mixed-use buildings to increase density and walkability.
- Support new developments or redevelopments that happen in or near the City center.
- Use the new Design Guidelines to encourage new developments to be more people oriented.
- Encourage innovative design techniques that support more affordable and diverse housing types.
- Invest in public improvements to streets and other public spaces.

“Redevelopment” is the practice of reusing pre-existing buildings for purposes different from their original use and can include reconstruction and additional construction to meet the needs of the new use.

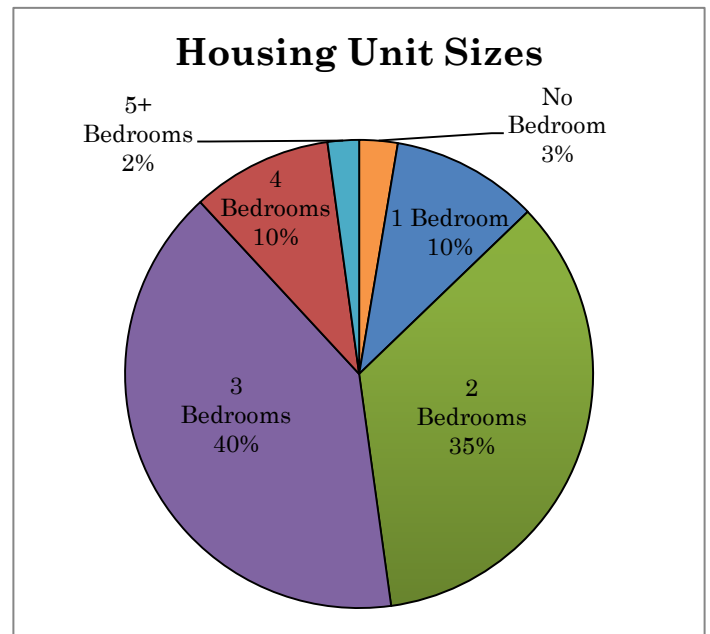
Housing

Housing is one of the most important parts of the everyday lives of the City's residents. One of the City's top priorities is to work to provide residents with a range of housing options within their budget so that their home is suitable and affordable.

Issues and Opportunities

Household Sizes

Most of the current housing units in the City are designed for single families needing three or more bedrooms. While this works well for the many families living in Tumwater, the expected housing trend for the City is that households will shrink in size and become older on average. More a people are living by themselves or with a partner, but without children. Single homes and large apartments are not always the best financial option for childless couples or single person households.



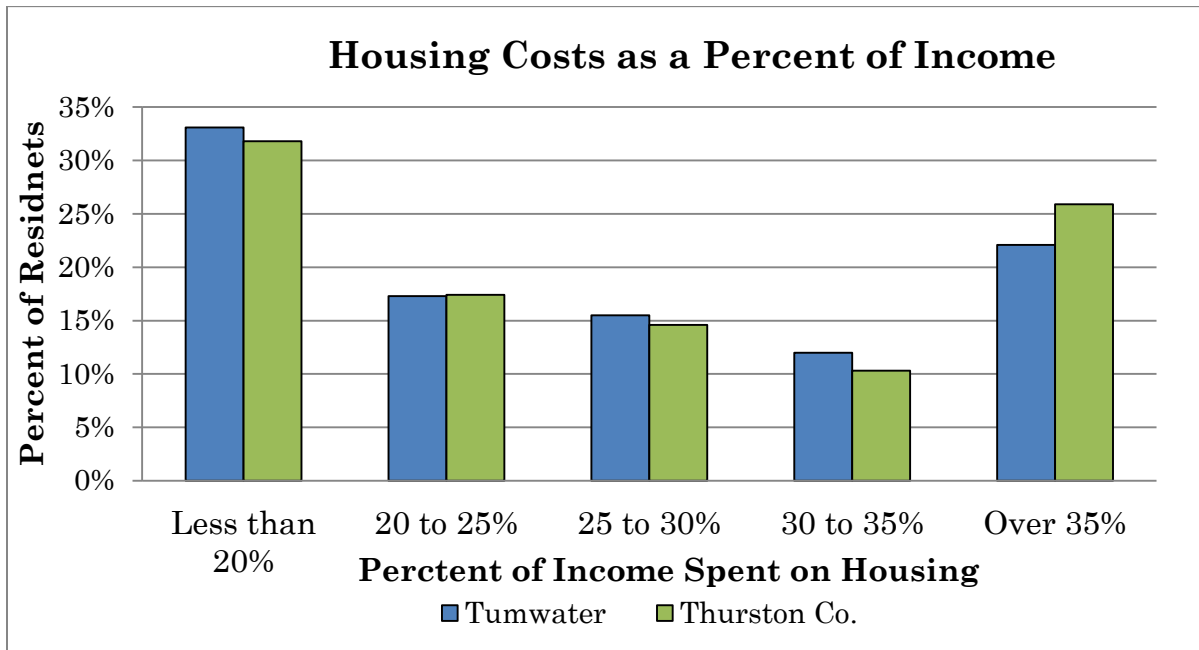
Homelessness

The local homeless population is estimated by Thurston County to be approximately 476 people who are living outdoors, in shelters, or in transitional housing. Within the Tumwater School District, there is an estimated 246 homeless students and that number is considered an underestimate due to the stigma surrounding homelessness. The local shelter organizations are beyond capacity night after night. They are in need of increased funding or additional services to help address the critical needs of Tumwater's less fortunate population. Tumwater already has about 50 transitional housing units but more can and should be done.

Affordable Housing

While most of Tumwater has stayed relatively affordable, 22% of the City's 2015 population was rent burdened, meaning they spent over a third of their income on housing costs. This limits the amount they can use to cover other costs of living

such as food or health care. This trend is predicted to continue as the City grows unless changes are made to the current housing stock.



Implementation Strategies

- Identify rarely used building strategies that can reduce the cost of development and encourage creating affordable housing.
- Provide a greater mix of housing styles and sizes to provide an affordable selection of housing to all of Tumwater's residents.
- Create new housing units to meet the needs of the City's future population while also maintaining the character of existing neighborhoods.
- Continue the discussion on how to help the homeless population best in Tumwater with strategies like building transitional housing.
- Encourage housing to be near transportation hubs, jobs, and other daily activities.

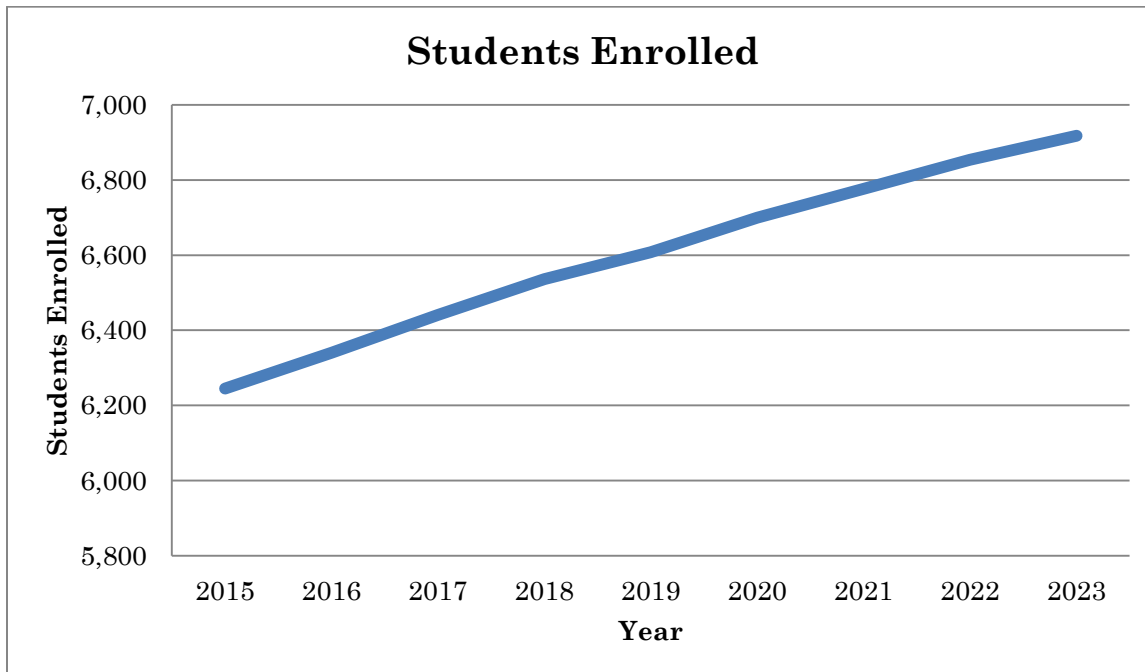
Lands for Public Purposes

Public services and utilities require careful planning to make sure they are placed in the most efficient manner possible. Tumwater aims to balance the goals of serving the greatest amount of people with the highest quality service while maintaining the lowest possible operating costs.

Issues and Opportunities

School District

With the current population projections, the Tumwater School District is expected to gain about 670 new students by 2023. To accommodate the incoming student population, the City of Tumwater should help the School District pick out sites for new schools and other facilities.



Waste Management

Solid waste in Tumwater is taken to the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center (WARC). While the WARC is functioning fine now, some of its facilities are beginning to wear down. The HazoHouse, the hazardous materials drop-off center, is in need of a replacement in the near future. Slightly further out, there may be need for an entirely new WARC as Tumwater and the County grow.

Reduce, Re-use, Recycle

The WARC receives about 550 tons of waste per day, only 4 tons of that being recyclables. As solid waste landfills are a big contributor of greenhouse gas emissions and Washington State is trying to reduce those emissions, Tumwater should do its part to increase recycling efforts.



Implementation Strategies

- Coordinate with the Olympia and Tumwater School Districts to plan for the future need for new school facilities.
- Work with the County to develop a new HazoHouse Facility and other facilities.
- Assist residents to increase recycling and re-use.
- Support green economic opportunities to build local markets, jobs, and firms in recycling, re-use, and related material management efforts.
- Encourage innovative and alternative technologies for converting municipal solid waste to energy or fuel.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Parks and open spaces have a significant impact on life within Tumwater. They provide recreation, social, and educational opportunities to both residents and tourists with the added bonus of preserving green space in the city.

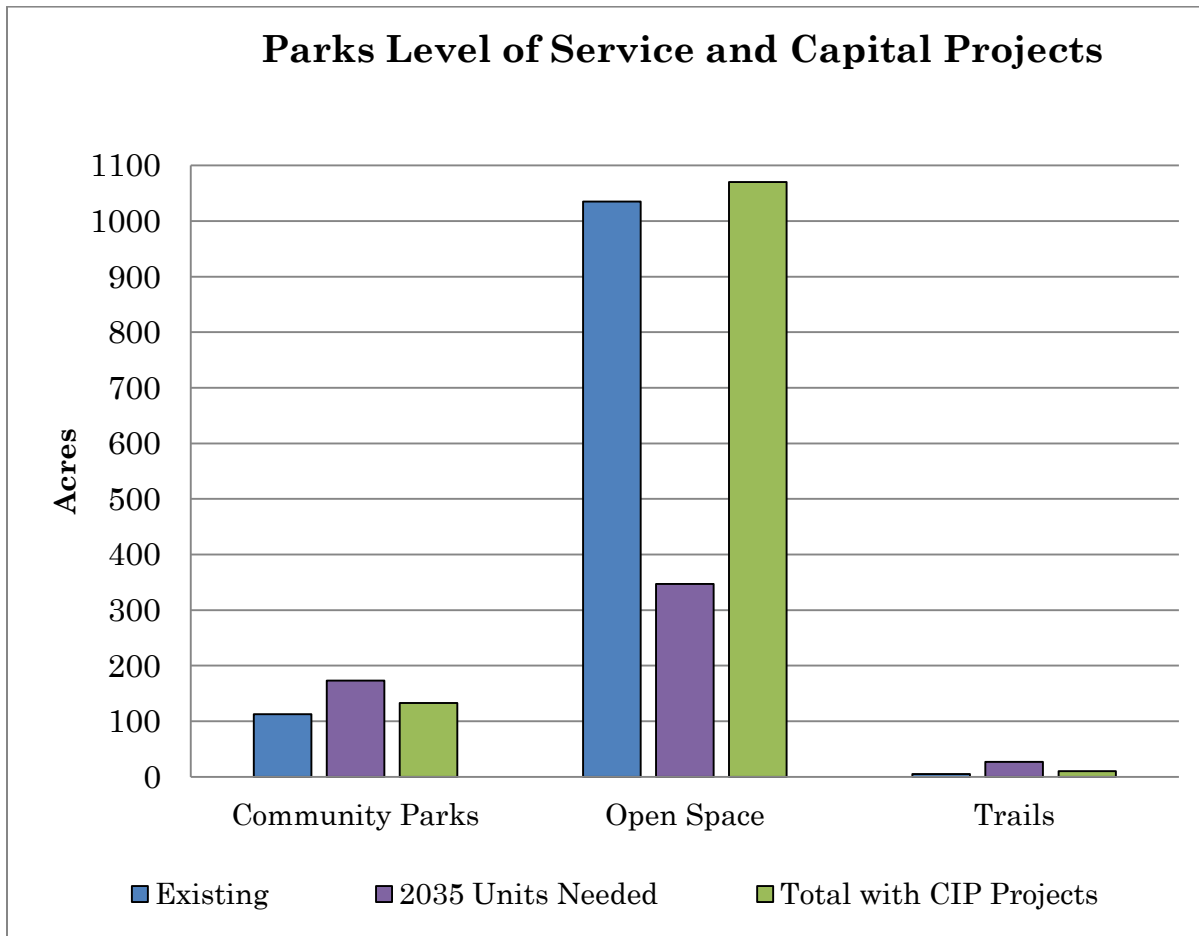
Issues and Opportunities

Community Parks

According to projections, Tumwater will be short on the amount of community parks to meet the needs of the 2035 population increase.

Trails

Tumwater is looking to create a network of trails for bikers and pedestrians to cross the city. Currently, the Parks Department is designing and constructing these trails, section by section, as funding allows.



Staffing

The Parks and Recreation department maintains 393.4 acres of parks and natural areas and the grounds of all City-owned properties as well as providing recreation services. Low staffing has resulted in sub-standard maintenance and program offerings. Additional staff members will be necessary to improve the current and future level of service.

Implementation Strategies

- Explore funding options, such as grants or collaborating with other entities, to increase the quality and quantity of parks and services the City can provide.
- Discuss the most efficient ways to use current and future resources to support the creation of new parks and programs.
- Create a citywide system of streetscapes, parkways, and gateways that access and highlight the scenic attributes of Tumwater.
- Create a comprehensive system of on and off-road hike and bike trails that access scenic, environmental, historical, and open space attributes of Tumwater.

Conservation

Tumwater takes a great deal of pride in the preservation of its natural assets from trees to wetlands. It has made the City more attractive and enjoyable to visitors and residents alike. With an undeniable population increase on the horizon, the City will have to find a way to strike a balance between increasing the City's capacity and retaining an acceptable quality and quantity of natural resources.

Issues and Opportunities

Water Resources

The City has heavily invested in the quality of its water. To maintain that level of quality that made Tumwater famous, the City must protect the groundwater and surface water sources from threats.

Wetland Protection

Wetlands have an array of benefits such as filtering stormwater runoff and providing habitat for local wildlife. Preventing and mitigating wetland loss is very important for the preservation of water quality and regional biodiversity.

Local Food Production

Historically, the spread of new urban development eliminated valuable agricultural lands. Tumwater should seek to prevent this trend from occurring and preserve farmlands for increasing the availability of locally produced food to the City.

Implementation Strategies

- Monitor and review zoning so that hazardous uses cannot locate next to sensitive natural areas.
- Enforce low-impact development regulations and other ordinances that protect critical areas.
- Offer incentives to become more water and energy efficient like rebates for high efficiency fixtures and retrofits.
- Educate the public on best sustainable practices through outreach events and programs.
- Support dense development in the urban core.
- Implement a septic to sewer program.
- Stay up-to-date on natural resource lands classifications to ensure that critical areas are getting the protection they need.

Transportation

Transportation is an important aspect of daily life. How people are able to move within Tumwater effects how the City will grow and what shape that growth will take as the City transitions to a more urban place.

Issues and Opportunities

Multi-Modal Transit

To support the additional trips traveled by the incoming population, Tumwater has to create and expand the City’s multi-modal transit network. Multi-modal transportation takes into account all the different ways people get around—from walking and biking to busing and driving. As Tumwater’s Town Center transitions into a more urban area, the roadways should reflect the variety of transit modes.



Rural



Urban



Walkability

Walkability is a measure of how easy it is to live in an area without a car. Factors like sidewalk conditions and nearby grocery stores come together to create a “walkscore,” or grade for an area. Tumwater’s “walkscore” is 28. This signifies a car-dependent transportation environment. By improving its non-motorized transportation system, Tumwater can boost its quality of life and become friendlier to those who choose not to own cars for financial, environmental, or other reasons.



Safety

As the City’s transportation system becomes more diverse, the City must address the issue of safety. Some streets in the City are too narrow for bikes and cars to share and create a dangerous and trying environment for both. In addition, some streets may have not enough crossing opportunities for pedestrians, thus encouraging them to jaywalk. There may also be a lack of accommodations for people with disabilities and temporary mobility issues.

Current Transportation Inventory	
Infrastructure Type	Quantity
Public Streets/Roads	140 miles
Owned by the City	100 miles
To be added	15-20 miles
Bus System	6 major routes (12, 13, 42, 43, 68, 609)
Trails	5 miles
Sidewalks	104 miles
Bike Lanes	11.5 miles
Airport Facilities	835 acres

Implementation Strategies

- Adopt land use based street design guidance.
- Adopt multi-modal Level of Service standards.
- Expand bicycle and pedestrian data collection.
- Establish bicycle and pedestrian advisory body.
- Conduct a local traffic safety campaign.
- Identify and prioritize projects or areas of improvement.

Utilities

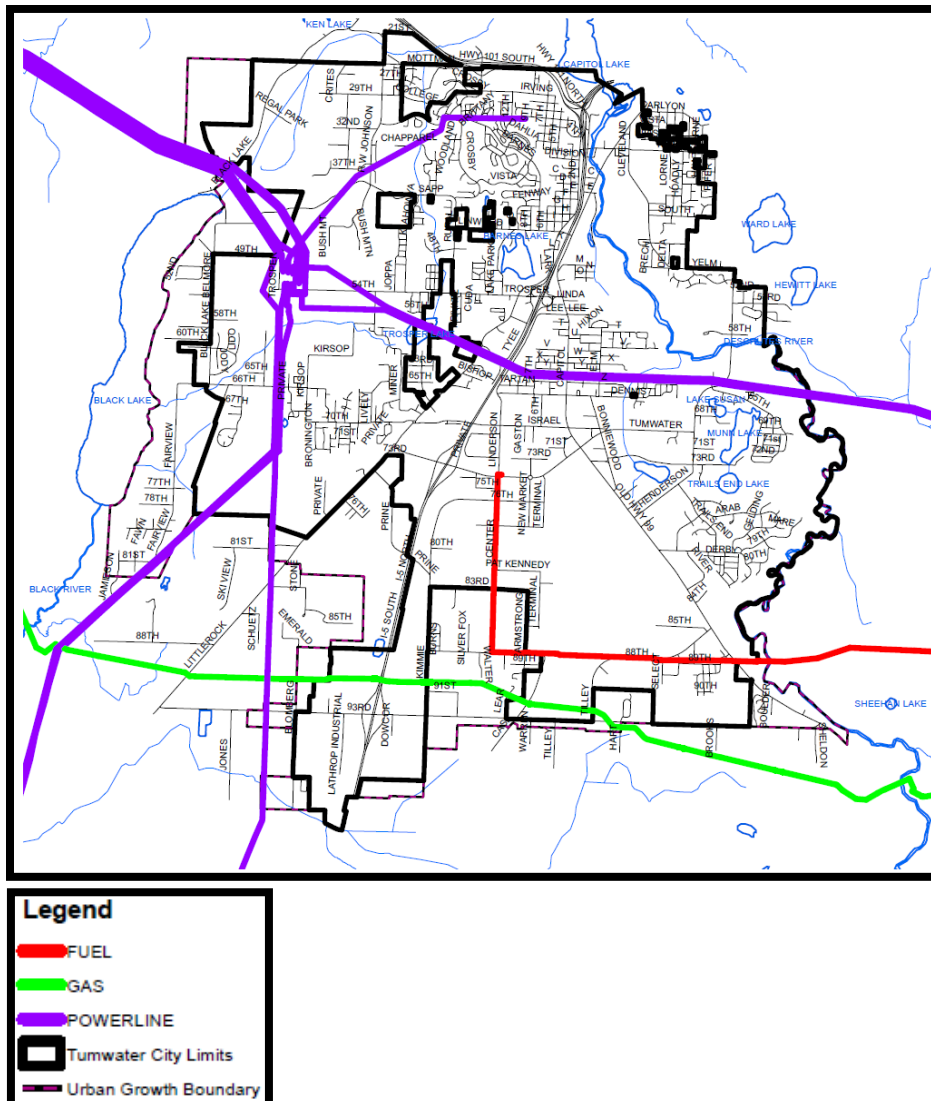
Utilities in Tumwater, with the exception of water and sewer services, are provided through private companies that work closely with the City. Tumwater cannot directly affect pricing or distribution of most private utilities, but the City can create incentives to increase efficiency and create opportunities to expand utilities.

Issues and Opportunities

Natural Gas and Electricity

Puget Sound Energy (PSE) provides natural gas and electricity to Tumwater and a large portion of the Puget Sound region. PSE is currently meeting Tumwater's gas and electricity needs and will work with the City to provide for the future population increase.

Map of Utility Corridors



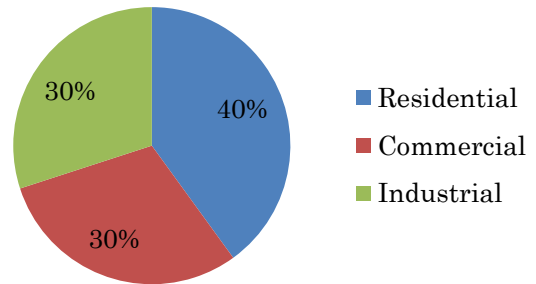
Telecommunication

Telecommunication utilities such as broadband internet, television, and telephone services are vital to businesses and attractive to residents. A number of companies provide these services to Tumwater. The most prominent are Comcast, CenturyLink, and HughesNet. While current demand is being met, the City should consider opportunities to expand telecommunication services with new strategies like expanding the fiber optic network.

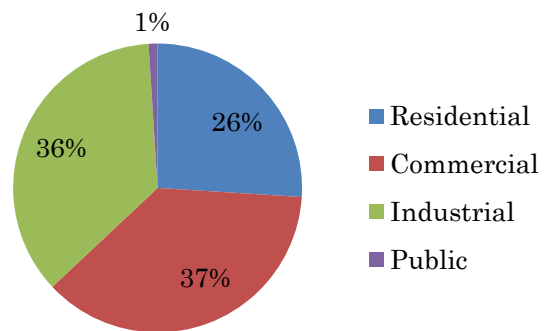
Implementation Strategies

- Require that private utility companies communicate with the City when siting new utilities.
- Increase the use of renewable resources to reduce the region’s carbon footprint.
- Enhance the region’s electricity distribution, monitoring, and storage infrastructure to support adoption of cleaner technologies and practices.
- Encourage energy efficiency and conservation through incentives and policy changes.

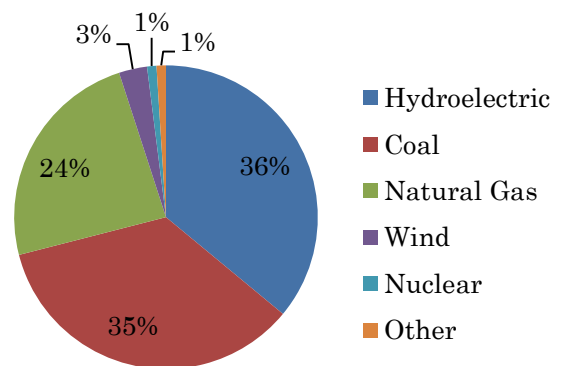
Natural Gas Usage by Sector



Electricity Usage by Sector



Electricity Sources



Economic Development

The City can support certain strategies and policy decisions to make Tumwater more attractive to new businesses and further support the ones that are already in the City.

Issues and Opportunities

Supporting Businesses

An important step in building a stronger local economy is to retain the City's existing businesses. Engaging with the businesses of Tumwater will give the City a good idea of how to better support its current and future businesses.

Tumwater's Image and Future

To draw in new businesses and workers, Tumwater should focus on marketing the City as a desirable place to live and favorable environment to start or expand a business in. The City can also take advantage of its brewing history to draw in brewing and associated businesses.

Neighborhood Plans and Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhood or sub-area plans are similar to the City Plan but on a smaller scale. Smaller plans allow for detail and citizen participation. Implementing and monitoring these plans helps to utilize the individual characteristics of each neighborhood.

Implementation Strategies

- Promote Tumwater as an attractive place to visit, live, and work.
- Communicate with businesses to identify their needs and ways for the City to meet them.
- Stabilize and redevelop the Old Brewhouse and other brewery properties.
- Continue to implement and review neighborhood plans.



Capital Facilities

The Capital Facilities Plan outlines what projects the City will pursue in the next six years, such as major construction, infrastructure improvements, land acquisitions, and equipment purchases, and how the City will pay for those projects.

Prioritization

With the City’s finite resources, Tumwater leaders must prioritize projects. Here is the list of criteria used in the process of ranking projects in order from greatest to least need:

- Is it an emergency repair?
- Is the City required by law to do it?
- Is it an older project that is still being carried out?
- Does it support or implement the City’s goals and objectives?
- Can it get outside funding?
- Is it an enhancement or repair of an existing facility?
- Does it involve the acquisition and development of new facilities?

Funding

The funding for capital facilities projects comes from a variety of sources such as grants, loans, and money generated from City taxes. It is important that the Capital Facilities Plan explore seeking funding from as many sources as possible so that the City can improve at a faster rate.

Implementation Strategy

Capital Facilities Budget		
Type of Project	Total Projects	Total Cost
General Governmental	31	\$39,094,240
Transportation	25	\$30,845,957
Water	21	\$24,221,500
Sanitary Sewer	12	\$8,365,000
Storm Drain	23	\$4,919,500