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**COMMUNITY PLANNING &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Joshua Cummings, Director

Creating Solutions for Our Future

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thurston County Planning Commission

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

DATE: May 1, 2019

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Update: Follow-Up Items

Requested Changes from the Planning Commission

Chapter 8 – Economic Development

On April 17, 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:

- **Goal 1, Objective A, Policy 9** - The county should encourage major institutions (such as schools, colleges, hospitals, etc.) to buy-local from Thurston County agricultural businesses.
- **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 lumber mills, hay distributors, etc.) to the rural economy (especially for agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting).

The Planning Commission also requested that staff include reference to the Earth Economics (2012) “The Natural Value of Thurston County” in the Comprehensive Plan. Staff included information regarding the valuation of ecosystem services for forestry and agriculture within Chapter 8. This study quantifies Thurston County’s natural capital by estimating a dollar value for ecosystem services.

Chapter 13 – Glossary, and Chapter 14 – Appendices

The Planning Commission requested staff to further review the new definition for mineral resource lands included in Chapter 13 – Glossary. Staff reviewed and updated this definition for

consistency with Chapter 3. The Planning Commission also requested the addition of the Homeless Housing Plan 2012-2022 into Appendix C – “Descriptions of Related Plans, Studies and Regulations”. Staff has included this reference, along with reference to the Voluntary Stewardship Work Plan.

Outstanding Questions from the Planning Commission

At the April 3, 2019 meeting, the Planning Commission raised several questions regarding transportation and the Comprehensive Plan. Community Planning staff contacted Public Works for their response on these questions.

1. Where does the County give direction for future transportation planning, 10-years down the road?
 - a. Regional Transportation Plan. The regional transportation plan looks at the entire regions transportation system. You can view this document at <https://www.trpc.org/662/2040-Regional-Transportation-Plan---What>. This plan serves as the basis for the local comprehensive plans for Thurston County and the local cities and towns.
 - b. Chapter 5 of the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan, Maps T7-T10. These maps show future traffic volumes, truck usage and congestion and illustrate some areas to could be focused on for transportation investments.
 - c. Thurston County Capital Facilities Plan. The transportation element is housed in what Public Works calls the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This document transitions long-range planning into projects. The document is updated annually to reflect the changing needs and priorities of county. Please look at Chapter 7 of the Transportation Improvement Program for the 20-year list of capacity projects: https://www.co.thurston.wa.us/publicworks/ebooks/2019TIP_FINAL/mobile/index.html#p=7

2. Where does the Comprehensive Plan tie the future economic/demographic shifts to transportation. Why does it refer us to Ch 5 and the Regional Transportation Plan?
 - a. The regional transportation plan serves as a strategic blueprint for the Thurston County, Washington transportation system. The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) takes the long view, looking 25 years into the future. To develop this blueprint a transportation model is used. The transportation demand model is a mathematical representation of supply and demand for travel in the region and represents the choices that people here make to travel. Traffic on the roads results from individual decisions like where, when, and how to travel. One of the other major inputs to the model is the land use data for the region. This includes housing and employment forecasting based upon the regions land use. This plan is updated every 4 years. This is where the region and Thurston County catches the major shifts in transportation

- needs due to economic and demographic shifts. You can read Appendix I from the [regional transportation plan](#) to get more information on how this region predicts future transportation demands. The results of this modeling for the unincorporated area of Thurston County can be seen on Maps T7 through T10 of the draft comprehensive plan.
- b. Thurston County also uses subarea plans/studies on a smaller scale, and traffic studies from larger developments to look at smaller geographic areas. Two recent examples are in Rochester and Grand Mound. Although the studies are not complete the links are as follows:
 - i. Main Street Rochester Study - <https://www.trpc.org/818/Main-Street-Rochester>
 - ii. Grand Mound Subarea Plans - <https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/planning/Pages/comp-plan-gmr-home.aspx>
3. How are we addressing rapid transit for the future?
- a. This will be addressed at a regional level through future updates to the regional transportation plan and subarea studies such as upcoming study for the Martin Way Corridor from Pacific Avenue to State Route 510. There is not a project page yet.
4. How are we addressing driverless vehicles for the future?
- a. This will be addressed at the statewide and regional level before diving down to us at each local agency. Washington Department of Transportation is beginning to develop the framework to prepare for the future fleet conversion to connected and automated vehicles. You can visit the following website to get more information. <https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/travel/automated-connected/home>. At this point there is not sufficient information to allow us to accurately model or predict the impacts of connected/automated vehicles on the transportation system.
5. When is it required that a bus turn out be installed rather than blocking traffic?
- a. This is determined by Intercity Transit. Generally, Intercity Transit prefers to stop in the travel lanes except for higher speed roads.
6. Where do I find the road set asides for the future? Planned arterials, feeder roads, etc. (those that don't exist yet and those that will need to be upgraded with the proper right of ways).
- a. In Urban Growth Areas: Through joint planning with the local cities Thurston County uses their transportation plans for identification of planned arterial roads, future roads, or other.
 - b. In unincorporated Thurston County: Chapter 5 of the comprehensive plan and also transportation maps T2 and T2a.

- c. Currently, no new roads are identified in the draft comprehensive plan. Thurston County does not individually identify roads that need to be upgraded to proper rights of way (e.g., that would be most roads in Thurston County). Proper rights of way are addressed as individual developments occur in the unincorporated county and when the county updates a roadway.

Decision Points

- Consider whether the updated changes to the Chapter 8, Chapter 13, and Chapter 14 are clear and sufficiently describe and capture the community’s interests, within the scope of the periodic update.