

# PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

## CITY OF BELLEVUE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

October 29, 2015



### BACKGROUND

The Washington State Growth Management Act calls for coordination between local, regional, and state planning efforts. To advance this coordination, state law requires PSRC to certify that regional transit plans, countywide planning policies, and local comprehensive plans within the central Puget Sound region conform to: (1) established regional guidelines and principles, (2) the adopted long-range regional transportation plan, and (3) transportation planning requirements in the Growth Management Act. Within the central Puget Sound region, the multicounty planning policies in VISION 2040 have been established as the regional guidelines and principles under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 47.80.026. Certification of local comprehensive plans is also a requirement for jurisdictions and agencies that intend to apply for PSRC funding or proceed with any project submitted into the Regional Transportation Improvement Program, regardless of funding source.

Within the central Puget Sound region, local governments and PSRC have worked together to develop an overall process ([Adopted Policy and Plan Review Process](#), Revised September 2003) for reviewing and certifying local, countywide, regional, and transit agency policies and plans.<sup>1</sup> This process also provides an opportunity to coordinate and share information related to local and regional planning. A set of materials, compiled in a [Plan Review Manual](#), provides details on the review and certification process, background, and framework. The manual also provides guidance and checklists for aligning plans and policies with [VISION 2040](#), [Transportation 2040](#), and [Growth Management Act](#) requirements.

### DISCUSSION

This report summarizes the findings and recommendations regarding the periodic update to the comprehensive plan for the City of Bellevue, adopted by the city on August 3, 2015. PSRC last certified the City of Bellevue's comprehensive plan in June 2014. PSRC staff reviewed the updated 2015 comprehensive plan and coordinated with city staff in the development of this report.

### CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the City of Bellevue comprehensive plan, the following action is recommended to the PSRC Growth Management Policy Board, Transportation Policy Board, and Executive Board:

**The Puget Sound Regional Council certifies that the transportation-related provisions in the City of Bellevue 2015 comprehensive plan update conform to the Growth Management Act and are consistent with multicounty planning policies and the regional transportation plan.**

The remainder of this report contains a summary of the PSRC review of the City of Bellevue comprehensive plan update. Under each heading, the scope of the certification review, as guided by the [Plan Review Manual](#) and Local Comprehensive Plan Checklist, is listed in high level bullets. Discussion in each topic area highlights

<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 2040, Part IV: Implementation.

exemplary provisions of the plan, as well as issues identified through the certification review where future work on the part of the city is needed to more fully address VISION 2040, Transportation 2040, and Growth Management Act planning requirements.

## Part I: Conformity with Growth Management Act Transportation Planning Requirements

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070(6)) includes several requirements related to transportation elements in local comprehensive plans. These requirements are summarized as follows:

**Land use assumptions and forecasts of travel demand** that are internally consistent and consistent with growth targets.

**Service and facility needs**, including 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.

**Financing and investments**, including a multiyear financing plan and reassessment strategy to address potential funding shortfalls.

**Intergovernmental coordination** with neighboring cities, counties, and regional and state agencies.

**Demand management**, including programs to implement the Commute Trip Reduction Act.

**Pedestrian and bicycle planning**, including project funding and capital investments, education, and safety.

**Land uses adjacent to airports**, identifying relevant facilities, existing and planned uses, and policies that discourage incompatible uses.

Air quality is largely an interjurisdictional issue in which each jurisdiction's travel behaviors, measured through vehicle emissions, affect the regional airshed. The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) requires local transportation elements and plans to include "policies and provisions that promote the reduction of criteria pollutants" for mobile sources (WAC 173-420-080). When PSRC reviews plans, it also certifies that the comprehensive plans include air quality policies and provisions, including a commitment to meeting the requirements of applicable federal and state air quality legislation.

### DISCUSSION: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS

The City of Bellevue's comprehensive plan effectively addresses many of the transportation planning requirements of the Growth Management Act and includes adequate air quality policies and provisions. Highlights include:

- ☑ Provisions to support bicycle and pedestrian mobility, including an inventory of existing facilities, multimodal investments identified in the city's comprehensive project list, and goals and policies that support a safe and functional nonmotorized network.
- ☑ The plan includes a comprehensive set of transportation demand management strategies, including establishing targets to increase the proportion of non-single-occupant vehicle commute trips, coordination with other jurisdictions and agencies on demand management strategies, ensuring the city sets a positive example as an employer, and encouraging car-sharing and bike-sharing (TR-8-19).
- ☑ Goals and policies that support intergovernmental coordination, including TR-2, which calls for the city to work actively and cooperatively with other Eastside jurisdictions and regional and state agencies to plan, design, fund and construct regional transportation projects that support the city's comprehensive plan.

## DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The city should address the following comments at the earliest opportunity through future amendments to the comprehensive plan, subarea plans, or functional plans:

- The Growth Management Act requires that local comprehensive plans include a multiyear transportation financing plan (see RCW 36.70A.070(6)) for how the jurisdiction will meet the mobility needs identified for the planning period. The city has a 12-year Transportation Facilities Plan that identifies long-range needs and cost estimates, and the city intends to develop a Transportation Master Plan. While the comprehensive plan includes a list of projects for the planning period, financing policies, and principles to guide future reassessment decisions, the city should add additional detail to the financing plan, including:
  1. Provide cost estimates for roadway, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements and operation identified through the 2035 plan horizon.
  2. Develop a more detailed forecast of probable funding resources for transportation through the 2035 plan horizon.
  3. Provide an analysis of the sufficiency of funding resources compared to estimated costs of identified improvements, including maintenance.
  4. Revise and expand on the current reassessment strategy to address steps the city could take to close the gap between costs and revenues, as needed.

Further guidance on how to address the financial analysis in the plan can be found in the Department of Commerce's [Transportation Element Guidebook](#), pages 202-212.

- The transportation element includes high-level information about forecasted travel in 2035, shown in a trip density forecast map. The city should provide additional detail from the travel forecasts, including documentation of estimated impacts to state-owned facilities per RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(E) and [RCW 36.70A.070\(6\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#).

## Part II: Consistency with Regional Plans and Policies

### OVERVIEW

This section discusses consistency with the adopted multicounty planning policies (established regional guidelines and principles under RCW 47.80.026) adopted in VISION 2040, and Transportation 2040, the region's long-range transportation plan. In addition to the multicounty planning policies, VISION 2040 contains a regional growth strategy with a preferred distribution of the region's residential and employment growth, as well as a number of implementation actions for local governments to carry out. Each policy area addressed in VISION 2040 is discussed in turn below.

### VISION 2040 Context Statement

VISION 2040 calls for local plans to include a context statement that describes how the comprehensive plan addresses regional policies and provisions adopted in VISION 2040. The plan includes policies emphasizing consistency with VISION 2040. The city should consider describing in greater detail how the comprehensive plan addresses VISION 2040, including the MPPs and the Regional Growth Strategy, when the city next amends the plan. Examples of context statements are provided in PSRC's [Plan Review Manual](#), page 2-1.

## Environment

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

VISION 2040 calls for local comprehensive plans to address the following environmental policy topics:

**Stewardship**, including addressing the natural environment throughout the plan, decisions based on best-available science, and regional environmental initiatives.

**Earth and habitat**, including open space protection, restoration and protection of native vegetation, and coordination with adjacent jurisdictions.

**Water quality**, including actions that maintain hydrologic functions and reduce water pollution in ecosystems, watersheds, shorelines, and estuaries.

**Air quality and climate change**, addressing federal and state laws, reduction of pollutants, Puget Sound Clean Air Agency policies, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change.

### DISCUSSION: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS

The Bellevue comprehensive plan addresses the environmental policy topics in VISION 2040 with strong goals and actionable policies. Highlights include:

- ☑ Policies call for working towards a target of at least 40% tree canopy coverage, developing an action plan to meet the target, and minimizing the loss of tree canopy and natural areas due to transportation and infrastructure projects (EN-12 and 13).
- ☑ Policies that address waste management, such as prioritizing the use of products that are recyclable and made from recycled materials, engaging in Environmentally Preferable Purchasing practices, working with residents, businesses, and waste haulers to continue to improve percentage of waste diversion (EN 14-17).
- ☑ The plan includes information on community and municipal greenhouse gas emissions, as well as policies that direct the city to establish a citywide target, take corrective actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and develop and implement climate change adaptation strategies that create a more resilient community (EN-6 and 7).

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement of the plan to better align with regional guidelines and principles on the environment.

## Development Patterns – Including Regional Growth Strategy

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

VISION 2040 calls for local comprehensive plans to address the following development patterns policy topics:

**Urban areas**, including targets for housing and employment growth, compact communities that support transit and walking, and provisions for redevelopment of underused land.

**Centers**, including planning for one or more central places as locations for compact, mixed-use development, with policies that prioritize funding to centers to advance development.

**Unincorporated urban areas**, including policies that advance annexation and orderly transition of governance.

**Resource lands**, including identification of steps to limit development.

**Regional design**, addressing local provisions that apply the Transportation 2040 Physical Design Guidelines, energy efficient building, historic preservation, and enhanced sense of community.

**Health and active living**, addressing healthy environment, physical activity and well-being, and safety.

## DISCUSSION: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS

The city's comprehensive plan effectively addresses many of the development patterns policies in VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan includes policies that support future growth within Bellevue's mixed use centers, most prominently the downtown regional growth center, consistent with MPP-DP-5 and DP-11. The plan anticipates 50 percent of housing growth and 55 percent of employment growth to occur in the downtown regional growth center. The plan also directs transportation investments and services to support growth in centers (TR-3).
- ☑ Policies support the Transportation 2040 physical design guidelines through managing parking, incorporating transit supportive and pedestrian-oriented design features, and locating new community facilities near major transit routes.
- ☑ Policy LU-6 encourages new residential development to achieve a substantial portion of the maximum density allowed on the net buildable acreage to encourage appropriate urban densities.

## DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The city should address the following comments at the earliest opportunity through future amendments to the comprehensive plan, subarea plans, or functional plans:

- ☐ The comprehensive plan anticipates an additional 7,900 housing units and 28,500 employees in the downtown regional growth center over the planning period. The city should update the downtown element to reflect these growth assumptions, as well as additional planning criteria in [PSRC's Center Plan Checklist](#). More information on center planning can be found PSRC's [Plan Review Manual](#), page 3-1.

## Housing

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

VISION 2040 calls for local comprehensive plans to address the following housing policy topics:

**Increased housing production opportunities**, including diverse types and styles for all income levels and demographic groups.

**Affordable housing needs**, including an assessment of existing and future housing needs based on regional and local factors, including household income, demographics, special needs populations, and adequacy of existing housing stocks.

**Regional housing objectives** in VISION 2040, including promotion of housing diversity and affordability, jobs-housing balance, housing in centers, and flexible standards and innovative techniques.

## DISCUSSION: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS

The city's comprehensive plan effectively addresses the housing provisions contained in VISION 2040.

Highlights include:

- ☑ A housing element that clearly documents housing need, including a map showing the distribution of severely cost-burdened households.
- ☑ Policies that support housing for residents with special needs, including support for regional efforts to prevent homelessness and collaboration with jurisdictions and social service organizations to ensure availability of shelters and day centers (HO-35 – 36).
- ☑ The plan includes policies to address the spectrum of housing affordability needs, including policies on working cooperatively with A Regional Coalition for Housing, providing funding to address housing needs, encouraging maintenance and preservation of existing affordable housing, and evaluating surplus city land for potential use for affordable housing (HO-21 – 32).

## DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The city should address the following comment at the earliest opportunity through future amendments to the comprehensive plan, subarea plans, or functional plans:

- As a signatory to the Growing Transit Communities Regional Compact, the City of Bellevue has committed to take steps to attract growth near transit investments, provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near transit, and increase equitable access to opportunity for new and existing residents of transit communities. The city is encouraged to adopt more explicit affordable housing policies prioritizing housing programs and investments to meet the needs of very low, low, and moderate- income households to live near transit. Additional resources can be found in the [Growing Transit Communities – Toolkit of Strategies and Actions](#).

## Economy

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

VISION 2040 calls for local comprehensive plans to address the following economic development policy topics:

Include an **economic development element** that addresses: business, people, and places.

**Retention and recruitment efforts** that support family wage jobs, industry clusters that export goods and services, and small businesses that are locally owned.

**Equitable benefits and impacts**, including provisions and programs that promote economic vitality in distressed areas or areas with disadvantaged populations.

**Adequate housing growth in centers** through collaboration with the private sector and provision of infrastructure.

### DISCUSSION: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS

The city's comprehensive plan effectively addresses many of the economic provisions of VISION 2040.

Highlights include:

- A thorough economic development element, which includes a cluster analysis highlighting the largest industry clusters in Bellevue and an overview of those sectors.
- Policies to enhance community livability in support of the economic development strategy, including recognizing the economic development benefits of investment in urban amenities, encouraging a range of workforce housing opportunities, and promoting equal opportunity (ED-15 - 17).
- Policy ED-41 encourages coordination with local and regional government and economic agencies to develop and implement countywide and shared economic development policies.

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement of the plan to better align with regional guidelines and principles on economic development.

## Transportation

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040 call for local comprehensive plans to address the following transportation policy topics:

**Maintenance, management, and safety**, including clean transportation with reductions in pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, environmental factors, health and safety, stable and predictable funding sources, system and demand management strategies, and security and emergency response.

**Support for the regional growth strategy**, including system improvements that align with planned growth, prioritized investments that support compact development in centers, joint- and mixed-use development, complete streets and improvements to promote biking and walking, and context-sensitive design.

**Improved transportation options and mobility**, including alternatives to driving alone, facilities and services for special needs transportation, avoidance of new or expanded facilities in rural areas, and financing methods.

**Linking land use and transportation**, including integrating Transportation 2040 physical design guidelines in planning for centers and transit station areas, and land development tools that promote transportation alternatives.

#### **DISCUSSION: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS**

The Bellevue comprehensive plan addresses the major transportation emphases in VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040, including maintenance, management, and safety; support for the Regional Growth Strategy; and providing greater options and mobility. Highlights include:

- ☑ Policies to establish multimodal level of service and concurrency standards in each area of the city reflecting planned development patterns and mobility options (TR-29, TR-30).
- ☑ Development of mode split targets for downtown workers as well as residents and workers citywide.
- ☑ The plan addresses environmental considerations in transportation planning, and includes policies that direct the city to minimize environmental impacts, support reduction of transportation-source greenhouse gas emissions, and provide curbside spaces for electric vehicle charging stations (TR-139-144).
- ☑ Multiple goals and policies support transit use through coordination with transit agencies, accessibility, rider amenities, and other actions to create a transit-supportive environment (TR-62-TR-102).

#### **DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK**

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement of the plan to better align with regional guidelines and principles on transportation (see comments addressing Growth Management Act transportation planning requirements on page 3 of this report).

## **Public Services**

#### **SCOPE OF REVIEW**

VISION 2040 calls for local comprehensive plans to address the following public services policy topics:

**Promote more efficient use of existing services**, such as waste management, energy, and water supply, through conservation – including demand management programs and strategies.

**Promote renewable energy and alternative energy sources.**

**Plan for long-term water needs**, including conservation, reclamation and reuse.

#### **DISCUSSION: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS**

The Bellevue comprehensive plan update contains policies that address the public services provisions of VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan includes a number of policies that promote coordination with non-city utility providers and plan utility infrastructure consistent with growth envisioned in the city’s comprehensive plan (CF-10, UT-7, UT-45).
- ☑ Capital facilities and utilities policies call for maintaining the post-disaster Response and Recovery Plan and coordinating emergency preparedness and response with local and regional utility partners (CF-12, UT-20).

- ☑ Policies UT-70 and UT-71 call for encouraging conservation of resources and facilitating the conversion to cost-effective and environmentally sensitive alternative technologies and energy sources.

**DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK**

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement of the plan to better align with regional guidelines and principles on public services.

**COMMENTS AND GUIDANCE**

PSRC staff thanks the city for working through the plan review and certification process. PSRC is available to provide assistance for future plan updates. Additional planning resources can also be found at <http://www.psrc.org/growth/planreview/resources/>. If the city has questions or needs additional information, please contact Liz Underwood-Bultmann at 206-464-6174 or [LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org](mailto:LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org).