

PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION



CITY OF BUCKLEY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

June 11, 2020

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](#)) for reviewing and certifying local, countywide, regional, and transit agency policies and plans.¹ 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](#), [the Regional Transportation Plan](#), and [Growth Management Act](#) requirements.

The Buckley Comprehensive Plan was reviewed for consistency with VISION 2040. The update to VISION 2040, VISION 2050, is anticipated to be adopted by fall 2020, which will guide future plan updates including the 2024 periodic update required by the state. PSRC's Plan Review Manual and supporting documents will be updated to reflect VISION 2050.

DISCUSSION

This report summarizes the findings and recommendations regarding the periodic update to the comprehensive plan for the City of Buckley, adopted by the city on May 26, 2020, and consisting of updates adopted in 2015, 2017 and 2019. PSRC last certified the Buckley comprehensive plan in 2007. PSRC staff reviewed the plan and coordinated with city staff in the development of this report.

CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the City of Buckley 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 conditionally certifies that the transportation-related provisions in the City of Buckley comprehensive plan conform to the Growth Management

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 2040, Part IV: Implementation.

Act and are consistent with multicounty planning policies and the Regional Transportation Plan.

Conditional status is in place until the city amends the comprehensive plan to incorporate the city's employment growth target into its land use and transportation analysis; include a multi-year transportation financing plan that identifies anticipated revenues; and addresses the air quality impacts related to transportation.

These amendments shall be acted upon by the city on or before the next periodic update deadline of June 30, 2024.

Discussion of the conditional requirements is provided in Part 1, below. Additional recommendations for future work are provided, which may be considered during the next comprehensive plan update or during other planning efforts and are not required to satisfy the conditional certification. 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 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, [the Regional Transportation Plan](#), 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 Buckley’s comprehensive plan effectively addresses many of the transportation planning requirements of the Growth Management Act.

- ☑ The Transportation Element provides excellent detail regarding current transportation facilities and the need and costs for future projects.
- ☑ The comprehensive plan promotes regional coordination including with Pierce County and neighboring jurisdictions to create opportunities for mutual improvements (Goal 1.4).
- ☑ It includes a transportation strategy that prioritizes maintenance and safety and improvements to system continuity by constructing missing sidewalk, bicycle route, and street links.
- ☑ The city has impressive planning for a walkable downtown and a system of paths and trails, including a key segment of the Foothills Trail and a future trail connection to Enumclaw.

DISCUSSION: CONDITIONS FOR CERTIFICATION

The following provides additional discussion regarding the conditional certification the city should address by June 30, 2024:

- ☐ The transportation element assumes a population growth rate that is consistent with the Land Use Element. The plan needs to be amended to include the city’s **employment growth target** to ensure that transportation planning is consistent with the city’s total anticipated growth, both population and employment.
- ☐ Policies 5.7.1 through 5.7.6 establish the city’s framework for financing transportation projects and page 8 notes the city’s operating costs and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The comprehensive plan needs to include a multi-year financing plan that identifies anticipated revenue sufficient to meet project costs, even if more detailed information is provided in the TIP.

DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The city should consider the following comments through future amendments to the comprehensive plan:

- ☐ The Transportation Element includes a great amount of detail about transportation conditions and projects. The city may choose to relocate some of the technical information into an appendix or other document as a means to focus on the core policies and GMA requirements.
- ☐ The city should ensure that the upcoming periodic update of the comprehensive plan fully addresses regional transportation coordination, including with Pierce County and Pierce Transit.

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 the Regional 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.

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 Buckley comprehensive plan addresses the environmental policy topics in VISION 2040 with strong goals and actionable policies.

- ☑ Policy 1.1.2 seeks to identify and preserve open space corridors and buffers to provide definition between critical areas and intensive land uses.
- ☑ Policy 1.2.3 seeks to identify and conserve wildlife habitat including nesting sites, foraging areas, and migration corridors.
- ☑ The city acknowledges shorelines of the state and that the goals and policies of the shoreline master program are considered an element of the comprehensive plan.

DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

To continue to work towards the goals of VISION 2040, the city should consider addressing the following through future planning work:

- ☐ Though the plan acknowledges the Shoreline Master Program, the planning implications of the shoreline should be addressed by the comprehensive plan, including land use, habitat and environmental protection, flooding, and recreational opportunities.
- ☐ Though the plan supports non-motorized modes of travel, it lacks detail on addressing pollution and climate impacts related to transportation. VISION 2040 asks cities in the region to offer significant measurable steps to reduce criteria pollutants beyond adopted standards. (MPP-En-17).

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 Regional Transportation Plan 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.

- ☑ The Buckley Comprehensive Plan includes a strong discussion of its vision for the future and the need to grow in a way that maintains the city's character and identity.
- ☑ VISION 2040 supports the development of centers within jurisdictions, including town centers and activity nodes (MPP-DP-11). Buckley serves as an important town center in eastern Pierce County and the city is commended for robust planning to support and advance its historic downtown.
- ☑ The city identifies and plans for its population target of 7,500 by 2030.

DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

To continue to work towards the goals of VISION 2040, the city should address the following through future planning work:

- ☐ The plan needs to be updated to include the city's [employment growth target](#) and incorporate the target into the plan's discussion of growth, land uses, transportation and other service needs. The next plan update should clearly incorporate both population and employment targets adopted by Pierce County for the next planning horizon. The employment target should relate to the Goal 1.6 regarding commercial land uses.

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.

- ☑ The plan includes specific policies to provide affordable housing for seniors and low-income populations and notes the need for low income housing options to be located within walking distance of public services, such as open space, health care, and grocery service. (Goal 2.3 and policies 2.3.1-2.3.3)
- ☑ Policies support innovative housing types, including duplexes and triplexes (2.2.1), planned unit developments (2.2.2), flexible lot sizes (2.2.3), and accessory dwelling units (2.2.4).

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 housing. However, the city may want to actively engage Pierce County and other communities in housing work, including the South Sound Housing Affordability Partners group.

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 complete Economic Development Element that describes and plans for the city’s employment conditions and outlines opportunities for economic growth that responds to its context as a small town.

DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

To continue to work towards the goals of VISION 2040, the city should consider addressing the following through future planning work:

- ☐ As noted above, the plan needs to be updated to include the city’s adopted [employment growth target](#). The economic strategy should be coordinated with the Land Use Element and the job target to provide a mix of land uses that are consistent with employment and economic objectives.

Transportation

SCOPE OF REVIEW

VISION 2040 and the Regional Transportation Plan 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 Regional Transportation Plan physical design guidelines in planning for centers and transit station areas, and land development tools that promote transportation alternatives.

DISCUSSION: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS

The Buckley comprehensive plan addresses the major transportation emphases in VISION 2040 and the Regional Transportation Plan, including maintenance, management, and safety; and providing greater options and mobility.

- ☑ As noted above, the plan includes very detailed information about the existing transportation system and planned transportation projects, including walkway, intersection, and Highway 410 improvements, which will help the city track and respond to changing transportation needs.
- ☑ The plan includes modelling of future levels of service using HCM2010 and Synchro.
- ☑ The plan seeks to build out its transportation system in a way that reflects the city's unique small town character and history, including policies to maintain a planned grid system of streets.
- ☑ The city plans for eventual transit service that will connect it to other parts of the county and help reduce dependency on single-occupant vehicles.

DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

To continue to work towards the goals of VISION 2040, the city should consider addressing the following through future planning work:

- ☐ The Growth Management Act requires level-of-service standards for all locally owned arterials and transit routes, and the multicounty planning policies call for other modes, such as biking and walking, to be addressed as well (RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(B)). PSRC commends the city for including policies that are supportive of walking, biking and transit and encourages Buckley to continue developing policies and approaches that incorporate multiple travel modes. In the upcoming plan update it may be helpful to refer to the Washington State Department of Commerce's Transportation Element Guidebook (<http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Documents/GMS-Transportation-2012.pdf>).
- ☐ The plan recognizes the importance of transit service and the challenges related to the limited Pierce Transit service area. Expansion of the Pierce Transit service area is a complex undertaking. It could help for the plan to discuss requirements for expansion and to develop policy supporting an expansion of the transit service area (page 7).

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 Buckley comprehensive plan update contains policies that address the public services provisions of VISION 2040.

- ☑ The plan seeks to coordinate orderly provision of public facilities with public and private development to complement the fiscal resources of the city (Goal 1.9).

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 and the upcoming 2024 periodic update. Additional planning resources can also be found at <https://www.psrc.org/our-work/plan-review>. If the city has questions or needs additional information, please contact **Paul Inghram** at pinghram@psrc.org.