Local Comprehensive Plans Certification Report

City of Granite Falls Comprehensive Plan

April 24, 2025



The Puget Sound Regional Council conducted a certification review of the City of Granite Falls comprehensive plan. Granite Falls adopted their 2024 comprehensive plan update on January 15, 2025. PSRC staff provided comments on the draft plan in November 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 Granite Falls 2024 comprehensive plan conform to the Growth Management Act and are substantially consistent with multicounty planning policies and the Regional Transportation Plan.

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

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

OVERVIEW

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

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

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

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

Regional Collaboration

Scope of Review

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

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

Certification Findings

The Granite Falls comprehensive plan effectively addresses regional collaboration policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes policies and discussion on coordination with other jurisdictions, agencies, developers and utility providers. It includes a Tribal Coordination element and directs the city to create a comprehensive Tribal consultation process and provide staff training for its implementation.

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 Granite Falls 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 of 987 additional housing units and 591 additional jobs through 2044. It envisions Granite Falls' downtown as a vibrant, compact, local center that is an inviting place to work, shop, live, and socialize.

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 Granite Falls comprehensive plan effectively addresses the environmental policies in VISION 2050. The plan supports recovery of the Stillaguamish and Snohomish watersheds through encouraging green stormwater infrastructure such as rain gardens, bioretention

areas, and permeable pavement. It promotes air quality through working with the fire district to alert the community when wood burning needs to be curtailed during local air stagnation events. The plan promotes equitable access to parks and supports a parks level-of-service standard to provide parks within a 10-minute walk of all residents.

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

- VISION 2050 calls for ensuring that all residents, regardless of race, social, or economic status, have clean air, clean water, and other elements of a healthy environment and prioritizing the reduction of impacts to vulnerable populations that have been disproportionately affected (MPP-En-3-4, En-7-8, En-21). The plan should include an analysis identifying where vulnerable populations are located and the potential environmental impacts they face. A policy to address those impacts should also be included.

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 Granite Falls comprehensive plan effectively addresses the climate change policies in VISION 2050. The plan's land use, transportation, and other elements support the implementation of the city's greenhouse gas emissions reduction policy (Resolution 2011-13). The plan directs the city to work collaboratively with Snohomish County and other cities to establish a regionally coordinated planning framework to anticipate, prepare for and adopt mitigation measures to address climate change impacts.

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

- VISION 2050 calls for addressing impacts to vulnerable populations and areas that have been or will be disproportionately affected by climate change (MPP-CC-6, CC-8, CC-Action-3, CC-Action-4). The plan should include information and analysis on the connection between the city's vulnerable populations and climate change impacts, as well as a policy to address the impacts identified.

- 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 Granite Falls comprehensive plan effectively addresses the land use and development patterns policies in VISION 2050. The plan calls for a land use planning process that encourages public commentary and participation, helps residents understand when and how to connect to the decision-making process, and ensures that all considerations and decisions are made in a transparent manner. It encourages infill development through support for rehabilitation of existing buildings and increased intensities.

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 Granite Falls comprehensive plan effectively addresses the housing policy topics in VISION 2050. The plan demonstrates that the city has sufficient capacity to accommodate its allocated housing need share by income band, including emergency housing, and documents strategies to address barriers to affordable housing. It directs the city to track implementation and performance to ensure policies are working as intended to undo racially disparate outcomes, exclusion, and displacement.

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

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

Economy

Scope of Review

VISION 2050 calls for local comprehensive plans to:

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

Certification Findings

The Granite Falls comprehensive plan effectively addresses the economy policies in VISION 2050. The plan promotes economic development that is compatible with the natural setting and encourages maintaining a recognized offering of services that makes residents proud to host visitors. It supports industrial activities through providing an adequate supply of industrial land for current and future employment needs.

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 Granite Falls comprehensive plan effectively addresses the transportation planning requirements of the Growth Management Act and the transportation policies in VISION 2050. The plan directs the city to improve the safety and connectivity of the roadway and trail systems to encourage walking, biking, transit use and physical activity. It supports reducing the water quality impacts of the transportation system through stormwater management and fish passage improvements.

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

- VISION 2050 calls for developing a comprehensive concurrency program that addresses level-of-service (LOS) standards for multimodal types of transportation (MPP-DP-52-54). PSRC commends the city for including LOS standards for walking, biking, and transit. The LOS analysis for these modes would be strengthened by

describing or mapping the deficiencies identified based on the standards and listing the transportation projects needed to address the deficiencies. Resources on multimodal LOS can be found in PSRC's Transportation Element guidance.

- The plan contains a 6-year transportation project list. PSRC encourages the city to develop a 20-year project list through 2044. The Department of Commerce provides information on these requirements in the Transportation Guidebook.
- The Growth Management Act requires local comprehensive plans to include a multiyear transportation financing plan for how the jurisdiction will meet the mobility needs identified for the planning period (RCW 36.70A.070(6)). Like the project list, PSRC encourages the city to include a 20-year transportation financing plan. In addition to providing projects and cost estimates needed to meet transportation needs through 2044, the financing plan should also include estimated probable revenues available to the city through the planning horizon, an analysis of the sufficiency of funding resources compared to estimated costs identified, and a reassessment strategy in the event revenues fall short of costs. Further guidance on how to address the financial analysis in the plan can be found in Commerce's Transportation Element Guidebook, pages 202-212.

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 Granite Falls comprehensive plan effectively addresses the public services policies in VISION 2050. The plan directs the city to partner with the Granite Falls School District to support safe, walkable access for students and to provide adequate urban capacity for new schools. It promotes conservation of water and other resources.

Conclusion and Next Steps

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

PSRC encourages the city to address areas identified for additional work in upcoming plan updates and other planning efforts. These may be areas where additional work would make the plan more consistent with the Growth Management Act or VISION 2050 and areas that may be necessary to address prior to the 2029 Growth Management Act Implementation Progress Report.

PSRC is available to provide assistance with future plan updates. Find additional planning resources on PSRC's Plan Review webpage. If the city has questions or needs additional information, please contact Erika Harris at eharris@psrc.org or 206-464-6360.