



Community Development Department Memo

To: City of Burlington, Planning Commission
From: Brad Johnson, Community Development Director
Date: November 15, 2024
Subject: 2025 Work Plan

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Summary

Burlington Comprehensive Plan Policy (BCPP) 9.3.5.3 requires the Planning Commission and Community Development Department to work together to develop and adopt a work plan on an annual basis. The purpose of the work plan is to identify City priorities, maintain consistent policy direction, and ensure the Community Development Department's workload is consistent with available staffing and financial resources.

The proposed 2025 work plan is narrowly tailored to address the City's regulatory obligations under the Growth Management Act (GMA) and priority policy areas identified by the Planning Commission and City Council. Significant changes will need to be made to the Burlington Comprehensive Plan to address recent changes to the Washington State Growth Management Act and the Skagit County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). These changes include:

- Accommodating projected housing needs
- Planning for climate change, including adaptation and mitigation measures
- Transportation planning to establish multimodal Level of Service (LOS) standards and reduce per-capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT)

When considered together with the Community Development Department's anticipated permit review workload, the proposed 2025 work plan will fully allocate the department's resources. Consistent with the BCPP 9.3.5.4 the City will not be accepting annual review docket proposals until the mandatory 2025 periodic update has been completed. The City may resume accepting annual review docket proposals in 2026 after the completion of the 2025 periodic update.

Proposed 2025 Work Plan

1. **Minor Code Updates.** It is important to periodically consider minor code amendments. The goal of this process is to quickly address minor code issues in an incremental fashion while continually improving the effectiveness and readability of the City's development regulations. Under BMC 17.125.100.C, a minor code amendment is an amendment that has little or no substantive effect and is consistent with the comprehensive plan. Minor amendments include editing changes to correct spelling, grammar, and organization, and changes to fix contradictory requirements or conflicting code provisions.

Priority: Medium – These changes are not legally required; however, ensuring the City's municipal code is effective, clearly written, and free of errors and conflicting provisions is important.

Timeline: Minor code updates will be presented to the Planning Commission throughout 2024 and early 2025. Final adoption of the revised code provisions will occur in conjunction with the overall Comprehensive Plan and code update in June 2025.

Budget and Staffing Considerations: This project does not require consulting services and can be completed with the department's existing staffing and budget allocations.

2. **2025 Periodic Update.** Because the City recently finished a complete overhaul of the comprehensive plan and development regulations the scope of this project will likely be limited to addressing legislation adopted after the completion of the City's last comp plan update. A more complete summary of recently adopted legislative changes will be provided later, but significant new requirements include changes related to housing production and climate resiliency.

Priority: High – The City is legally required to complete this project by June 30, 2025.

Timeline: This project is currently underway. Work is expected to continue throughout late 2024 and early 2025 with an estimated completion date of June 2025. Exact timelines will be driven by the completion of regional planning work, including the population, employment, and housing allocations produced by the Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG). This regional planning work will serve as a foundation for the 2025 periodic update and must be completed before the City can move forward with this project.

Budget and Staffing Considerations: The scope of this project is expected to be limited to addressing recently adopted changes to the Growth Management Act (GMA). Addressing the required changes is manageable with existing staffing allocations. However, significant staffing time will be required to participate in regional planning meetings for the purpose of allocating population, housing, and employment. The City has been allocated \$125,000 by the state to fund this work. An additional \$250,000 in

funding is available for elements related to climate change. This \$250,000 represents half the City's Department of Commerce Climate Planning grant award.

- 3. Transportation Safety Improvements and Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.** The recently completed comprehensive plan contains a rough outline of proposed non-motorized transportation improvements, such as improved sidewalks, multiuse paths, safe crossings, and bicycle lanes. The comprehensive plan also includes specific goals related to improving transportation safety and increasing the share of trips made on foot or by bicycle. In order to implement these goals a detailed design plan identifying specific routes, projects, and cost estimates is required.

Priority: High – This item was identified by the City Council as a high priority at their annual retreat and again at the recent joint meeting of Planning Commission and City Council. The Planning Commission has also identified this as a priority.

Timeline: This project is expected to be completed in conjunction with the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update. The project is currently underway and is scheduled to conclude in June 2025.

Budget and Staffing Considerations: This project will require work from Community Development and Public Works staff; however, a consultant with specific non-motorized transportation expertise and engineer capabilities is required. The City has entered into a contract with the Transpo company to complete this work. Approximately \$250,000 is allocated to this project. This funding represents half the City's Department of Commerce Climate Planning grant award.

- 4. Fire and EMS Impact Fee Rate Study**

Priority: High – As documented in the Public Facilities and Services Element of the comprehensive plan, impact fees for Fire and EMS services are not currently supported by a Level of Service (LOS) standards and documentation showing growth related system impacts. In order to ensure the City's Fire and EMS capital program is fully funded, adopting updated impact fees is important.

Timeline: This project is expected to be completed in conjunction with the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update. Revised impact fee rates structures will be adopted in June 2025.

Budget and Staffing Considerations: This project will require consulting services. Staff time will be limited to developing a scope of work, selecting and retaining a qualified consultant, reviewing the consultant's work, and forwarding completed work to the Planning Commission and City Council. The estimated cost range for the contracted work is \$20,000 – \$60,000. Funding for this project has been included in the department's 2025 professional services budget. The Community Development

Department is currently working with the Burlington Fire Department to identify a suitable contractor to perform the work.

5. **Park Planning Support**

Priority: Medium – The 2025 CIP includes two feasibility studies that will require technical support from the Community Development Department. These projects include CIP Project Number 7-2025-1 (Pickleball Site Selection and Feasibility) and CIP Project Number 7-2025-2 (Pump Track Site Selection and Feasibility). These projects will require the Community Development Department to assist Parks Department staff in identifying and screening potential sites for land use and permitting issues. The goal of both projects is to identify potential sites, establish a detailed scope of work, and obtain preliminary cost estimates for design work.

Timeline: No specific timeline exists for this work; however, in order to incorporate the results of the feasibility studies into the 2026 CIP, work should be completed by late summer 2025.

Budget and Staffing Considerations: Community Development staff will support the Parks Department on an as needed basis. The Community Development budget does not include any specific allocations for this work.