



# Puget Sound Regional Council

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## City of Milton 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update

- 1) Certification report dated February 22, 2018 (see page 2). As of this Executive Board action taken at the March 22, 2018 meeting, the City of Milton comprehensive plan is now fully certified for consistency with the transportation-related provisions of the Growth Management Act, VISION 2040, and Transportation 2040.
- 2) Certification report dated December 31, 2015 (see page 3). This report summarized complete review of the 2015 comprehensive plan update and a certification condition for the city to address by December 31, 2017.

# PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION



## CITY OF MILTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

February 22, 2018

### BACKGROUND

PSRC conditionally certified the City of Milton’s 2015 periodic update of the city’s comprehensive plan on January 28, 2016. In January 2018, the city adopted amendments to the plan that address the conditions and resubmitted the plan for further review and full certification.

### CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the 2017 City of Milton comprehensive plan amendments, 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 Milton 2017 comprehensive plan amendments conform to the Growth Management Act and are consistent with multicounty planning policies and the regional transportation plan.**

### 2018 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

The Growth Management Act requires local comprehensive plans to be updated to accommodate the growth that is anticipated for the succeeding 20-year planning period (see RCW 36.70A.070, .115, and .130). The act also requires that plan elements use consistent land use assumptions in order that a local jurisdiction is coordinating planning for land uses, housing, and capital facilities (RCW 36.70A.070(6)).

The December 2015 certification report for the City of Milton comprehensive plan update identified significant inconsistencies in housing and household growth assumptions used in the land use and transportation elements of the plan.

In January 2018, the city amended the land use, transportation, and housing elements of the comprehensive plan to reflect greater consistency in the amount of growth assumed to occur over the 20-year planning period. The amended plan also more clearly demonstrates consistency with the GMA and countywide targets for King and Pierce counties.

### Conclusion

PSRC staff worked closely with the city as they drafted the plan amendments that address the conditions for certification. If the Executive Board acts as recommended, the plan will no longer have conditions on its certification. PSRC looks forward to working with the city on future planning efforts and will continue to provide guidance and technical assistance on any further amendments to the plan, subarea plans, or functional plans developed in response to additional issues identified through the PSRC certification review.

Additional background and resources can be found in the [City of Milton 2015 PSRC Plan Review and Certification Report](#) and on the PSRC website at <https://www.psrc.org/our-work/plan-review>. Questions should be directed to Michael Hubner at 206-971-3289 or [mhubner@psrc.org](mailto:mhubner@psrc.org).

# PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

## CITY OF MILTON 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 major update to the comprehensive plan for the City of Milton, adopted by the city on June 15, 2015. PSRC last certified the Milton comprehensive plan in 2002. Since 2002 the plan has also been updated with annual amendments. PSRC staff reviewed Milton's 2015 update to its comprehensive plan, and coordinated with city staff in the development of this report.

### CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the City of Milton 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 conditionally certifies that the transportation-related provisions in the 2015 City of Milton comprehensive plan update conform to the Growth Management Act and are consistent with multicounty planning policies and the regional transportation plan.**

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<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.

**Conditional status is in place until the city amends the comprehensive plan to address inconsistencies between land use assumptions used in the plan and housing growth targets adopted by Pierce and King counties (see details on page 3) and make clear that all elements of the plan assume consistent 20-year growth in housing and jobs. This work will occur according to the following schedule:**

- 1. Council adoption of a work plan to address the condition identified in the certification report by April 30, 2016.**
- 2. Submission of a draft amended comprehensive plan and supporting documents that address the condition to PSRC for review and comment in advance of adoption.**
- 3. Once the condition is adequately addressed, submission of the adopted amended comprehensive plan and supporting documents by June 30, 2017, for review and certification by PSRC.**

**The city acknowledges and understands these conditions.**

The remainder of this report contains a summary of the PSRC review of the City of Kent 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 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 Milton’s comprehensive plan satisfies most of the transportation planning requirements of the Growth Management Act and includes adequate air quality policies and provisions. The plan includes many provisions that go above and beyond minimum requirements, including:

- ☑ The plan focuses on a 2012 community visioning process that casts Milton as a “City of Places.” These places, or special planning areas, are incorporated in all elements of the plan with special planning area-specific policies, underscoring the neighborhood and center focus of the plan. In addition, each element is guided by questions derived from the community visioning process.
- ☑ Policy MM 1.7 includes a commitment to developing a comprehensive bike and pedestrian network that links neighborhoods with activity centers and institutions, as well as neighboring jurisdictions, building off of the city’s connection to the Interurban Trail. Additional policies (MM 1.5, MM 1.13) support this network through developing clear wayfinding and signage for the network.
- ☑ Intergovernmental coordination is highlighted in the plan, and is sensitive to the context of both King and Pierce counties, multiple transit agencies, the Puget Sound Regional Council, and appropriate state agencies.

## DISCUSSION: CONDITIONS FOR CERTIFICATION

The city must address the following provisions of the Growth Management Act and VISION 2040 in order to maintain certified status:

- ☐ RCW 36.70A.130 requires that local comprehensive plan updates accommodate the growth projected to occur over the subsequent 20-year period. VISION 2040 (MPP-DP-3) calls for countywide adoption of housing and employment growth targets that promote the Regional Growth Strategy. MPP-T-9 calls for coordination of state, regional, and local transportation planning in support of that strategy. RCW 36.70A.070 requires the transportation element of local comprehensive plans to implement and be consistent with the land use element.

Located within two counties, the City of Milton must plan for targets set in both King and Pierce counties. For the 20-year planning period in this update, the estimated combined housing target is 300 units and the employment target 1000 jobs. The land use and housing elements of the comprehensive plan update assume growth of approximately 700 housing units between 2014 and 2035; the transportation element assumes growth of approximately 300 households. The city should amend the comprehensive plan to clarify the technical and policy basis for planned growth assumptions, to resolve inconsistencies between plan elements, and to demonstrate alignment with the adopted growth targets and support for the regional growth strategy. PSRC staff is available to provide technical guidance on reconciling the various growth assumptions and documenting data sources and policy references.

# 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. VISION 2040 calls for local comprehensive plans to contain a brief statement of how the plan addresses the multicounty planning policies. 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 should address this provision when the plan is next amended. Examples of context statements are provided in PSRC's [Plan Review Manual](#), page 2-1.

## 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 city's comprehensive plan addresses the environmental policy topics in VISION 2040 with strong goals and actionable policies in all topic areas. Highlights include:

- ☑ The land use element includes proactive goals and policies for addressing climate change through mitigation and adaptation, including policies that promote energy efficiency, transportation choices, and protection of natural resources. These policies are complemented by policies in the transportation element that encourage alternatives to driving alone.
- ☑ The plan contains policies that recognize the ecosystem services provided by wetlands (EV 1.7) and other sensitive habitats, and commit to their preservation.
- ☑ A goal (UT 5) in the utilities element addresses the management of stormwater to maintain environmental quality and protect property and drinking water supplies. Implementing policies call for the city to maintain a comprehensive stormwater plan, encourage the use of Low Impact Development techniques, and ensure that regulations protect threatened and endangered species.

### 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 addresses the development patterns policies in VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan accommodates housing and jobs within locally defined centers and corridors. The plan's "City of Places" vision identifies and includes specific policies for special planning areas throughout the city to serve residents and visitors, and provide centers for economic development opportunities. The vision was created with significant input from Milton residents, a theme carried throughout the plan.
- ☑ Health and active living are advanced throughout the plan, including policies that encourage land use patterns that promote walking, biking and transit with accessibility to services and employment, construction of healthy buildings, and access to healthy foods by recognizing grocery stores as neighborhood anchors and supporting community gardens and farmers markets.
- ☑ Protection of the natural environment and responsiveness to climate change are central tenets of the plan. Notable policies and actions address partnerships for restoration of Hylebos Creek (EV 1.7-8), and promotion of community resiliency through adaptation to climate change (EV 3.2).

#### 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:

- ☐ VISION 2040 (MPP-DP-11,13, MPP-T-11) calls for central places to be designated in all jurisdictions, and for those centers to be supported with priority investments and local funding. The plan identifies a Town Center Special Planning Area as a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use town center. The city should strengthen support for the town center with policies that prioritize public investments, including transportation funding, to the town center.

## 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 addresses the housing provisions contained in VISION 2040. The plan incorporates a number of best housing practices that address identified housing needs. Highlights include:

- ☑ Policies, such as Housing Policy 3.2, encourage affordable housing throughout the city, specifically through preservation, permitting manufactured housing and accessory dwelling units, inclusionary or incentive zoning, and multi-family development well-served by urban amenities.
- ☑ The housing element directs the city to work with and support social and health service organizations and state agencies that offer housing programs for low income or special needs residents, as well as residents

in crisis. Housing Policy 3.5 directs the city to compile information on these services for residents in need, and assist non-profit housing developers in finding suitable sites for affordable developments.

#### **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:

- MPP H-2 calls for local plans to provide for a sufficient supply of housing to meet the needs of low and moderate income households, including through preservation, rehabilitation, and new development. Background analysis of current housing conditions in the city highlights indicators of current and potential future housing needs. The housing policies would be strengthened by responding to some of the specific needs identified. For example, data that show that more than 40% of both homeowners and renters are cost burdened suggests a need for programs to provide low income residents greater access to ownership housing. In addition, data that show that nearly half of all units are in attached or multifamily building types, which suggests a need for policies and actions to encourage preservation and production of affordable multifamily units.

## **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 Milton comprehensive plan update addresses many of the economic provisions of VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- The plan jointly addresses economic development and place-making, such as by encouraging compact mixed-use redevelopment in targeted locations for investment identified in the city's vision for special planning areas. Recommended economic development strategies are tailored to each special planning area and their environmental context (for example, policies addressing the West Milton Commercial District Special Planning Area).
- Policy WMCD 3.3 directs the city to regularly meet with business owners and expand outreach to industry organizations.
- Policies (PD 1.1-2) promote a vision for planned development at the Quarry Site that promotes redevelopment compatible with neighboring uses and provides new economic development opportunities.

### **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:

- The city should consider how to provide more information about economic sectors and the city's actions to support economic development in either a new economic development element (recommended) or existing plan elements. This element could build on VISION 2040's framework of people, business, and



places for economic development and address the region’s industry clusters identified in the region’s economic strategy (See [VISION 2040](#) Economy section).

## 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 Milton 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:

- Goal TR3 and its subsequent policies call for maintaining an environmentally sustainable transportation system that includes a complete multimodal transportation network, environmentally sensitive approaches to capital facilities, and transportation demand management to reduce trips.
- The plan places a clear priority on enhancing safety over expanding vehicle capacity, and notes the city has established a monitoring program to prioritize maintenance.
- Goal TL1 clearly demonstrates the link between land use and transportation, recognizing the relationship between infrastructure provision and development. Specific policies throughout the transportation element address special planning areas and context-sensitive design.

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The City of Milton should address the following regional policies, where possible, through annual amendments or in the next update of the comprehensive plan (see conditions for certification on page 3):

- VISION 2040 (MPP-T-14,15) and Transportation 2040 emphasize providing a system for all users and increasing mobility and choice in transportation. The plan includes policies and provisions addressing various users of the system. The city should build on existing policies that address multiple types of users to develop full standards for transportation facilities to serve all users safely and conveniently (i.e., “complete streets”). For more information, see the Commerce [Transportation Element Guidebook](#) (pages 134), and PSRC’s [Active Transportation Plan](#), page 43.
- The transportation and other plan elements include 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 addresses 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. The city should

consider steps to develop such multimodal tools through future plan amendments and updates. 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 city’s comprehensive plan update contains policies that address the public services provisions of VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- Policy UT 8.5 requires dry-line sewers in areas where septic systems are permitted, and cost-sharing for future sewer extension.
- The utilities element encourages water conservation in order to reduce impacts on water, wastewater, and surface water systems, and promote environmental health.

### 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 Michael Hubner at 206-971-3289 or [mhubner@psrc.org](mailto:mhubner@psrc.org).