

Local Comprehensive Plans Certification Report City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan

March 12, 2026



The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) conducted a certification review of the City of Seattle comprehensive plan. Seattle adopted its 2024 comprehensive plan update on December 16, 2025. PSRC staff provided comments on the draft plan in May 2024 and February 2025 to inform the final plan adopted by the city.

This document is organized into two primary parts: a statement of certification and any applicable conditions to certification; and a discussion of conformity with the Growth Management Act and consistency with VISION 2050 by topic area.

Certification Action

The Puget Sound Regional Council certifies that the transportation-related provisions in the City of Seattle 2024 comprehensive plan conform to the Growth Management Act and are substantially consistent with multicounty planning policies and the Regional Transportation Plan.

Within the central Puget Sound region, local governments and PSRC have worked together to develop an overall process for reviewing and certifying local, countywide, regional center, and long-range transit plans.¹ Transportation-related provisions that are key for certification are based on RCW 47.80.026 and the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A). This report may recommend additional work to fully address the requirements of the Growth Management Act, VISION 2050, or the Regional Transportation Plan, although such revisions may not be strictly required for certification. Jurisdictions are encouraged to address those items during upcoming comprehensive plan updates and other planning efforts.

Conformity with Growth Management Act Transportation Planning Requirements and Consistency with Regional Plans and Policies

OVERVIEW

This section discusses conformity with the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070(6)) and the transportation-related requirements for local comprehensive plans. It also discusses consistency with the adopted multicounty planning policies (established regional guidelines and principles under RCW 47.80.026) adopted in VISION 2050 and the Regional

¹ The certification requirement in the Growth Management Act is described in RCW 47.80. The specific requirements for transportation elements in local comprehensive plans are spelled out in RCW 36.70A.070. PSRC's Interlocal Agreement, Section VII, also provides direction for the review of local comprehensive plans and countywide policies (Resolution A-91-01, amended March 1998). The Council's Executive Board last updated its process for Policy and Plan Review in September 2003. The process is also described in [VISION 2050: Implementation](#).



Transportation Plan. In addition to the multicounty planning policies, VISION 2050 contains a regional growth strategy with a preferred distribution of the region’s residential and employment growth, as well as several implementation actions for local governments to carry out. Each policy area addressed in VISION 2050 is discussed in turn below. More information about the requirement to review and certify local plans is provided in the [Adopted Policy and Plan Review Process](#).

Plans are reviewed using PSRC’s [VISION 2050 Consistency Tool](#). This report documents where the plan meets requirements, highlights outstanding provisions of the plan, and identifies where additional work is needed to fully address VISION 2050, the Regional Transportation Plan, or Growth Management Act planning requirements. This section is organized by the sections in VISION 2050. While this may align with plan elements, many of these concepts may be addressed in various parts of local comprehensive plans.

Regional Collaboration

Scope of Review

The Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070(6)) and VISION 2050 call for local comprehensive plans to:

- **Coordinate** with other jurisdictions, agencies, tribes, ports, military installations, and special purpose districts.
- Prioritize **access to opportunity** for people of color, people with low incomes, and historically underserved communities.
- Address opportunities and challenges related to **military installations** when applicable.
- Prioritize investments in **centers**.
- Explore **funding sources** and fiscal tools to meet infrastructure and other needs.

Certification Findings

The Seattle comprehensive plan effectively addresses regional collaboration policies in VISION 2050. The plan describes how the city’s policies and actions implement the Growth Management Act and VISION 2050. The plan describes coordination with neighboring jurisdictions, Tribes, Port of Seattle, transit agencies, and other partners to advance policy objectives. The plan includes policies to invest and engage with both Tribal Nations and Urban Indigenous residents. The plan identifies equity and opportunity as a central theme, and the city completed a Racial Equity Analysis to evaluate how the plan could further equity goals. Policies in the plan support an inclusive process in all planning efforts. The plan prioritizes equity-driven community engagement, seeks to center the voices of marginalized communities, and prioritizes resources for equitable community involvement.



Regional Growth Strategy

Scope of Review

VISION 2050 calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Incorporate **housing and employment targets**.
- Use **land use assumptions** substantially consistent with countywide growth targets.
- Demonstrate sufficient zoned **development capacity** to accommodate targets.
- Use consistent **land use assumptions** throughout plan.
- Maintain a **stable urban growth area** with densities that support the Regional Growth Strategy.
- Support growth in designated **centers and high-capacity transit station areas**.
- Manage and reduce **rural growth** and protect natural resource lands.

Certification Findings

The Seattle comprehensive plan effectively addresses the Regional Growth Strategy policies in VISION 2050. The plan accommodates another 112,000 new housing units and 169,500 new jobs by 2044, consistent with the adopted countywide growth targets, while providing additional housing capacity to respond to existing unmet needs and potential demand from future growth. The city is planning for a significant share of growth in its regional centers, urban centers and neighborhood centers. The plan prioritizes growth and multimodal investments in centers and near frequent transit to support walkable neighborhoods, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and maximize transit access.

Environment

Scope of Review

VISION 2050 calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Ensure **air quality standards** are met and reduce emissions of air toxics and greenhouse gases.
- Protect **critical areas and habitat** through coordination and environmental stewardship.
- Plan for **park, trail, and open space** resources and needs.
- Protect and enhance **tree canopy and native vegetation**.
- Protect and restore **water quality**, including actions to restore shorelines and estuaries, remove fish-passage barriers, reduce toxic products, and manage stormwater.
- Ensure **access to healthy environments** for all residents, prioritizing the reduction of impacts for vulnerable residents.



Certification Findings

The Seattle comprehensive plan effectively addresses the environmental policies in VISION 2050. The plan seeks to restore and protect habitat by reconnecting floodplains, daylighting creeks, restoring native vegetation, and removing fish barriers to accelerate ecosystem recovery. The plan includes policies on tree canopy and urban forestry, including a goal to achieve 30% tree canopy by 2037. The plan commits to federal and state air quality requirements through partnerships with the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency and land use, transportation, building, and energy strategies to improve air quality. The plan includes policies to treat stormwater runoff using green stormwater infrastructure and other best management practices. The plan identifies policies to create new and enhanced public spaces to serve the city's current and future residents, especially where population growth is anticipated in urban and regional centers.

Climate Change

Scope of Review

VISION 2050 calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Reduce **greenhouse gas emissions** in support of state, regional, and local reductions goals.
- Protect and restore natural resources that **sequester and store carbon**.
- Address impacts to **vulnerable populations** that have been or will be impacted by climate change.
- Retrofit **existing buildings** to reduce building energy use.
- Increase **resilience** by identifying and addressing the impacts of climate change and natural hazards.
- Address **rising sea levels** by siting and planning for relocation out of the floodplain.

Certification Findings

The Seattle comprehensive plan effectively addresses the climate change policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes a new Climate and Environment element, which includes goals and policies to address greenhouse gas emissions and community resilience. The plan supports regional emissions reductions goals. Policies in the plan address emissions reduction in transportation, the built environment, buildings, and solid waste. The plan includes policies addressing the impacts of climate change through coordination, collaboration, and partnerships with other public agencies, Tribes, funders, and affected communities. The plan includes policies for communities to have the capacity to prepare for and recover from the impacts of climate change through partnerships and investing in community capacity to co-develop and co-lead engagement and technical assistance about climate resilience.

The city should address the following comment in future updates to the plan:

- The city has made important progress on addressing climate change in the comprehensive plan. The Department of Commerce released [final guidance on](#)



[climate planning](#) consistent with House Bill 1181 in 2025, which will apply to the implementation progress report for jurisdictions in the Puget Sound region. The city should be aware of this upcoming deadline and monitor whether the plan's current state reflects the new requirements.

Land Use/Development Patterns

Scope of Review

VISION 2050 calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Build **thriving urban communities** through inclusive engagement.
- Support **centers** as connections to opportunity.
- Address **healthy environment**, physical activity and well-being, and safety, while reducing disparities.
- Support **annexation and incorporation** by planning for phased growth of communities.
- Preserve **rural areas and natural resource lands**.
- Evaluate potential **residential and commercial displacement** and mitigate impacts.
- Limit **incompatible uses** adjacent to military lands, industrial centers, and tribal reservation lands.

Certification Findings

The Seattle comprehensive plan effectively addresses the land use and development patterns policies in VISION 2050. The plan emphasizes the role of centers throughout the city to provide walkable access to amenities, retail, services, and opportunity. The plan identifies new and expanded urban and neighborhood centers to focus new growth around existing commercial areas or frequent transit. The plan also supports designation of Ballard as a future regional growth center. The plan includes policies to facilitate annexation, including cooperating with adjacent jurisdictions, working with King County to establish pre-annexation agreements, and considering strategies such as transferring permitting authority. The plan includes a policy to avoid incompatible uses adjacent to general aviation airports. The plan includes policies to reduce potential health impacts on residential populations and other sensitive uses near high-volume corridors, the King County airport, industrial facilities, and point sources of pollution.

The city should address the following comments in future updates to the plan:

- The Growth Management Act requires jurisdictions to adopt development regulations that are consistent with the comprehensive plan ([RCW 36.70A.040\(4\)\(d\)](#)). The city plans a multi-phase effort to implement the comprehensive plan through zoning changes. The city should ensure adoption of development regulations that implement the comprehensive plan.
- The plan includes goals and policies supporting the city's regional growth centers and manufacturing/industrial centers. PSRC is in the process of conducting an in-depth review and redesignation of regional centers. To maintain center



designations, the city should continue its efforts to align with regional criteria, including adoption of subarea plans that meet all requirements.

Housing

Scope of Review

The Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070) and VISION 2050 call for local comprehensive plans to:

- Provide an **inventory and analysis** of existing housing and housing needs at each income level.
- Document **sufficient land capacity** to accommodate housing for all income levels and emergency shelters.
- Identify **actions** to provide housing for all income levels.
- Identify and address **racially disparate impacts, displacement, or exclusion** in housing.
- Expand housing capacity for **moderate-density housing**.
- Promote **jobs-housing balance**.
- Support the **development and preservation of affordable housing** by considering inclusionary and incentive zoning and promoting affordable housing near high-capacity transit.
- Promote **homeownership** opportunities.

Certification Findings

The Seattle comprehensive plan effectively addresses the housing policies in VISION 2050. The plan demonstrates sufficient land capacity to accommodate the city's 2044 housing allocation for all income levels, including emergency shelter. The plan estimates the capital and operational funding needed to meet the city's allocated housing needs. The plan provides data on racially disparate impacts, exclusion and displacement in housing. The Housing element includes strategies to prevent and mitigate displacement, such as tenant protections, discouraging real estate speculation ahead of zoning changes, and supporting efforts of organizations addressing displacement. The plan documents barriers to developing affordable housing and encourages a range of tools to create income-restricted homes with market rate development, including development regulations, inclusionary zoning, incentives, and permit fee reductions. The plan supports the creation of social housing to provide permanent, publicly owned homes for low-income households and other qualifying households.

The city should address the following comment in future updates to the plan:

- The region is facing a housing crisis, and jurisdictions should act with urgency to address the housing needs of all residents. PSRC encourages the city to continue to work with regional partners to monitor housing conditions, to implement housing strategies, and to amend the plan periodically to adjust to changing conditions.



Economy

Scope of Review

VISION 2050 calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Identify and enhance **industry clusters**, including those that provide goods and services for export.
- Support retention and recruitment of **family wage jobs** and small businesses that are **locally, women-, and minority-owned**.
- Develop a **range of employment opportunities** to create a closer balance between jobs and housing.
- Address and prevent potential **physical, economic, and cultural displacement** of existing businesses.
- Expand **access to opportunity** and remove barriers for disconnected communities.
- Recognize and empower the contributions of the region's **culturally and ethnically diverse communities**.

Certification Findings

The Seattle comprehensive plan effectively addresses the economy policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes policies to support a stable and accessible downtown core, building on downtown's cultural, historic, nightlife, and other assets. The plan includes a Container Port element, which seeks to maintain viable and thriving import and export activities as a vital part of the city and region's economic base. The plan promotes the development of affordable commercial spaces that meet the needs of historically underserved communities, with a focus on serving the needs of businesses at risk of displacement.



Transportation

Scope of Review

The Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070(6)) requires local comprehensive plans to:

- Use **internally consistent land use assumptions** and forecasts of travel demand and that are consistent with growth targets.
- Provide **inventories of existing facilities**, and level-of-service standards and concurrency provisions that address multiple modes of travel, planned land uses and densities, and state highways.
- Include a **multiyear financing plan** and reassessment strategy to address potential funding shortfalls.
- Direct **demand management**, including programs to implement the Commute Trip Reduction Act.
- Plan for **pedestrians and bicycles**, including capital investments, education, and safety.
- Discourage **incompatible uses adjacent to airports**.
- Address **air quality** and the reduction of pollutants consistent with WAC 173-420-080.

VISION 2050 also calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Plan for **system maintenance, safety and emergency management**.
- Support the **Regional Growth Strategy**.
- Provide **alternatives to driving alone**.
- Plan facilities and services for **special needs transportation**.
- Avoid the creation of new and expanded facilities in **rural areas**.
- Identify **racial and social equity** as a core objective when implementing transportation projects.
- Protect the **environment** and reduce stormwater pollution.

Certification Findings

The Seattle comprehensive plan effectively addresses the transportation planning requirements of the Growth Management Act and the transportation policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes policies to encourage walking, biking, and transit trips. The plan includes a policy to retrofit transportation facilities to improve fish passage and design transportation facilities with stormwater systems that reduce roadway runoff pollution. The plan emphasizes transportation safety, particularly for the most vulnerable travelers through strategies such as enforcement, education, and facility design.

The city should address the following comments in future updates to the plan:

- The Growth Management Act requires local comprehensive plans to include a multiyear transportation financing plan for how the jurisdiction will meet the mobility needs identified for the planning period (RCW 36.70A.070(6)). The transportation



appendix includes an estimate of probable revenues available to the city through 2035. PSRC encourages the city to extend its analysis to the 20-year planning period to provide an analysis of the sufficiency of funding resources compared to estimated project costs. Find further guidance on how to address the financial analysis in the plan in Commerce’s [Transportation Element Guidebook](#), pages 202–212.

- VISION 2050 calls for multimodal level of service standards, and the Growth Management Act will also require these standards by 2029. The plan includes baseline data but does not yet establish specific standards. The city should continue to develop policies, standards, and regulatory approaches that incorporate multiple travel modes. Making progress in this area would strengthen and reinforce the plan’s goals to support walking, biking and transit. PSRC’s [Transportation Element Guidance](#) provides information on multimodal level of service standards.

Public Services

Scope of Review

VISION 2050 calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Promote **coordinated and efficient** use of public services.
- Protect **water quality** by serving urban development with sewer systems and replacing failing septic systems.
- Consider the **impacts of climate change on public facilities** and promote renewable energy.
- Promote **affordable and equitable access to public services**, especially for underserved communities.
- Promote working with school districts on **school siting and design** to support safe, walkable access.

Certification Findings

The Seattle comprehensive plan effectively addresses the public services policies in VISION 2050. The plan promotes sustainable design and construction of capital facilities. The plan includes policies to make capital facilities accessible in design, language, affordability, and relevance to people of all abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, ages, and cultures. The plan includes policies to coordinate with Seattle Public Schools to plan for population growth, explore opportunities to reduce the costs of developing new schools, expand opportunities for joint use, and coordinate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to make it easy and safe for students and families to get to school.

Conclusion and Next Steps

PSRC found the City of Seattle comprehensive plan is substantially consistent with the transportation-related provisions of the Growth Management Act, VISION 2050 and the Regional Transportation Plan.

PSRC encourages the city to address areas identified for additional work in upcoming plan updates and other planning efforts. These may be areas where additional work would make



the plan more consistent with the Growth Management Act or VISION 2050 and areas that may be necessary to address prior to the 2029 Growth Management Act Implementation Progress Report.

PSRC is available to provide assistance with future plan updates. Find additional planning resources on [PSRC's Plan Review webpage](#). If the city has questions or needs additional information, please contact Liz Underwood-Bultmann at 206-464-6174 and LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org.

