

Local Comprehensive Plans Certification Report City of Lakewood Comprehensive Plan

January 30, 2025



The Puget Sound Regional Council conducted a certification review of the City of Lakewood comprehensive plan. Lakewood adopted their 2024 comprehensive plan update on September 16, 2024. PSRC staff provided comments on the draft plan in July 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 Lakewood 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 City of Lakewood comprehensive plan effectively addresses regional collaboration policies in VISION 2050. The plan acknowledges Lakewood's position adjacent to Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), the largest military installation west of the Mississippi River. It supports ongoing coordination with the installation with a specific Military Compatibility planning element, and support for the South Sound Military & Community Partnership. It also recognizes its unique status as a city hosting a state forensic hospital and two colleges, and includes a policy section regarding coordination with the Nisqually Indian Tribe.



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 City of Lakewood comprehensive plan effectively addresses the Regional Growth Strategy policies in VISION 2050. Section 2.2.5 clearly addresses the adopted growth targets and future growth capacity. Lakewood has a target of 23,180 additional people by 2044 and has growth capacity for 40,922 people. It also has sufficient capacity for employment. Lakewood identifies potential annexation areas that are part of the urban growth area.

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

- VISION 2050 includes a goal for the majority of population and job growth to occur in centers and transit station areas. The 2035 housing growth target for Lakewood's Downtown regional growth center is about 25% of the city's overall target for 2044. The city is encouraged to consider increasing the target for Downtown in its update of the subarea plan to better align with the Regional Growth Strategy.



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 City of Lakewood comprehensive plan effectively addresses the environmental policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes elements on the Natural Environment, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space that support protecting critical areas, enhancing water quality, and maintaining the urban forest.

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 City of Lakewood comprehensive plan effectively addresses the climate change policies in VISION 2050. The plan updated the Energy and Climate Change element initially adopted in 2021. The city reviewed HB 1181 to determine how to be consistent with the new



requirements by the 2029 and 2034 deadlines. The plan looks at the climate and energy aspects of land use, housing, economic development, transportation, capital facilities, and utilities. The plan also addresses urban heat islands, extreme precipitation potential, and urban wildfire risk. The plan promotes a climate resilient community.

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

- 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 City of Lakewood comprehensive plan effectively addresses the land use and development patterns policies in VISION 2050. It includes plans for the Lakewood Downtown Regional Growth Center, the Lakewood Station transit area at the Sounder train station, and identifies local centers. The land use designations also take into account the clear zones due to McChord Field and proximity to JBLM.



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 City of Lakewood comprehensive plan effectively addresses the housing policy topics in VISION 2050. The plan recognizes the need for a range of housing types and affordability levels and identifies housing needs of each housing type to correspond to household income levels. Lakewood will need 9,378 housing units by 2044. The plan demonstrates capacity for 17,786 additional housing units including capacity for multifamily, ADUs, and lower density housing units. The plan also addresses emergency housing, permanent supportive housing, and displacement risk.

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. The city is encouraged 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 City of Lakewood comprehensive plan effectively addresses the economic policies in VISION 2050 including an Economic Development element that addresses the city's competitive position and includes an economic analysis. The city is planning for 9,858 additional jobs between 2020 and 2044, aiming for a total of 39,735 jobs. The plan policies support continued partnerships with Workforce Central, the Tacoma-Pierce County Economic Development Board, and the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce.



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 City of Lakewood comprehensive plan effectively addresses the transportation planning requirements of the Growth Management Act and the transportation policies in VISION 2050 and addresses the transportation needs of the expected growth of the city. The plan addresses multimodal transportation, including referencing the city's pedestrian system plan and bicycle system plan and plans for transit service, including the Lakewood Station Sounder stop. Consistent with HB 1181, the plan considers changes to Vehicle Miles Travels (VMT) by 2044 and anticipates a 1.2% reduction overall.

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

- While the plan outlines long-term transportation projects, it identifies a gap between anticipated revenue and project costs in the six-year project list. The plan should be updated to balance costs and revenues and address possible funding shortfalls



including a reassessment strategy (RCW 36.70A.070(6)(iv)). Additional information about long-term anticipated costs and revenues should also be included in transportation planning over the twenty-year period.

- Providing high transit service levels will be essential to support the growth of the regional growth center. The city is encouraged to coordinate with Pierce Transit during its long-range plan update and with Sound Transit to identify enhanced transit service to serve the needs of Downtown Lakewood and Lakewood Station and to periodically update the comprehensive plan as transit plans change.
- Consistent with VISION 2050, the plan discusses levels of service for non-motorized transportation. Additional work may be needed to meet state requirements to include multimodal level of service standards by 2029. Additional guidance may be available in the future to refine adopted standards.

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 City of Lakewood comprehensive plan effectively addresses the public services policies in VISION 2050 and identifies anticipated capital projects.

Conclusion and Next Steps

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

The city is encouraged 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 for future plan updates. Additional planning resources can also be found on [PSRC's Plan Review webpage](#). If the city has questions or needs additional information, please contact Paul Inghram, Director of Growth Management, at pingham@psrc.org.

