

Local Comprehensive Plans Certification Report City of Milton Comprehensive Plan

April 24, 2025



The Puget Sound Regional Council conducted a certification review of the City of Milton comprehensive plan. Milton adopted its 2024 comprehensive plan update on January 21, 2025. PSRC staff provided comments on the draft plan in December 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 Milton 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 Milton comprehensive plan effectively addresses regional collaboration policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes policies and discussion on coordination with other jurisdictions, agencies, Tribes, and utility providers. It promotes equitable health outcomes and access to opportunity. The plan identifies several local centers, including Uptown, and calls for coordinated planning for the Uptown center with Edgewood.



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 Milton comprehensive plan effectively addresses the Regional Growth Strategy policies in VISION 2050. The plan navigates the complexity of having growth targets from two counties. The plan demonstrates that the city has sufficient capacity to accommodate adopted growth targets, including 295 new housing units (245 in Pierce County and 50 in King County) and 1,341 new jobs (441 in Pierce County and 900 in King County), through 2044.

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

- The plan indicates that capacity exists to meet housing and jobs targets citywide. However, PSRC recommends the city amend the plan to include a discussion of capacity within each county to demonstrate consistency with countywide growth targets.



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 Milton comprehensive plan effectively addresses the environmental policies in VISION 2050. The plan has a policy to identify and protect wetlands, river and stream banks, ravines, and other areas that provide or support essential habitat for sensitive and locally important plant and wildlife species and that play an important role in mitigating stormwater impacts. Another policy supports the establishment of connected floodplains and riparian systems for water attenuation, pollution filtration, flooding resilience, and drought resistance.

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 Milton comprehensive plan effectively addresses the climate change policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes land use and transportation strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It calls for maintaining and strategically expanding the city's urban tree canopy to equitably reduce the impact of urban heat islands.

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 Milton comprehensive plan effectively addresses the land use and development patterns policies in VISION 2050. The plan has a goal and several policies that promote positive and equitable health outcomes through development patterns that encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use. It directs the city to evaluate and mitigate the potential physical, economic, and cultural displacement of residents and businesses within the city, particularly for Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color; immigrants and refugees, low-income populations; disabled communities; and other communities at greatest risk of displacement.



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 Milton comprehensive plan effectively addresses the housing policy topics in VISION 2050. The plan demonstrates that the city has sufficient capacity to accommodate its allocated share of countywide housing need, including emergency housing, and documents strategies to address barriers to affordable housing. It includes a policy to protect housing stability for renter households, and expand protections and support for extremely low-income, very low-income and low-income renters and renters with disabilities. The plan calls for the city to explore partnerships with nonprofit and religious entities to assist in providing extremely low-income, very low-income and low-income housing, permanent supportive housing, and emergency housing.

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 Milton comprehensive plan addresses the economy policies in VISION 2050. The plan encourages high-quality, compact development in the Town Center, Uptown, and neighborhood centers in order to create vibrant community hubs and employment opportunities; encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use; and provide for mixed uses and choices in housing types. It seeks to provide a diversity of dense housing options within walking distance of transit, services, and jobs.

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

- VISION 2050 includes EC-Action-5, which calls for cities to include an economic development element in their comprehensive plan. PSRC encourages the city to include an economic development element in future updates to the plan. PSRC's [Economic Development Element Guide](#) provides more information on how to develop an economic development element.



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 Milton comprehensive plan effectively addresses the transportation planning requirements of the Growth Management Act and the transportation policies in VISION 2050. The plan promotes vanpooling, carpooling, public transit use, and other strategies and investments to reduce single-occupant vehicle travel. The plan envisions a comprehensive network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that link neighborhoods with activity centers (e.g., schools, parks, transit, trails, and commercial uses) and adjacent jurisdictions. It directs the city to identify and evaluate unsafe traffic conditions, and work to improve traffic safety for users of all ages and abilities through installation of appropriate street improvements.

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

- The Growth Management Act calls for level of service standards that promote optimal movement of people across multiple transportation modes, including walking, biking,



and transit (RCW 36.70A.070, RCW 36.70A.108, MPP-DP-52-54). The plan has policies to adopt active transportation and transit-supportive level of service standards. PSRC encourages the city to make progress on this. Resources on multimodal level of service can be found in PSRC's [Transportation Element Guidance](#). Please note the Growth Management Act will require multimodal level of service standards in central Puget Sound jurisdictions by 2029, and 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 Milton comprehensive plan effectively addresses the public services policies in VISION 2050. The plan calls for locating community facilities and services, including civic places like parks, schools, and other public spaces in centers and near transit, with consideration for climate change, economic, social and health impacts. It encourages the siting of facilities that considers impacts on the environment, service distribution efficiency, and historically marginalized communities.

Conclusion and Next Steps

PSRC found the City of Milton 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.

