



# Plan Review Manual

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A Resource to Assist with Plan Development and Review - *including Certification*

Puget Sound Regional Council



September 2010

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# overview

## ORGANIZATION OF THIS MANUAL

This manual has been designed to provide both general and detailed guidance for the development of amendments and updates to countywide planning policies, local comprehensive plans, transit agency plans, and regional center subarea plans. It describes how each of these types of plans should address VISION 2040, Transportation 2040, specific requirements in the Growth Management Act, and provisions for designated regional centers.

The manual also serves as tool for the Regional Council's review of policies and plans developed in the central Puget Sound region. Following the introduction, the manual includes four parts and several appendices, which address the following:

**Part 1 provides background information** on the Regional Council's plan review process. It describes state requirements, clarifications provided by the Growth Management Hearings Board, and the Regional Council's own administrative guidance. This section discusses the four distinct types of review performed by the Regional Council, including the review of (1) countywide planning policies, (2) local comprehensive plans, (3) transit agency plans, and (4) plans for designated regional centers.

**Part 2 provides a model *VISION 2040 Statement***, to be included in countywide planning policies, local comprehensive plans, and transit agency plans. This statement summarizes how the policies or plans relate to and address VISION 2040. The *VISION 2040 Statement* is a more formal communication piece to inform users of the policies or plan, including citizens, officials, and other stakeholders.

**Part 3 includes a set of four reporting tools** to help guide each type of plan that is reviewed by the Regional Council – countywide planning policies, local comprehensive plans (including their transportation-related provisions), center plans, and transit plans. The reporting tools include two parts: a checklist and a set of related questions. The checklist portion is primarily a tool to assist staff as they work on plan amendments and updates. The set of questions serves as a communication piece between jurisdiction or agency staff and Regional Council staff during the review of amendments and updates.

## APPENDICES

**Appendix A is the Regional Council's *Adopted Policy and Plan Review Process***, which was last updated by the Executive Board in September 2003. The adopted process addresses the review of countywide planning policies, local comprehensive plans, transit agency plans, and center plans.

**Appendix B is an excerpt from VISION 2040's Part IV Implementation.** This section describes expectations for various policy and planning efforts in the central Puget Sound region.

**Appendix C contains the entire set of *Multicounty Planning Policies*** which were adopted as part of VISION 2040 in April 2008.

**Appendix D is an excerpt from the Growth Management Act** and lists the requirements for transportation planning for local comprehensive plans.

**Appendix E** is a set of four additional appendices that have been developed to provide topic-by-topic guidance to policy development for various types of plans. These appendices provide a greater level of detail than the reporting tool or checklists.

- ***Appendix E-1*** describes issues and approaches for achieving **consistency with VISION 2040**. This section outlines the multicounty planning policies, which also serve as the *regional guidelines and principles* required for certifying the transportation-related provisions in local comprehensive plans.
- ***Appendix E-2*** discusses additional issues related to **consistency with *Transportation 2040***, the adopted regional transportation plan.
- ***Appendix E-3*** describes further issues required in the **Growth Management Act for local transportation planning**, which also are factors for the certification of transportation-related provisions.
- ***Appendix E-4*** addresses issues related to **planning for centers**. While this is geared to designated regional growth centers and regional manufacturing industrial centers, it also has applications for planning for central places and more compact activity areas of different types.

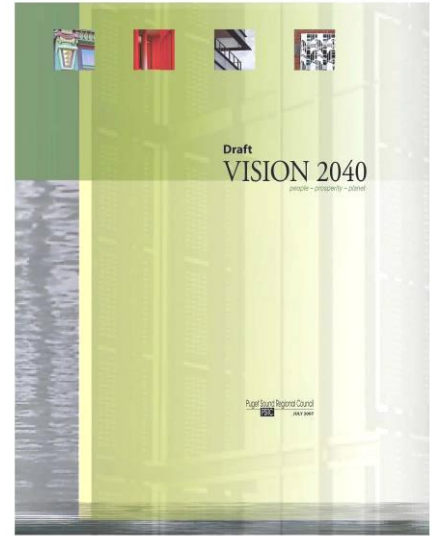
**Appendix F** provides an example of a completed **plan review report**.

**Compendium.** A separate compendium provides **examples and best practices** to assist planning efforts with understanding various ways of addressing VISION 2040 and state planning requirements. The compendium is a working document and is designed TO BE periodically updated with new examples and practices.

# Introduction

## WHY REVIEW POLICIES AND PLANS?

VISION 2040 represents regional agreement on many complex issues, including environmental sustainability, where future development should go, housing, economic development, transportation, and the siting of public services. To ensure that individual regional and local planning efforts are coordinated, the Puget Sound Regional Council works with countywide planning groups, local jurisdictions, transit agencies, and others to ensure that adopted regional policies and provisions are being addressed. This happens through the review of countywide planning policies, local comprehensive plans – including subarea plans for regionally designated centers – and transit agency plans.



The Growth Management Act emphasizes intergovernmental coordination and consistency. To advance coordination between regional and local planning, the Act requires regional transportation planning organizations, including the Puget Sound Regional Council, to formally certify countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plan transportation provisions. To be certified, the transportation provisions must demonstrate that they are consistent with the regional transportation plan, with regionally established guidelines and policies, and with Growth Management Act requirements for transportation planning.

## WHAT IS THE REGIONAL COUNCIL'S PLAN REVIEW PROCESS?

The Regional Council process for reviewing various policies and plans is designed to further regional coordination and satisfy the Growth Management Act certification requirements. The Regional Council's Executive Board last revised the *Policy and Plan Review Process* in September 2003 to incorporate guidelines for the review of plans for designated regional growth centers. The adopted process is provided in *Appendix A*.

With the adoption of VISION 2040 – including revisions to the multicounty planning policies<sup>1</sup> and additional information on the plan review program presented in VISION 2040's Implementation section – new guidance is now in place for the plan review process. This manual is designed to be a resource for understanding that guidance and the review process.

## HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?

**Where It Starts.** The plan review process ideally starts when a countywide planning body, local jurisdiction, or agency begins an update or amendment. All are encouraged to provide

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<sup>1</sup> The Act states that multicounty planning policies shall be adopted by two or more counties, each with a population of 450,000 or more, having contiguous urban areas. They may be adopted by other counties, according to the process established in the Act or as agreed to among the counties and cities within the multicounty region (RCW 36.70A.210 (7)).

advance drafts to Regional Council staff for review and comment. Based on the nature of the update or amendment, the comments can take the form of staff-to-staff communications or more formal written memoranda or letters.

## Brief Summary of How the Plan Review Process Works

### STEP I

#### **Work Starts on Update or Amendments**

- Agency or planning body contacts PSRC regarding scope and schedule
- Use the Plan Review Manual to identify issues and topics to be addressed

#### **PSRC Support**

- PSRC staff is available as material is drafted for review and assistance

#### **As Work Progresses on Draft Provisions**

- Craft a VISION 2040 Statement to be included in the final adopted set of policies or plan
- Use the checklist in the reporting tool to ensure key provisions have been addressed

### STEP II: Final Pre-Adoption Review

- If not previously provided, a completed draft of the reporting tool should be provided to PSRC staff for review, along with the draft revisions 60-days prior to final adoption. (Note: This corresponds with state agency review of draft amendments.)
- Work with PSRC comments to finalize policies or plan

### STEP III: After Adoption

- Submit adopted policies or plan to PSRC.
- If changes were made to draft policies and plans as part of adoption, then any related revisions to the reporting tool should also be submitted.
- PSRC staff then drafts a Plan Review Report and certification recommendation – which is first made available to the submitter for review and comment
- Plan Review Report revised as needed and transmitted to PSRC's boards for action

Along with using this manual, it is helpful to work with past *Plan Review Reports* prepared by the Regional Council to identify specific issues or topics that were previously identified as needing attention or were recommended as ways of improving the plan.

Note: This manual should be used in concert with the VISION 2040 document itself, rather than as a stand-alone resource. VISION 2040 provides the full array of goals, planning provisions, and explanatory material to guide various regional and local planning efforts in the central Puget Sound region.

***PSRC Support – Shifting the interaction to earlier in the process.*** Regional Council staff is available to provide technical assistance and support in the *development* of policy amendments or plan updates. Our goal is to help each planning effort in the region result in successfully demonstrating consistency with VISION 2040 and state planning requirements well in advance of final adoption.

***VISION 2040 Statement.*** A new requirement in VISION 2040 is for all countywide planning policies, local comprehensive plans, transit agency plans, and subarea plans for regional centers to

include a brief report or statement in the plan itself. (See Appendix B.) The statement can be a few paragraphs or more substantive and in-depth on how they address VISION 2040. A model VISION 2040 statement is provided in Part 2 of this manual. Note: For a minor amendment to a set of policies or a plan, it may not always be necessary to revise or prepare a new VISION 2040 statement. (Please consult with Regional Council staff as amendments are drafted.)

***Reporting Tool.*** A separate reporting tool has been developed for each type of plan reviewed by the Regional Council, including countywide planning policies, local comprehensive plans, transit agency plans and center plans. The first part of the reporting tool is a checklist is designed to help guide the development of plan updates and amendments. The checklist is primarily designed to assist those responsible for crafting amendments and updates.

The second part of the reporting tool is a series of directed questions that relate to key VISION 2040 provisions and certification requirements. The entire reporting tool should be completed and submitted to the Regional Council prior to adoption for review and comment – along with a copy of the actual draft plan update or amendment. This provides an opportunity to work out any issues or problems that may be identified before final action is taken. After adoption, the reporting tool may be revised as needed – if changes were made to draft policies or plans during final adoption. The information provided in the reporting tool serves as the basis for the *Plan Review Report* that Regional Council staff will craft for formal review by the Council’s policy boards and Executive Board.

***Plan Review Report.*** After plan update or policy amendments are adopted and the reporting tool has been finalized, Regional Council staff will draft a *Plan Review Report*. For more detailed plan updates, the report will address a broader range of consistency issues. For simpler amendments, the report may take the form of a memorandum. An initial draft of the report is first sent to staff of the countywide group, jurisdiction, or transit agency for review and comment. The report is finalized and transmitted to the Regional Council’s policy boards for their consideration. (See example of a *Plan Review Report* in Appendix F.)

***Board Review and Action.*** The final *Plan Review Report* is transmitted to the Regional Council’s Growth Management Policy Board and Transportation Policy Board, along with a recommendation regarding certification. Both boards act on the recommendation and then forward it to the Executive Board. Action by the Executive Board finalizes the process.

## **WHAT IS EXPECTED FOR CERTIFICATION?**

***Requirements in State Law.*** The Puget Sound Regional Council serves as the *regional transportation planning organization* for King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. As the regional transportation planning organization, the Regional Council is required to certify countywide planning policies for each of the four counties, as well as the transportation-related provisions in the comprehensive plans for all 86 local jurisdictions in the four-county region. Certification is based on three things: (1) addressing what state law refers to as *regional guidelines and principles* – which in the central Puget Sound region are the 174 multicounty planning policies in VISION 2040 (see Appendix C), (2) conformity with the Growth Management Act requirements for transportation planning (see Appendix D and Appendix E-3, and (3) consistency with the regional transportation plan – that is, *Transportation 2040* (see Appendix E-2) (Chapter 47.80.023, Revised Code of Washington). The Regional Council’s Executive Board formally certifies the transportation-related provisions based on recommendations from the Regional Council’s two policy boards.

### **Regional Transportation Planning Organization Duties**

*Certify that transportation-related provisions (1) reflect the established regional guidelines and principles, (2) are consistent with the adopted regional transportation plan, and (3) conform with requirements for transportation planning. (See RCW 47.80.023 and Adopted Policy and Plan Review Process – September 2003)*

## **WHAT ABOUT THE REVIEW OF OTHER PROVISIONS BEYOND CERTIFICATION?**

The Regional Council's review also provides an opportunity to comment on other aspects of countywide planning policies, local comprehensive plans, transit plans, and center plans beyond what is considered for the purposes of certification. This portion of the review process takes into account additional regional guidance provided by VISION 2040 beyond the multicounty planning policies. The Regional Council also takes the opportunity to offer comments on ways that policies or plans could be improved. This part of the review process has been developed in response to direction provided by the Interlocal Agreement for Regional Planning of the Central Puget Sound Area (VII-C) and Framework Plan (Section 5, 1-c-3)

## **HOW FREQUENTLY DOES REVIEW OCCUR?**

*Policies and Plans Remain Certified until Amended or Updated.* Once a set of countywide planning policies or local comprehensive plan (or subarea plan for a regional center) has been certified, it remains certified until it is next amended or updated. (See Appendix A.) Countywide planning groups, local jurisdictions, and agencies are encouraged to continue to be in communication with the Regional Council as amendments and updates are being developed in order to ensure that their certification status remains up-to-date.

## **DO AMENDMENTS NEED TO BE REVIEWED?**

*All Amendments Must Be Submitted – But Not All Require Formal Action.* The Regional Council requests that it receive all amendments to countywide planning policies, local plans, transit agency plans, and center plans. However, amendments are treated in different ways based on the issues they address and their level of detail. For example, minor amendments typically do not trigger the need for a formal action by the Regional Council.

*Major Amendments – Updates or Substantial Revisions.* If a set of policies or a plan is substantively revised or updated, the Regional Council asks for a new reporting tool to be completed and will prepare a new plan review report, including a recommendation regarding certification, for consideration by the Regional Council's policy boards and Executive Board.

*Minor Amendments Related to Certification.* If only a portion of a set of policies or plan is amended that has bearing on one or more of the transportation-related provisions, only that portion of the reporting tool that relates to the issue(s) being revised needs to be completed. In such instances, only a brief explanation of the amendment(s) would likely be sufficient. Also, rather than a full plan review report, a memorandum will be transmitted to the Regional Council's board for consideration. The memorandum will briefly summarize the amendment and include a recommendation regarding certification.

*Other Minor Amendments.* Minor amendments that deal with issues that do not address certification requirements or consistency with VISION 2040 should also be submitted to the Regional Council. In the case of local comprehensive plans, jurisdictions may opt to transmit drafts of these minor amendments to the Regional Council at the same time they submit them to the Department of Commerce for state review.

If a portion of a set of policies or plan is amended that does not relate to certification, there are two possible outcomes. If the issue addressed may be of interest to the Regional Council's policy boards, an information item may be composed to inform board members of the subject and how it has been addressed. No action is taken by the board to retain certification status. For other minor amendments, the Regional Council staff will acknowledge receipt of the amendment and include it in its collection of policies and plans.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF POLICIES OR PLANS ARE NOT CERTIFIED?**

Only those transportation or economic development projects or programs located in jurisdictions whose policies or plans have been certified are eligible to receive PSRC-managed funds. This includes projects sponsored by an agency other than the local jurisdiction itself. In some instances, jurisdictions or agencies may apply for funds while work is underway to revise policies or plans to address certification requirements. In those cases, a project may be identified for funds but may not receive them until the certification requirements are fully met.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF POLICIES OR PROVISIONS ARE NOT CONSISTENT WITH VISION 2040?**

For other planning issues that are not directly transportation-related, the Regional Council's Plan Review Report will discuss consistency with pertinent provisions in VISION 2040. Should an issue be identified, the Report will provide information on how the policies or plan could be revised to better address VISION 2040. The adopted *Policy and Plan Review Process* identifies how unresolved issues are to be addressed (see Appendix A).

### **WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR CERTIFICATION STATUS WHEN VISION 2040 OR TRANSPORTATION 2040 IS AMENDED?**

Countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plans retain their certification status until they are updated or amended. In case VISION 2040 or *Transportation 2040* are updated, countywide policies and local plans are expected to reflect any new regional provisions during subsequent update and amendment cycles.

### **HOW DOES THE REGIONAL COUNCIL'S PROCESS RELATE TO THE REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PLANS BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE?**

Countywide planning policies, local comprehensive plans, and related regulations are required to be submitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce for review and comment 60 days prior to adoption. The Department coordinates a review of the draft provisions involving various state agencies. This review often involves a response to the countywide planning group or local jurisdictions with comments on the draft. However, it is important to note that this review does not result in a formal certification or approval of the policies or plans by the state. The only formal certification that takes place is that by the Regional Council (as the regional transportation planning organization) and occurs after the policies or

plans have been adopted. Also, the Regional Council does not review regulations or zoning codes.

The Regional Council and the Department of Commerce do coordinate in developing materials and criteria used to review policies and plans. This allows countywide policy groups and local jurisdictions to provide similar responses to common issues expressed in both review processes. The Regional Council also typically receives copies of comments provided by the Department in the state agency review of draft policies and plans. The Regional Council has that information at the time it prepares a Plan Review Report and certification recommendation once the policies or plans are formally adopted. It is strongly recommended that countywide planning bodies and local jurisdictions provide advance copies of draft amendments and updates to the Regional Council at least during the 60-day period for Department of Commerce review – preferably earlier.

### **HOW DOES THE REGIONAL COUNCIL’S REVIEW RELATE TO THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT HEARINGS BOARD PROCESS?**

As the regional transportation planning organization in the four-county region, the Regional Council is required to review and certify transportation-related provisions for all countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plans. This function is separate from any challenge to the validity of policies or plans that may be brought before the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board. The Regional Council’s certification action is based on determining consistency with (1) the multicounty planning policies, which serve as the regional guidelines and principles, (2) *Transportation 2040*, the regional transportation plan, and (3) Growth Management Act requirements for transportation planning.

The Hearings Board has more of a quasi-judicial mandate when it is petitioned to review a set of policies or a plan. While there can obviously be some overlap with issues that are reviewed by the Hearings and the Regional Council, the Hearings Board process is set up to consider a much broader range of provisions from the entire body of requirements in the Growth Management Act.

### **ARE LOCAL PLANS CERTIFIED WITH COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES AS WELL?**

While local comprehensive plans are required to be consistent with both countywide planning policies and multicounty planning policies, state law only provides for a certification function by regional transportation planning organizations, which in the four-county region is the Puget Sound Regional Council. Each county and its cities have their own mechanisms for developing and maintaining their respective countywide planning policies.

## **HOW DOES THE PLAN REVIEW PROCESS RELATE TO THE PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS?**

The review of transportation projects and applications in the Regional Council's Transportation Improvement Program is closely coordinated with its Plan Review Process. For example, only those transportation projects or programs located in jurisdictions whose comprehensive plan provisions have been certified are eligible to apply for and receive PSRC-managed funds. Moreover, each transportation project proposal (or amendment) for inclusion in *Transportation 2040* must demonstrate consistency both with the local comprehensive plan, as well as with the multicounty planning policies and regional transportation plan.

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# Part 1: Background

This section addresses the duties and responsibilities for reviewing plans and policies. The Growth Management Act requirements for reviewing countywide policies and local comprehensive plans are outlined, as well as the Puget Sound Regional Council's institutional framework for reviewing policy and planning documents. Then the different types of plan review conducted by the Regional Council are described.

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following information provides a brief summary of the legal and institutional framework of the Regional Council's plan review program.

### What Does Washington State Law Say?

The Growth Management Act emphasizes coordination and consistency of planning. Comprehensive plans are expected to be internally consistent, consistent with the plans of other jurisdictions, and consistent with regional planning. Development regulations, including zoning provisions, are also expected to be consistent with the comprehensive plan.

To ensure consistency between regional and local planning, the Act requires regional transportation planning organizations to:

*certify ... that the transportation elements of comprehensive plans adopted by counties, cities, and towns within the region reflect [regionally adopted guidelines and principles], are consistent with the adopted regional transportation plan, and, where appropriate, conform with the [mandatory elements section of the Growth Management Act]. Where appropriate, certify that county-wide planning policies ... and the adopted regional transportation plan are consistent.* (Chapter 47.80.023, Revised Code of Washington - RCW)

The Act defines mandatory elements for local plans (RCW 36.70A.070), and provides guidance for the development of the regional guidelines and principles (RCW 47.80.026) and the regional transportation plan (RCW 47.80.030). These guidelines and principles are to be used to develop regional and local transportation plans, and for the certification of transportation-related provisions in local comprehensive plans.<sup>2</sup> In the central Puget Sound region, the Act also requires the adoption of multicounty planning policies. VISION 2040 establishes that the multicounty planning policies serve as the central Puget Sound area's regional guidelines and principles. (See Part IV: Implementation.) The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) provides additional guidance and stipulates that "regions shall cooperatively define and establish

<sup>2</sup> At a minimum, the factors to be addressed include *concentrations of economic activity, residential density, development corridors and urban design that, where appropriate, supports high capacity transit, freight transportation and port access, development patterns that promote pedestrian and nonmotorized transportation, circulation systems, access to regional systems, effective and efficient highway systems, the ability of transportation facilities and programs to retain existing and attract new jobs and private investment and to accommodate growth in demand, transportation demand management, joint and mixed use developments, present and future railroad right-of-way corridor utilization, and intermodal connections.* (RCW 47.80.026)

measures and processes to determine regional consistency with the adopted regional transportation plan” (WAC 468-86-150).

### **What Does the Hearings Board Say?**

The Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board has addressed regional coordination and consistency in several cases.<sup>3</sup> The Board has asserted that local jurisdictions are obliged to balance local interests with regional interests. It has also identified local comprehensive plans as being the appropriate mechanism for translating regional policies into results. Finally, the Board has stated that amendments to a comprehensive plan may not cause the comprehensive plan to become inconsistent with countywide and multicounty policies.

### **What Does the Regional Council Say?**

The Puget Sound Regional Council’s *Interlocal Agreement for Regional Planning of the Central Puget Sound Area* and *Framework Plan* provide additional direction for coordinating planning on interjurisdictional issues. The *Interlocal Agreement* calls for the Regional Council to develop a process for the review of countywide planning policies (VII-C). The *Framework Plan* directs the Regional Council to work with local and state agencies to ensure that provisions of the regional growth strategy are reflected in local planning efforts (Section 5, 1-c-3).

To meet these directives, the Regional Council’s Executive Board adopted the *Policy and Plan Review Process*, which was last updated in 2003 (see Appendix A). The process describes the authority for reviewing plans and certifying transportation-related provisions. It then discusses each of the four types of review carried out by the Regional Council, including the review of (1) countywide planning policies, (2) local plans, (3) transit agency plans, and (4) center plans. Certification responsibilities are also described along with procedures for resolving disputes.

### **What Does VISION 2040 Say?**

The *Policy and Plan Review Process* is addressed in the *Implementation* section of VISION 2040. That section calls for each distinct planning effort to incorporate a brief report or statement in their plans that addresses VISION 2040 and the multicounty planning policies (See Appendix B.). A discussion of the VISION 2040 statement is included in Part 3 of this manual.

## **TYPES OF REVIEW**

The Regional Council’s Plan Review process is divided into four types: (1) countywide planning policies, (2) local comprehensive plans, (3) transit agency plans, and (4) center plans. Each is briefly described below.

### **1. Countywide Planning Policies**

Whereas multicounty planning policies provide a common framework for planning at the regional level, countywide policies provide such a framework for collaborative planning within individual counties. In central Puget Sound, each set of countywide planning policies

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<sup>3</sup> For balancing local, regional, and state interests, see *Rural Residents*, 3310, FDO, at 14. Regarding the local plans as the mechanism for implementing regional policies, see *Aagaard*, 4311c, FDO, at 7. Consistency of local comprehensive plans with countywide planning policies and multicounty planning policies is addressed in *LMI/Chevron*, 8312, FDO, at 44.

is reviewed for consistency with the multicounty planning policies and with *Transportation 2040*, the regional transportation plan. A finding of consistency results in certification of the countywide policies. According to Policy MPP-G-2, countywide planning policies are to be updated to reflect revised multicounty planning policies by December 31, 2010.

## **2. Local Comprehensive Plans**

Local comprehensive plans are the primary focus of planning under the Growth Management Act. The primary guidance and requirements of the Act are directed at local jurisdictions, including provisions to ensure consistency between the local comprehensive plan and the codes and regulations that implement the plan.

One of the advantages of VISION 2040 is that it provides a long-term view that extends beyond the planning period of local comprehensive plans. This long-range outlook provides context for the 20-year planning period for local plans, and helps identify long-range issues that local jurisdictions can begin to address early on.

The Growth Management Act includes a schedule<sup>4</sup> that requires comprehensive plans to be reviewed and updated as needed every seven years. Based on that provision, local plans will likely be updated at least five times between now and 2040 – in 2011, 2018, 2025, 2032, and 2039. Local plans are reviewed to (1) ensure consistency with VISION 2040 and to (2) certify that their transportation-related provisions meet state planning requirements.

**Consistency with VISION 2040.** Issues relating to consistency with VISION 2040 include: sustainability, implementation of the *Regional Growth Strategy*, multicounty planning policies, and those implementation actions geared to local jurisdictions.

**Certification of Transportation-Related Provisions.** Certification of the transportation-related provisions is based on (1) consistency with established *regional guidelines and principles* – that is, *the multicounty planning policies*, (2) consistency with the *regional transportation plan (Transportation 2040)*, and (3) conformity with the specific Growth Management Act requirements for transportation planning.

A single *plan review report* is prepared for each local comprehensive plan update. A recommendation for certification is included based on the three areas described above. Comments on consistency with VISION 2040 are intended to assist local governments in ways their plan can implement regional goals and policies, as well as local objectives and concerns.

## **3. Transit Agency Plans**

Each transit agency in the central Puget Sound region has a plan that guides its service program. However, they currently vary in terms of their planning horizons and level of detail. Under PSRC's Interlocal Agreement, the Regional Council reviews and comments on transit agency plans. In addition, state law requires the Puget Sound Regional Council to certify long-range plans developed by Sound Transit (RCW 81.104). The provisions in the regional transportation plan and the multicounty planning policies, which provide the policy framework for the region's transportation plan, serve as a basis for developing a certification recommendation for Sound Transit's plan.

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<sup>4</sup> RCW 36.70A.130

#### 4. Center Plans

Local jurisdictions that have regionally designated centers – either *regional growth centers* or regional *manufacturing/industrial centers* – are to prepare a subarea plan for each center (DP-Action-17). According to VISION 2040, the subarea plan is to be adopted within four years of the center’s designation. Center plans are viewed for consistency with (1) VISION 2040, (2) Growth Management Act requirements for subarea planning, and (3) regionally established criteria for center planning.

#### **Aligning growth targets with VISION 2040’s Regional Growth Strategy**

The Regional Council has offered guidance to counties and their cities as they work to align their local growth targets with the *Regional Growth Strategy*. This guidance recognizes that the path from now to 2040 is more than three decades long, and that the path to 2040 may not be linear. Where recent growth has been at significant odds with the policy direction set by the *Regional Growth Strategy*, jurisdictions are asked to try their best to set any new targets as close to VISION 2040 as reasonably possible. Jurisdictions are asked to explain what steps they are taking to “bend the trend” of recent growth to align with the concepts in VISION 2040.

The Regional Council will remain flexible by recognizing good faith efforts in its review of targets. The Regional Council will also provide guidance and technical assistance to counties and their cities as they work to prepare their targets and plan updates. The review and certification of plans will be based on the actions and measures already taken or proposed to be put in place to bend the trend, not just on an assessment of the targets alone.

#### **GUIDANCE FOR OTHER PLANNING ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION**

In addition to those planning efforts that are formally reviewed by the Puget Sound Regional Council, other planning activities – including those of state agencies, other regional agencies, and special service districts – are also expected to be consistent with and work towards implementation of VISION 2040 and the *Regional Growth Strategy*.

The Growth Management Act requires state agencies to comply with local comprehensive plans and development regulations (RCW 36.70A.103). This applies to both planning and programming by state agencies.

VISION 2040 reinforces the provision in the Growth Management Act that cities are the preferred provider of urban services. As such, VISION 2040 states that urban services should be provided by cities or appropriate regional service providers. Special districts serving municipalities or potential annexation areas are encouraged to consolidate or dissolve as a result (MPP-PS-6). Counties are asked to review special service districts’ plans to identify any inconsistencies with local or regional planning goals. Cities and counties are asked to collaborate with special service districts to review district location and design criteria for public facilities to ensure that regional and local growth management objectives are met.