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## Planning Commission Recommendation

**To:** Burlington City Council

**From:** Burlington Planning Commission

**Project:** 2026 Work Plan

**Date:** January 7, 2026

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### Summary:

The City's comprehensive plan requires that the Planning Commission and Community Development Department develop and adopt a work plan identifying planning priorities and important projects on an annual basis. The purpose of the annual 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 Planning Commission and Community Development have prepared a work plan for 2026. The Planning Commission recommends this plan be adopted by the City Council.

### Findings:

1. Burlington Comprehensive Plan Policy (BCPP) 9.3.5.3 requires that the Planning Commission and Community Development Department produce and adopt an annual work plan. The work plan is then used by the Community Development Department to inform scheduling decisions, staffing levels, and budget requests.
2. Because significant work will be required to complete the City's mandatory Comprehensive Plan update and address recent change to the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), the scope of the 2026 work plan should focus available Community Development resources on addressing this task; however, the Comprehensive Plan update is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2026, after which resources may be available for other priorities.
3. When considered together with the Community Development Department's anticipated permit workload, the proposed 2026 work plan will fully obligate the department's

available staffing and financial resources. Consistent with BCPP 9.3.5.4 the City shall not accept annual review docket proposals until the Comprehensive Plan update is completed.

4. The Washington State Growth Management Act requires that all local government actions be consistent with the adopted comprehensive plan (RCW 36.70A.120), including the adoption of annual budgets, work plans, and capital improvement plans.
5. BCPP 9.3.5.3 establishes an order of priorities to guide the development of annual work plans. The order of priorities includes:
  - a. Public health, safety, or environmental concerns of an immediate nature.
  - b. Efforts to achieve or maintain legal or regulatory compliance.
  - c. Changes necessary to achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
  - d. All other work, including proposals to amend the Comprehensive Plan.
6. The Planning Commission has reviewed a draft work plan prepared by the Community Development Department (attached) and finds this work plan to be consistent with the order of priorities established by BCPP 9.3.5.3. The Planning Commission further finds that:
  - a. No issues concerning immediate public health, safety, or environmental concerns were identified in the proposed work plan;
  - b. Washington State law requires that the City complete a periodic review and update of its comprehensive plan. Because this work is necessary to maintain legal or regulatory compliance it shall be the City's highest priority consistent with BCPP 9.3.5.3.b.
  - c. The policies of the Burlington Comprehensive Plan specify that level of service (LOS) standards should be adopted for all major capital programs including Fire/EMS (BCPP 6.4.2.1), that impact fees be used to substantially offset the cost of growth-related capital projects (6.4.5.1), and that options be explored for collecting impact fee revenue for EMS impacts in unincorporated Skagit County (BCPP 6.4.5.7). Presently Burlington does not have LOS standards for Fire and EMS services and the City's Fire Impact fees do not address growth related capital impacts. Additionally, Burlington has no process for collecting impact fees in unincorporated Skagit County to offset the impacts of providing EMS services to support growth outside the city's municipal boundaries. Because an impact fee and LOS study is necessary to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan policies listed above, and because it was included in the 2025 Work Plan

and identified as a priority by the City Council, it should be the second highest priority work plan item.

- d. Other work plan items should be completed as time and budget considerations allow.

**Recommendation:**

Based on the findings presented above the Planning Commission respectfully makes the following recommendations to the City Council:

1. The City Council should adopt the annual work plan prepared by the Community Development Department and the Planning Commission (attachment "1").
2. The highest priority work plan item shall be the completion of the City's required periodic update.
3. The second highest priority work plan item shall be the completion of an impact fee rate study and level of service analysis for Fire/EMS services.
4. All other work plan items should be completed as time, staffing, and budgetary constraints allow.
5. Consistent with BCPP 9.3.5.4 annual review docket proposals shall not be accepted until the completion of the Comprehensive Plan update.
6. The Planning Commission recognizes that the Community Development Department may have other responsibilities of an administrative nature, such as reviewing permit applications, responding to public questions, and preparing annual capital improvement plans.

**Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of January 2026**

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Marianne Manville-Ailles  
Chair, City of Burlington Planning Commission

Attachments:

"1" 2024 Work Plan