

COVER MEMO

Briefing Date/Time: May 26, 2026
Staff Contact/Title: Shawn Gilbertson, Director of Environmental Planning and Programming, shawng@portolympia.com
Subject: Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan – Update and Amendment to Interlocal Agreement with City of Tumwater
Purpose: Information Only Decision Needed

Type of Agenda Item:

Advisory

Background:

The Port of Olympia and City of Tumwater signed an interlocal agreement (ILA) in 2016 to jointly develop Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan (BPHCP) for the City of Tumwater, including the Olympia Regional Airport and surrounding Port properties. This ILA has been amended three times over the course of the last decade, mostly to allow for time extensions and to add shared grant responsibilities. This proposed fourth amendment to the ILA is to account for an increase in the scope and cost of consulting services needed to complete the draft HCP and associated environmental review and permitting requirements. The projected increase to the Port's BPHCP budget is \$60,500 in 2026 and \$32,553.95 in 2027.

Summary and Financial Impact:

HCPs are required under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for development and other activities that could impact threatened or endangered species. HCPs are documents detailing the protection, mitigation, and restrictions necessary to protect species of concern from impacts resulting from development and other activities and actions.

In Tumwater, a HCP is required to protect habitat and populations of Mazama Pocket Gopher, Streak-Horned Lark, Oregon Spotted Frog, and Oregon Vesper Sparrow. Completion of the HCP and approval by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will result in an Incidental Take Permit under the ESA. This will allow Port development and infrastructure projects, as well as operations and maintenance, to proceed provided all provisions of the HCP are implemented. It is notable that the incidental take permit is for compliance with the ESA only. All other environmental regulations and permits must also be complied with for future projects.

The Port and City of Tumwater have worked closely with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, and environmental consulting firm (ICF) to complete a revised draft of the Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan. The draft plan

provides meaningful protections and strategies to improve the likelihood of recovery for the listed species. The draft document is currently under initial review by USFWS. We will work closely with USFWS and the City of Tumwater to make corrections and edits as needed with the intent to finalize the draft and begin the environmental review process sometime in late summer 2026. This process will include publicizing the draft document and soliciting input from stakeholders and other interested parties.

Due to the complexity and extended timeframe needed to develop the HCP, we have a funding shortfall compared to the amount of committed funds allowed by the ILA. Therefore, we are asking the Commission to authorize the execution of an ILA amendment that would increase the funding commitments for the Port and City. For the Port, the increase in costs compared to the last ILA are as follows:
2026 – From \$39,500 to \$100,000. An increase of \$60,500.
2027 – From \$90,000 to \$122,553.95. An increase of \$32,553.95.

Despite the increased cost to complete the HCP, it is important to note that most of this work has been funded by Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund grants through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. At the conclusion of this project, these grant funds will have paid \$1.3 million of what is likely to be a \$2 million project.

Alignment with Vision 2050:

The HCP project aligns with the goals to “Emphasize sustainability in all planning and actions...” and “Maximize the economic and community value of the Olympia Regional Airport...” Specifically, it supports action items #31 “Coordinate with partners on Tumwater development opportunities” and #34 “Support non-air-dependent manufacturing at airport properties”

Environmental Considerations and Review:

The HCP is the required method for preserving endangered species under the ESA. This effort supports the recovery plan for the species put forth by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and supported by the WA State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Document(s) Attached:

Proposed HCP ILA Amendment #4
ICF Scope and Budget Memo March 9, 2026