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**COMMUNITY PLANNING &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Creating Solutions for Our Future

Joshua Cummings, Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston County Planning Commission

FROM: Maya Teeple, Associate Planner
Ian Lefcourte, Associate Planner

DATE: May 15, 2019

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update: Follow-Up Items

Requested Changes and Follow-Up from the Planning Commission

Chapter 5 – Transportation

Below is a summary of follow-up comments and questions received regarding Chapter 5 – Transportation.

1. There should be a goal in the Comprehensive Plan that encourages the County to further investigate:
 - a. The impact on traffic, safety, and roadway needs of driverless vehicles; and
 - b. Improving rapid transit and increased movement north or south for employment, such as expanding commuter rail into Thurston County.

Staff has included an action item (currently housed outside of the Comprehensive Plan) to review the impact of new transportation technologies, including driverless vehicles, as information becomes available from the state.

Transit options for north-south commuter traffic is addressed in policies within Chapter 5. Under policy T.3B.1, there is policy language that encourages support of transit options appropriate to existing and future land use, including rail. Goal 6, Objective 6B has several policies around expansion of existing rail system to improve passenger travel, including T.6B.4 which specifies to support efforts of in the region for a commuter rail connection. The County also encourages

non-rapid transit options, such as a connected north-south shared use trail corridor (Policy T.3E.3).

2. The Comprehensive Plan should give guidance on bus turnouts so that safety is maintained as well as right of ways are purchased/provided for.

Staff previously requested information on bus turnouts from Thurston County Public Works. In previous correspondence with public works, they stated Intercity Transit determines when a bus turn out should be installed. One location where Intercity Transit provides guidance on in-lane and pull-out bus stops is their “Short and Long-Range Transit Plan” (page 12-8, October 2018)¹.

3. Map T-10 shows that Rural Strategy Corridors have many roads that exceed adopted LOS standards. Where in the Comprehensive Plan do we say that this must be accounted for and a plan developed to meet LOS standards?

Rural Strategy Corridors (Map T-9) are defined within the Comprehensive Plan as areas where the adopted LOS standard *may* be exceeded (page 5-16, redline). Rural Strategy Corridors include areas such as Old Highway 99, South Bay Road and Rainier Road, where roads are built out at two travel lanes and paved shoulders. In these areas, road widening is typically not an option and alternatives such as intersection improvements, connections to trails, and transit services are needed to mitigate congestion. Map T-10 identifies areas within the unincorporated county where routes are projected to exceed the 2040 Level of Service projections. This includes areas such as Old Highway 99 and SR510.

Chapter 5 of the Comprehensive Plan currently states under bullet number 6 that “all known improvements needed to provide for capacity at adopted LOS standards are included in the CFP” (page 5-6, redline). The CFP is currently Chapter 6 of the Comprehensive Plan, with the six-year financing program now referred to as the Capital Improvement Program (Appendix G). A 20-year capacity projects list exists in the [Transportation Improvement Program](#). The [Regional Transportation Plan](#) serves as the basis for city and county Comprehensive Plans, and also contains goals around alternative strategies to reduce congestion on Strategy Corridors.

Chapter 8 – Economic Development

On May 1, 2019, Community Planning and Economic Development Staff presented a draft of the changes to policy language from the Economic Development Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 8). The Planning Commission provided feedback and directed staff to make minor changes to the policy language. Staff has changed the policy language to the following:

¹ Intercity Transit. (October 2018). “Short- and Long-Range Plan”. Available online at: <https://www.intercitytransit.com/agency/plans-publications-fact-sheets>

- **Goal 1, Objective D, Policy 7 -** The county should support land use regulations and land use designations that serve and/or add value (such as cold storage, lumber mills, hay distributors, etc.) to the rural economy (especially for agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting).

Planning Commissioner Karman provided written feedback for a variety of topics related to the comprehensive plan, including the economic development chapter. The questions were incorporated into the chapter where appropriate. Generally, the questions required slightly more citation/data, or were already addressed in the chapter. The chapter was updated with more emphasis, content, and citations for the changing retail landscape (big box stores, online retailers, down-towns, etc.).

Chapter 9 – Environment, Recreation and Open Space

At the May 1, 2019, the Planning Commission recommended additional clarification to what a “process and fugitive” means within Table 9-1. Staff revised the language in the footnote to provide clarification for what a “process and fugitive” may include.

Several members of the Planning Commission expressed concerns over using the term “balance” in the language, specifically within the 2019 critical issues section. Staff revised the language under the 2019 critical issues to remove the word “balance” for all chapters to which this applies, with the intent to better reflect the planning goals under RCW 36.70A.020.

A number of additional comments and questions were raised on Chapter 9 prior to the May 1, 2019 Planning Commission meeting. The following adjustments to Chapter 9 language were made based on those comments:

- Additional language on general pollutants has been added to language within Chapter 9 water quality section. Further information on anthropogenic sources of pollution (nutrients, fecal coliform, PCBs) is discussed within Chapter 11 - Health.
- Additional language has been added to the water quality section to emphasize climate change impacts to stormwater runoff.
- A footnote has been added to Table 9-1 to define “MTCDE”. The Table on Greenhouse Gas Emissions is directly from the Thurston Climate Action Team (2017).
- Language has been revised in the ‘Section V. Parks, Trails, and Open Space’ bullets to provide clarity to “living healthy lifestyles”.
- Additional language has been added to ‘B. County Parks, Trails and Open Spaces’ to identify the need for sustainable funding to maintain existing parks, as well as new. This is also identified as one of the parks goals within the chapter.

Other questions were received regarding Chapter 9, and below is a follow up on that information:

- There was a request for inclusion of more information on source pollution and septic systems contributing back to the aquifer. Source pollution, specifically as it relates to on-site sewage, including within the Nisqually and Henderson inlets, is discussed in more

detail in Chapter 11 – Health. Septic systems contribution back into the aquifer is also discussed in more detail in Chapter 11 – Health.

- Lake St. Clair is included under the minimum instream flow rule per WAC 173-511. This lake has varied in precipitation both seasonally and long-term per records dating back to 1988. An instream flow rule could be set based on the aquifer connected to the water body, and not solely based on the level of water in the lake. In addition, instream flow rules are determined by the Department of Ecology, with changes to the rules possible during the watershed planning efforts through RCW 90.94.
- Policies addressing greenhouse gases are primarily located under Goal 6. There are currently policies included within the chapter that state the County should promote energy efficiency in businesses (Goal 6, Objective 1, Policy 1), and promote renewable energy in businesses (Goal 6, Objective 1, Policy 3).

Decision Points

- Consider whether the updated changes are clear and sufficiently describe and capture the community's interests, within the scope of the periodic update.