

PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

CITY OF LAKE STEVENS 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.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](#), [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 Lake Stevens, adopted by the city on September 1, 2015. PSRC last certified the City of Lake Stevens' comprehensive plan in April 2005. PSRC staff reviewed the updated 2015 comprehensive plan and coordinated with city staff in the development of this report.

CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the City of Lake Stevens 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 Lake Stevens 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 Lake Stevens comprehensive plan update. Under each heading, the scope of the certification review, as guided by the [Plan Review Manual](#) and

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.

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 Lake Stevens' 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:

- ☑ Goal 8.9 and policies 8.9.1-8.9.8 direct the city to develop alternative transportation solutions to reduce congestion with minimum infrastructure investment through compact, mixed-use, and connected land use, transit programs, and other transportation demand management strategies.
- ☑ Policy 8.13.3 encourages alternatives to automobile transportation by promoting improvements to the public transit system, increasing availability of bicycling and walking facilities, and limiting the amount of parking that may be included in some new developments.
- ☑ Policy 8.17.4 supports improving the safety of the transportation system and, in the long term, achieving the state's goal of zero deaths and disabling injuries.

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 (see comments addressing consistency with regional guidelines and principles on transportation and Transportation 2040 on page 7):

- RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a) requires that traffic forecasts are based on the adopted land use plan. The land use element documents 2035 population, housing and employment growth assumptions, which are consistent with adopted 2035 county growth targets. To show internal consistency, the transportation element should demonstrate more clearly that those same 2035 land use assumptions were used for the traffic forecast.
- RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iv) requires local plans to include a multiyear transportation financing plan for the mobility needs identified for the 20-year planning period. While the plan provides important information such as a list of 20-year transportation projects and cost estimates for those projects, the city should more fully address financing for identified needs, including:
 - Develop an estimate of revenue available for transportation over the 20-year planning period.
 - Based on the comparison of estimated costs and revenues, revise and expand on the current reassessment strategy to document steps the city could take to close the gap, if any, between costs and revenues, such as additional demand management strategies, pursuing new revenues, reducing level-of-service standards, and land use changes.

Commerce’s [Transportation Element Guidebook](#) discusses finance on pages 202 through 212.

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 city describes how the comprehensive plan addresses regional policies and provisions adopted in 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 Lake Stevens comprehensive plan addresses the environmental policy topics in VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- ☑ Policy 4.1.13 promotes the retention of stormwater and encourages regional stormwater treatment solutions to maintain hydrological functions and water quality within ecosystems and watersheds.
- ☑ Policy 4.3.3 supports identifying and protecting wildlife corridors both inside and outside the Urban Growth Area through critical areas avoidance, protection and mitigation.
- ☑ Goal 4.8 and policies 4.8.1-4.9.4 direct the city to work with public agencies and private partners to develop strategies to prepare for and mitigate potential impacts of climate change, both on city government operations and the general Lake Stevens community.

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:

- ☑ Policy 2.3.3 promotes the efficient use of land by encouraging infill development on suitable vacant parcels and redevelopment of underutilized parcels.
- ☑ Goal 2.4 and policies 2.4.1-2.4.4 encourage the continued planning of local growth centers that provide a focus for employment, public, and residential development in order to achieve a balanced and sustainable community.
- ☑ Policy 2.12.3 supports energy-saving construction and building operation practices and the use of energy-conserving materials in new construction and rehabilitation of buildings.
- ☑ Policy 2.12.4 encourages small scale, neighborhood compatible, commercial uses to be distributed throughout the community, thus reducing the need to drive to the nearest "big-box" retailer to pick up day-to-day convenience items. This also provides the opportunity for pedestrian access to stores along with the health and social benefits related to pedestrian activity.

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 development patterns.

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:

- The housing element contains a thorough housing needs assessment that provides a detailed analysis of the current and future housing needs for the city.
- Goal 3.3 and policies 3.3.1-3.3.5 encourage the use of innovative techniques to provide for a broad range of infill housing types for all income levels and housing needs.
- Policy 3.5.4 prioritizes funding transportation facilities, infrastructure and services that explicitly advance the development of housing in designated growth centers.

DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

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

- The policies in the draft housing element go a long way to advancing VISION 2040's housing goals. Many of the housing policies (e.g. Policy 3.2.2, all policies under Goal 3.3, and Policy 3.7.4) rely on future work to fully address housing needs in Lake Stevens. The city should consider adding a discussion of implementation strategies, including a timeline for anticipated adoption and implementation of relevant policies and provisions.

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:

- ☑ Policy 6.3.3 directs the city to develop a business retention and expansion program to foster and grow local business.
- ☑ Policy 6.8.1 promotes economic activity and employment growth that creates widely shared prosperity and sustains a diversity of family-wage jobs for the city's residents. Policies 6.8.2 and 6.8.3 support disadvantaged populations through targeted efforts to create economic opportunity for those populations.

DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

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

Transportation

SCOPE OF REVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

DISCUSSION: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS

The Lake Stevens 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:

- ☑ Policy 8.8.6 encourages the planning of pedestrian scale neighborhoods and centers to enhance access and mobility for public transportation users.
- ☑ Policy 8.13.2 directs the city to take a lead role in encouraging conservation by using more efficient vehicles and alternative-fueled vehicles in the city fleet, and by encouraging employees to use alternative modes of transportation to travel to work.
- ☑ Policy 8.13.6 supports developing a public transportation system that is compatible with the city's centers growth strategy through coordination with Community Transit.

DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The city should address the following comment at the earliest opportunity through future amendments to the comprehensive plan, subarea plans, or functional plans (see comments addressing Growth Management Act transportation planning requirements on page 3 of this report):

- ❑ The transportation and other plan elements have many policies supportive of walking, biking and transit. Implementation of these policies would be strengthened through adoption of levels of service and a concurrency approach that includes multiple modes. 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 through concurrency. For centers, the city is encouraged to tailor its multimodal concurrency program to encourage development that can be supported by transit. PSRC encourages the city to implement policy 8.2.4 on developing multimodal level of service standards for Lake Stevens. The Washington State Department of Commerce's [Transportation Element Guidebook](#) has information on how to set level of service standards and identify system needs (pages 143-150 and 183-189) and PSRC has [resources on multimodal concurrency](#).

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

- ☑ Policies 7.6.6 and 7.6.7 prevent impacts from wastewater by requiring properties with failing septic systems and new development to connect to the sanitary sewer system.
- ☑ Policies 7.9.1 and 7.9.5 support conservation, renewable energy resources, energy management technology and the conversion to cost-effective and environmentally sensitive alternative technologies to meet the region's energy needs.
- ☑ Policy 7.9.2 promotes the reduction of water consumption through conservation, efficiency, reclamation and reuse to reduce wastewater generation and ensure continued water availability.

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 Erika Harris at 206-464-6360 or eharris@psrc.org.