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**COMMUNITY PLANNING &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Creating Solutions for Our Future

Joshua Cummings, Director

**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE (DS) AND
REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON SCOPE OF NON PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)**

Proponent: Thurston County Community Planning and Economic Development Department

Description of Proposal: Thurston County has completed a draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to obtain an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). The County proposes to implement the HCP to cover a variety of activities for which the County issues permits or approvals (e.g., commercial, building, subdivision, accessory structures), or that it otherwise carries out through the course of its normal business (e.g. roads, water/sewer, and stormwater projects) throughout unincorporated Thurston County. The purpose of the HCP is to define how Thurston County will offset construction impacts for projects requiring county permits on land with species covered by the plan (Oregon vesper sparrow, Taylor's checkerspot butterfly, Oregon spotted frog, and Mazama pocket gopher).

Lead Agency: Thurston County Community Planning and Economic Development will be the lead agency under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will be the lead agency under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Location of Proposal: Unincorporated Thurston County

Threshold Determination: The lead agencies have determined that the proposal is likely to result in significant adverse impacts to the environment and, pursuant to 42 U.S. Code (U.S.C.) 4332(C) (NEPA) and Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 43.21C (SEPA), an environmental impact statement (EIS) is required. The lead agencies have determined that a combined NEPA/SEPA EIS will be prepared. A separate Notice of Intent (NOI) will be posted in the Federal Register by the USFWS to initiate the NEPA process. The EIS will address probable significant adverse environmental impacts of the proposed Thurston County Habitat Conservation Plan (Thurston HCP).

The SEPA lead agency has preliminarily identified the following for discussion in the EIS: Under SEPA, the EIS will examine the environmental impacts of the Thurston HCP proposal on the area of Thurston County covered by the HCP. Elements of the environment (WAC 197-11-444) that have been identified for discussion are listed below. Additional discussion items may be included in the NEPA NOI published in the Federal Register.:

- Earth (Geology and Soils)
- Air (Air Quality and Climate)
- Water (Movement, Quality, Quantity, Runoff/Absorption, Groundwater, and Public Water Supplies)
- Plants and Animals (habitat, unique species, and migration routes)
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Noise
- Land Use
- Recreation
- Aesthetics
- Light, Glare
- Historical and Cultural Preservation
- Transportation
- Public Service and Utilities

Alternatives: Alternatives to the Thurston HCP proposal will be determined through the scoping process according to WAC 197-11-440(5)(b). Reasonable alternatives shall include actions that could feasibly attain or approximate the proposal’s objectives. The No Action Alternative will also be evaluated.

Scoping: Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. The county, in cooperation with USFWS, will be holding two community meeting events for the public to ask questions. Public comments will not be taken at that time. Methods for presenting your comments are described below. All comments are due no later than 5:00 PM, November 15, 2020, and may be submitted:

- **Thurston HCP Comments:** <https://thurstoncomments.org/comment-on-the-habitat-conservation-plan/>
- **In writing to** Christina Chaput, Community Planning and Economic Development Department, 2000 Lakeridge Dr. SW, Olympia, WA 98502

Open House Meeting Date/Time: October 26th and 28th, 2020 6:00-8:00 PM
The meetings will be online using the internet meeting service called Zoom.

October 26th Public Zoom link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86768293569>
Or dial-in: 253 215 8782
Webinar ID: 867 6829 3569
Passcode: 932545

October 28th Public Zoom link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83530202275>
Or dial in: 253 215 8782
Webinar ID: 835 3020 2275
Passcode: 633751

Documents Available: Background documents and other materials can be reviewed at our offices and on our website at: <https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/planning/Pages/hcp-docs-maps.aspx>

Project No.: 2020104906

Date: 10/15/2020 **Responsible Official:** *Jennifer Davis*
(for) Josh Cumming, Director