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**COMMUNITY PLANNING &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Joshua Cummings, Director

Creating Solutions for Our Future

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston County Planning Commission
FROM: Chris Hawkins, Education & Prevention Manager Thurston County PHSS
Maya Teeple, Senior Planner
DATE: June 17, 2020
SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update: Chapter 11 – Health & Human Services

Background

The Health and Human Services Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan describes the current health conditions of the Thurston County community, contributing physical and environmental factors to health, and services designed to increase county-wide health. The chapter also sets policies to address changes in health conditions of Thurston County.

The health element is not a required element under the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A). The Board of County Commissioners approved an update to this chapter in the adopted scope of work under Resolution 15436 on February 14, 2017, specifically to:

“Review and revise, incorporating information and data from Sustainable Thurston and Thurston Thrives, including the Community Design, Health, and Nutrition Strategies.”

The way the Thurston County community develops will affect our health and the environment. In order for community development to promote good health for our residents, the policies that guide development and manage growth should consider health implications. The health element intersects with all parts of the Comprehensive Plan, and especially with objectives in housing, land use, natural resources lands, transportation, and natural environment. Information and policies within other elements of the Comprehensive Plan are directly linked to achieving health objectives.

The Health Chapter covers topics such as:

- Health services and clinical care; behavioral, social, and environmental determinants of health
- Interactions between the built environment and health
- Public health priorities in Thurston County
- Community health indicators and data for decision making, such as access to health services, groundwater, marine and freshwater surface waters, on-site septic systems, hazardous and

solid waste, air quality, chronic disease prevention, physical activity, tobacco and other substance use prevention, including secondhand smoke

What public feedback has the Health chapter received?

Thurston County Community Planning worked closely with Public Health and Social Services to update the Health and Human Services chapter for 2020. This chapter was included in the March 27 and March 31, 2018 open houses. Feedback from citizens provided at that time included:

- Support for universal health care.
- Support content on nutrition as health care, farm preservation is key to this chapter.
- Support content on homelessness, mental health/substance abuse, and increased funding for those areas.
- Reduction of jail terms and release reform for non-violent crimes.
- Protection of the environment, including air and water.
- Fund septic system management program.
- Green spaces to promote opportunity for physical activity.
- Address waste water from land uses and septic systems.

What has changed in the Health chapter?

Updates to the chapter reflect current conditions and include data related to Thurston County's community health. New information from Sustainable Thurston and Thurston Thrives is included in the chapter, and language on the interactions between the built environment and health, and public health priorities is updated for consistency with the Thurston County and local health department strategic plans. Old policy language has been reworded, and new policies are included from Thurston Thrives, the 2019 Community Health Assessment, Public Health and Social Services, stakeholders, and other PHSS plans, particularly in the area of access to health services. The Chapter has also been updated in formatting for consistency with the rest of the Comprehensive Plan.

Critical Issues

Health demands and challenges are driven by changing physical and environmental factors and a growing population. Critical issues for health and human services over the planning period include:

- Encouraging land use development that emphasizes urban density and infill to create walkable communities;
- Strengthening collaboration across partners, agencies, and programs that address housing needs, provide emergency shelters and help those experiencing homelessness;
- Expand access to, and the quality of, local health services;
- Protect the environment, especially from water and air pollutants; and
- Reduce disparities in access to health services and social determinants of health.

Decision Points for Planning Commission Review

- Consider whether the draft changes to Chapter 11 are clear and sufficiently describe health and human services for the Thurston County community.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 - Clean Version of Chapter 11 - Health and Human Services
- Attachment 2 - Redline Version of Chapter 11 - Health and Human Services