

# PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

## CITY OF EVERETT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

January 28, 2016



### 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 Everett, adopted by the city on October 21, 2015. PSRC last certified the City of Everett's comprehensive plan in 2003. PSRC staff reviewed the 2015 comprehensive plan amendments and coordinated with city staff in the development of this report.

### CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the City of Everett 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 Everett 2015 comprehensive plan update conform to the Growth Management Act and are consistent with multicounty planning policies and the regional transportation plan.**

---

<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.

The remainder of this report contains a summary of the PSRC review of the City of Everett 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 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 Everett'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:

- ☑ Goals and policies support engagement with the region and intergovernmental coordination, such as partnering with other jurisdictions to develop an efficient regional transportation system. They include support for coordinating with other jurisdictions on planning, design and financing to identify opportunities to maximize benefits. In addition, they call for integrating future high-capacity transit systems with transportation modes serving the city, and actively seeking an equitable share of any regional high-capacity transit service (Policy T-5.1-5.5).
- ☑ Provisions to support bicycle and pedestrian mobility, including an inventory of existing facilities and goals and policies that support a safe and convenient nonmotorized network. To promote non-motorized travel, Policy 1.12 also proposes to develop a Pedestrian System Plan to be used in the planning, design, designation and construction of pedestrian facilities and routes in the city.

- ☑ The plan supports compatible land uses near Paine Field, addressed through a number of policies that encourage compatible land uses and reduce hazards. The policies call for evaluating all proposed amendments to the comprehensive plan and capital facilities plan that may increase incompatible land uses. They require a notice to title/disclosure statement within the Airport Influence Area for new or substantial redevelopment. They also discourage the siting of uses that attract birds, create visual hazards or result in potential hazards to aviation.

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

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement with GMA transportation requirements.

## **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 introduction includes a consistency statement describing how the plan supports VISION 2040, including the MPPs and the Regional Growth Strategy.

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

- ☑ Policies call for preserving and enhancing water resources by encouraging participation in landscape level planning efforts. They also call for subarea planning to manage aquatic resource critical areas at a watershed or subarea planning level. Policies encourage adopting land use and development regulations that establish adequate protections to water resources. In addition, they encourage low-impact development methods where appropriate (Policies 2.15.9-2.15.15).
- ☑ Policies 2.14.3 and Policy 2.15.11 call for a systems-based approach to environmental stewardship. They call for continuing to work with the Puget Sound Partnership to implement programs and projects that

contribute to the recovery of Puget Sound. They also address participating in regional watershed planning efforts directed toward the protection and preservation of endangered species under the federal Endangered Species Act.

- ☑ The plan includes a climate change and sustainability element that addresses actions the city can take to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The element calls for the city to lead by example and encourage other community stakeholders to commit to actions that optimize reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and to assist vulnerable populations who are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change. Collaborating with other government agencies to develop meaningful strategies is addressed. Additional measures include working with utilities to develop cost-effective options to improve energy efficiency, reduce energy consumption and GHGs at city facilities. The element also calls for the city to coordinate with the state and others to develop a common strategy to incorporate analysis of GHG emissions and climate change impacts in State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) reviews.

#### **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 the 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 accommodates a significant share of regional growth, anticipating 165,000 residents and 140,000 employees by 2035, consistent with the countywide adopted growth targets and the Regional Growth Strategy. The plan includes policies that support future growth within Everett's downtown center and manufacturing/industrial area. The plan also prioritizes funding for multimodal infrastructure in centers and in areas that support access to centers (Policy 1.17).
- ☑ Policies support the Transportation 2040 physical design guidelines and high-quality urban design. For example, Policy 2.19.2 calls for the city to implement parking management strategies that reduce the amount of land used for parking and to consider parking standards reductions for businesses that implement such strategies.
- ☑ The plan emphasizes infill and efficient use of urban land. It promotes increased densities and infill housing types in all residential neighborhoods through appropriate design standards. Clean-up and

redevelopment of polluted brownfields is promoted, particularly in the urban center. Infill development on underutilized sites with adequate urban services is also encouraged (Policies 2.1.2, 2.16.10, and 4.5.4).

- ☑ The plan promotes health and wellness. It calls on the city to identify and develop strategies to address disproportionate health impacts from climate change. The plan also addresses encouraging children to travel to school by bicycling and walking, and it considers tools such as health impact assessments. Increased community gardening and urban agriculture opportunities are encouraged, as are farmers markets that sell locally produced food (Policies 10.41-10.47).

#### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The city should consider the following comments, which may be implemented through future amendments to the comprehensive plan, subarea plans, or functional plans:

- ☐ As noted above, the city is planning for future growth that is ambitious and is aligned with countywide targets and the Regional Growth Strategy. The city has identified conditions under which achieving the planned levels of growth would be more likely, such as completion of regional high-capacity transit (HCT) investments to Everett. Support for the Regional Growth Strategy through coordinated planning involving Snohomish County and other cities is also identified, as are successful efforts to leverage market demand for housing and commercial development. Consistent with VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040, the city is encouraged to make progress in all of these areas, and PSRC is available to provide assistance and to coordinate with other regional partners.
- ☐ Both the metropolitan center and the Paine Field manufacturing/industrial center play important roles in accommodating future growth in the region. VISION 2040 includes an action for jurisdictions with regional centers to develop subarea plans (DP-Action-17), and PSRC will be certifying center plans for consistency with regional policies and procedures. Subarea planning will help the city achieve its vision for the centers as well as address regional center expectations in the [center plan checklist](#). The comprehensive plan notes the center subarea plan will address population, housing and employment targets, policies and potential land use regulations for the area, as well as all other relevant items consistent with the PSRC Regional Center Plans Checklist. The city also commits to working with Snohomish County on additional planning for the Paine Field manufacturing/industrial center. PSRC staff is available to review drafts and provide assistance as needed. 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 detailed housing needs assessment that evaluates multiple dimensions of affordability and housing need, along with a summary of policies implemented from the 1994 and 2005 plan updates.

- ☑ Policies that increase access to affordable housing. These include considering additional incentives in return for affordable housing, establishing a priority permit procedure for affordable housing developments, and providing incentives to encourage affordable housing within walkable distances to public transit. They also include considering permitting "affordable housing demonstration projects" and working with financial institutions, the Washington State Housing Finance Commission and others to overcome barriers that inhibit the development of affordable housing (Policies 4.3.1 - 4.3.13).
- ☑ Policy 4.6.3 promotes efforts that help to change the incorrect public perception that tenants of rental housing are less responsible than homeowners.
- ☑ Policies addressing housing in the context of natural disasters, including making housing more resistant to natural disasters, discouraging development or replacement of housing near areas prone to or at risk of increased future natural disasters, and promoting awareness of emergency management mitigation plans to eliminate or reduce property losses due to natural disasters (Policies 4.13.1 – 4.13.3).

### 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.

## 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:

- ☑ An economic development element that supports industry clusters such as aerospace, maritime, tourism, medical services, high tech, and biotech.
- ☑ Objectives and policies that promote local purchasing for businesses and residents to support local vendors, services, and stores. They encourage community supported agriculture and farmers markets. They promote attracting businesses that provide family wage jobs. They also call for improving export opportunities for the agricultural community, in partnership with the Port of Everett and Snohomish County, and encouraging small businesses to start up in Everett and create a vibrant expanding economy (Policies 10.22 and 10.23, Objectives 7.1.7 – 7.1.12).
- ☑ The plan supports equitable economic growth and economic growth in distressed areas to create economic opportunity for all residents. The plan recognizes and respects cultural diversity, encourages women, minorities, and people with disabilities to compete for work and contracts to serve city government. It also promotes programs in the private sector and established programs in the city to address the needs of the unemployed and under-employed (Objectives 7.6.2-7.6.4, Policy 7.6.2).

## 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 economy.

## 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 Everett 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:

- ☑ The plan promotes multimodal travel options serving all residents and promotes system completeness in its overall transportation planning.
- ☑ Multiple goals and policies support transit use, including developing an integrated transit system plan, identifying and preserving necessary rights-of-way for high-capacity transit alignments, supporting expansion of passenger rail services to Everett, and working with regional jurisdictions to coordinate decisions on regional, high-capacity transit rights-of-way (Policies 6.1 – 6.10).
- ☑ Mode split goals for both the downtown regional growth center and Paine Field manufacturing/industrial center that advance alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel.
- ☑ Policy 4.8 – “Promote carpooling, vanpooling, walking, bicycling, flexible working hours, subsidized transit passes and other programs that encourage non-SOV modes, and continue to evaluate Transportation Management Associations (TMA) and Growth and Transportation Efficiency Centers (GTEC) to help comply with the Washington State Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) objectives for reducing vehicle-miles traveled to and within the city.”

## 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.

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

- ☑ Policies to promote conservation, recycling, and reuse by supporting neighborhood events such as garage sales that extend the useful life of items and clean-ups that recycle appliances, metals, and yard waste. They promote eco-industrial development that minimizes the use of raw materials, and they encourage local recycling businesses and the reuse of salvageable material (Policies 10.18 – 10.21).
- ☑ Emphasis on energy efficiency, such as Policy 10.14 – “Reduce GHG emissions through energy efficiency and use of low-carbon energy sources in buildings and site and infrastructure development. Support the State’s goal to construct energy efficient homes and buildings that achieve the goal of building zero fossil-fuel greenhouse gas emission homes and buildings by the year 2031 (RCW 19.27A.020).”

### 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.

## Conclusion

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).