

# Local Comprehensive Plans Certification Report City of Arlington Comprehensive Plan

March 27, 2025



The Puget Sound Regional Council conducted a certification review of the City of Arlington comprehensive plan. Arlington adopted their 2024 comprehensive plan update on December 2, 2024. PSRC staff provided comments on the draft plan in October 2024 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 Arlington 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.<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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 City of Arlington comprehensive plan effectively addresses regional collaboration policies in VISION 2050. The plan highlights its connection to statewide, regional and county policy frameworks. The plan also recognizes the city's role within the local and regional economy, including significant work on the city's manufacturing/industrial center, which is planned jointly with the City of Marysville. In addition, the plan provides policy support for tribal coordination to ensure cultural and environmental preservation.



# 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 City of Arlington comprehensive plan effectively addresses the Regional Growth Strategy policies in VISION 2050. The plan demonstrates that the city has sufficient capacity to accommodate the adopted growth targets through 2044, including an additional 14,781 residents, 7,794 housing units and 14,423 jobs.

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

- The plan includes a subarea plan for the Cascade Industrial Center, a designated manufacturing/industrial center planned jointly with the City of Marysville. In advance of the centers redesignation process in fall 2025, the subarea plan should be revised to include the portion of the city's employment target that will be accommodated within the Cascade Industrial Center.
- The plan includes policy and a map indicating a desire to expand the urban growth area (UGA) to accommodate future population and employment growth based on recent low-density development trends. VISION 2050 (MPP-RGS-4) supports a stable UGA, recognizing the transportation and environmental challenges with serving an expanded urban area. To be consistent with VISION 2050, the city should amend the plan to focus on infill development and other reasonable measures to improve utilization of the existing UGA, through subarea planning for the Cascade Industrial Center and other employment growth strategies.
- The plan references adopted growth targets for the entire Arlington UGA. The city should consider amending the plan to use the Arlington City growth targets for consistency with the Snohomish County Countywide Planning Policies.



## 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 City of Arlington comprehensive plan effectively addresses the environmental policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes detailed maps and information on critical areas within the city and several policies to protect them. The plan highlights the importance of maintaining habitat and water resources for both environmental protection and quality of life benefits. Throughout the environment element, the plan emphasizes the value of ensuring that environmental benefits are provided to all residents in an equitable manner.

## 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 City of Arlington comprehensive plan effectively addresses the climate change policies in VISION 2050. The plan identifies climate adaptation and community resiliency as a foundational principle of the plan update and incorporates the theme into many elements of the plan. The plan identifies a range of climate-related impacts and natural hazards that are likely to impact the city and includes policies to increase landscape and community resilience. In addition, the plan acknowledges regional greenhouse gas reduction goals and provides policies supporting local climate action.

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 plans to release 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 City of Arlington comprehensive plan effectively addresses the land use and development patterns policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes subarea plans for neighborhoods throughout the city, supporting nodes of dense, mixed-use development that encourage walkability and connectivity. The plan supports a significant portion of housing growth within the Smokey Point area, which aligns with the planned bus rapid transit station area, and much of the employment growth within the Cascade Industrial Center MIC. The plan also addresses land use coordination around the Arlington Municipal Airport.



# 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 City of Arlington comprehensive plan effectively addresses the housing policy topics in VISION 2050. The plan includes a detailed inventory of existing housing within the city and documents the capacity to meet housing needs by income level by expanding the variety of housing types available throughout the city. The plan provides an analysis of recent development to identify potential barriers to development and provides several regulatory strategies to address these barriers. In addition, the city provides several policies encouraging the development of affordable housing near transportation and employment centers.

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. The plan includes a strong set of goals for mitigating displacement in a future affordable housing program. The city is encouraged 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 City of Arlington comprehensive plan effectively addresses the economy policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes economic stability and vibrancy as a foundational principle of the plan and incorporates support for local and small business development through various elements of the plan. The plan focuses on the importance of local and regional economic development to the city's success, providing policies to encourage the development of small, women- and minority-owned businesses. In addition, the plan includes several policies supporting the coordination of manufacturing and industrial development with the City of Marysville in the Cascade Industrial Center.





## 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 City of Arlington comprehensive plan effectively addresses the transportation planning requirements of the Growth Management Act and the transportation policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes a bicycle and pedestrian component with facility inventories, policies to improve the environment for walking and biking, and identifies projects to complete a nonmotorized network. The plan supports the coordination of land use and non-motorized transportation by focusing on bicycle, pedestrian and transit connections between housing development, employment, and transit centers.

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

- While the city's six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) identifies project costs and funding sources, the city should incorporate the TIP by reference into the comprehensive plan, to meet the GMA requirement (RCW 36.70A.070(6)(iv)). In





addition, PSRC encourages the city to extend its analysis of project costs and funding sufficiency to the 20-year planning period in its 2025 update to the Transportation Master Plan. This document should be adopted into the comprehensive plan as part of the annual amendment process. Find further guidance on how to address the financial analysis in the plan in the Department of Commerce's [Transportation Element Guidebook](#), pages 202–212.

- Consistent with VISION 2050, the plan includes multimodal level of service standards to identify system improvements. Please note that GMA will require multimodal level of service standards in central Puget Sound jurisdictions by 2029, and additional guidance may be available in the future to refine adopted 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 City of Arlington comprehensive plan effectively addresses the public services policies in VISION 2050. The plan provides several policies supporting the coordinated and equitable provision of public services with regional and non-profit entities. The plan supports community resiliency and disaster preparedness by including policies on hazard mitigation planning, community capacity building and maintenance of critical infrastructure. In addition, the plan provides a policy framework supporting concurrency in capital facilities and utilities and promotes affordability and equity in access for all residents.



## Conclusion and Next Steps

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

The city is encouraged 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 for future plan updates. Additional planning resources can also be found on [PSRC's Plan Review webpage](#). If the city has questions or needs additional information, please contact David Dixon at (206) 464-6172 or [ddixon@psrc.org](mailto:ddixon@psrc.org).

