

# PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

## CITY OF KIRKLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

December 31, 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 Kirkland, adopted by the city on December 8, 2015. PSRC last certified the City of Kirkland's comprehensive plan in 2014. 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 Kirkland 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 Kirkland 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 Kirkland 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 Kirkland'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, goals and policies that support safe and convenient nonmotorized travel, maps of planned networks, and identification of specific projects and funding.
- ☑ Thorough overview of planned investments and financing. In the plan, the city identifies available funding over the planning period and develops project lists informed by available revenues. This approach is supported by Policy CF-6.1, which addresses the Capital Facilities Plan based on conservative estimates of current local revenues and external revenues that are reasonably anticipated to be received by the city.
- ☑ The plan includes comprehensive inventories of all modes and is supplemented by additional maps of existing conditions, such as transit boardings, transit delay, sidewalk conditions, walkability, signals, downtown parking locations, and safe routes to schools.

- ☑ Provisions to support intergovernmental coordination, including a goal to coordinate with a broad range of groups, public and private, to help meet Kirkland’s transportation goals (G-7). This is supported by policies directing the city to play a major role in development of Sound Transit facilities, to work with King County Metro to meet mutual interests, to participate in regional decision-making, and to coordinate multimodal transportation systems with neighboring jurisdictions, among other actions (Policies T-7.1 – T-7.6).

#### **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:

- ☐ Per RCW 36.70A.070(6)(iv), the transportation element should include a reassessment strategy to address potential funding shortfalls. The plan includes detailed information on financing and transportation priorities, but the financial strategy should also include discussion of a reassessment strategy that describes the city’s approach if probable funding falls short. See the Washington State Department of Commerce’s [Transportation Element Guidebook](#), page 209, for additional information about the multi-year financing plan.

## **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 an excellent regional planning 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 Kirkland comprehensive plan addresses the environmental policy topics in VISION 2040 with strong goals and actionable policies. Highlights include:

- ☑ Policy E-2.1 calls for achieving a healthy, resilient urban forest with an overall 40 percent tree canopy coverage.
- ☑ The plan includes goals and policies addressing climate change, including a goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 (Goal E-5). The plan includes greenhouse gas emission reductions targets, a summary of the city's work on climate change since 2000, commitment to ongoing collaboration through the King County Climate Change Collaborative, and policies calling for a market-based price on carbon and support for adopting a statewide low carbon fuel standard (Policies E-5.4, E-5.5, E-5.6).
- ☑ The plan calls for developing a city-wide sustainability master plan and working toward creating a culture of stewardship by supporting sound practices, such as low impact development and sustainable building techniques (Policies E-1.5, E -1.7). Policy E-4.12 promotes sustainable product stewardship in order to provide stable financing for waste management of consumer products, recycling and resource recovery, and reduced environmental and health impacts.
- ☑ Goals and policies supporting provision of open space, including through working with adjacent jurisdictions, other governments, and non-profit groups to identify and protect open space networks and distributing parks and open spaces throughout the city. Open space policies focus on providing new facilities in areas experiencing the greatest population growth, in areas where facilities are deficient, and in areas where connections of the open space network could be made (Policy LU-6.2, Policy LU-6.1).

## 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 accommodates a significant share of the region's growth, anticipating an additional 8,361 housing units and 22,435 jobs in the planning period. The plan supports future growth concentrated within the Totem Lake regional growth center, supported through an update to the Totem Lake Business

District element and prioritization of capital facilities investments and services to support growth in the center (Policy T-5.3).

- ☑ Support for the Transportation 2040 physical design guidelines through various policies addressing parking and pedestrian-oriented design. For example, Policy LU-3.4 calls for locating higher density land uses in areas served by frequent transit service and directly taking into account availability of viable transportation choices when planning for growth.
- ☑ Policies to support access to healthy foods, a viable local food economy, and consideration of health and wellness in the city's planning (Policies E-6.1-E-6.3, HS-3.5).
- ☑ Goals and policies supporting environmentally friendly and energy-efficient building, such as expanding city programs that promote sustainable building certifications, implementing energy-efficiency projects for city facilities, utilizing rigorous sustainability standards and green infrastructure in all city projects, and designing and certifying public building projects to LEED, Living Building Challenge or equivalent certification standards (Policies E-4.1-4.6).

#### **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:

- ☐ As a signatory to the Growing Transit Communities (GTC) Regional Compact, the City of Kirkland has an opportunity to demonstrate a commitment in its comprehensive plan to promoting thriving and equitable transit-oriented development. In light of ongoing coordination with Sound Transit and the city's interest in developing a transit plan, the city should consider more fully incorporating the GTC strategy in the comprehensive plan and functional plans that implement it. PSRC has developed [a memo](#) that provides guidance on comprehensive plan updates to Compact signatories, including recommendations to identify transit station areas, establish transit community goals, and adopt policies and provisions that advance the GTC strategy.

## **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:

- ☑ Multiple policies address meeting local and regional needs for affordable housing. The plan includes an overarching goal to meet the city's proportionate share of the county's housing needs. Policies include requiring affordable housing in conjunction with increases to development capacity, ensuring that affordable housing opportunities are available throughout the city and especially in areas with good access to transit, preserving existing housing, and supporting housing acquisition by various organizations (Goal H-3, Policies H-3.1-3.6).

- ☑ Policies that support housing for residents with special needs, including housing options, programs, and services that allow seniors to stay in their homes or neighborhood and encouraging Universal Design improvements that increase housing accessibility (Policy H-3.9).
- ☑ The plan includes strategies to promote and foster innovative and non-traditional housing types, such as Policy H-2.4 that allows a broad range of housing and site planning approaches in single-family areas to increase housing supply and choice, to reduce cost, and to ensure design quality and neighborhood compatibility.

**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 strives to provide a sustainable and resilient economy, a diverse tax base, access to job opportunities, and goods and services for the community. The plan provides detail of existing conditions, including sales tax revenue by neighborhood, business licenses by type, and largest employers in the city.
- ☑ Policy ED-6.23 calls for working with businesses, schools and other institutions to sustain a highly educated and skilled workforce through job training and education resources that lead to job opportunities especially for disadvantaged populations.
- ☑ Policies that support sustainable economic development in the city by supporting activities that retain and expand existing businesses, targeting recruitment activities toward new businesses that provide living-wage jobs, and supporting locally developed enterprises by encouraging small startup businesses (Policies ED-1.1-1.8).

**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 Kirkland 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, including a multimodal plan-based concurrency method to monitor the rate at which land use development and the transportation system are constructed and aligned to meet community needs (Policy T-8.1).
- ☑ Multiple goals and policies support transit use, with the overall goal of supporting and promoting a transit system that is a high value option for many trips (Goal T-3). This is achieved through partnering with transit agencies, working with Sound Transit to incorporate investments in Kirkland, planning and constructing an environment supportive of frequent and reliable transit service, and integrating transit facilities with the bicycle and pedestrian networks (Policies T-3.1, T-3.2, T-3.3, T-3.7, and T-3.8). The plan calls for supporting this work through developing a Kirkland Transit Plan.
- ☑ Emphasis on multiple dimensions of sustainability through planning for system maintenance, environmental sustainability, and safeguarding the transportation system from disaster. The plan places highest priority for funding on maintenance and operation of existing infrastructure and maximizing the useful lifetime of the transportation network at optimum lifecycle cost (Policies T-6.2, T-6.4, and T-6.5).

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

- ☑ Multiple policies promote conservation, demand management, and efficient use of public services. The plan calls for managing the built environment to reduce waste, prevent pollution, conserve resources and increase energy efficiency (Goal E-4). The plan also calls for encouraging reuse and recycling of building construction materials and concentrating land use patterns to encourage efficient use of public facilities and services in order to reduce the need to expand (Policies PS-2.2, CF-3.1).
- ☑ The plan includes several targeted goals, such as pursuing 100% renewable energy use by 2050 through regional collaboration, participating in regional efforts to increase renewable electricity use 20% beyond 2012 levels countywide by 2030, and working with regional partners to achieve a 70% recycling rate by 2020 and net zero waste by 2030 (Policy E-4.8, Policy E-5.7).
- ☑ Consistent with MPP-PS-6, Policy U-8.5 calls for encouraging the consolidation of special districts.
- ☑ The plan addresses equity in public service provision by providing equal access to utility services, regardless of historic disparities in income and employment opportunities, and committing resources to public services and infrastructure for underserved populations (Policy U-1.7, Policy PS-3.7).
- ☑ Commitment to coordination with utility providers, including reviewing facility plans to ensure they reflect and support Kirkland's land use plan and working with providers to ensure that utilities are available to support land uses and to maintain appropriate levels of service (Policy U-8.1).
- ☑ The plan addresses water reclamation and reuse by working with regional partners to pursue 100% use of a combination of reclaimed, harvested, grey and black water for the community's needs (Policy E-4.7).

### 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 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).