

PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

CITY OF MUKILTEO 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 Mukilteo, adopted by the city on October 5, 2015. PSRC last certified the city of Mukilteo's comprehensive plan in December 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 Mukilteo 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 Mukilteo 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 Mukilteo 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

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.

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 Mukilteo'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:

- The plan calls for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, streetscape standards, and traffic calming methods to be installed to improve connectivity between parks, retail centers, schools, and regional transportation nodes and to promote a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment (TR9).
- Policy TR11a encourages transportation demand management strategies, including but not limited to shared parking plans between adjacent properties, carpooling incentives, flexible hours, staggered work hours, telecommuting, and a ferry reservation system to make the most efficient use of available parking.

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 6):

- The level of service (LOS) for urban Highways of Statewide Significance (SR 525 and SR 526) should be listed in the plan as LOS D. See [WSDOT](#) and [PSRC](#) guidance and maps for more information.

- The transportation or capital facilities element should include a financing plan and analysis of funding capability that addresses transportation facilities and strategy needs identified in the plan for the full 20-year planning period. While the plan provides important information such as a list of 20-year transportation projects and a 6-year Capital Project Plan, the city should more fully address financing for identified needs, including providing cost estimates for identified facilities and strategies and estimated revenues for the full 20-year planning period. The Washington State Department of Commerce’s [Transportation Element Guidebook](#) has information on developing a financing plan for the transportation element (pages 202-213). In addition, the plan should include a reassessment strategy in the event of a funding shortfall RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iv)(C).

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. Although the plan mentions VISION 2040 several times, the city should describe how the comprehensive plan specifically addresses regional policies and provisions adopted in VISION 2040. A [model context statement](#) can be found in the [Plan Review Manual](#).

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 Mukilteo comprehensive plan addresses the environmental policy topics in VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan supports maintaining the natural hydrological functions of each watershed, and where appropriate and possible, restoring them along with freshwater and marine habitats to a more natural state and ecological functionality (LU9b).
- ☑ The plan specifies that the preferred development and redevelopment stormwater management alternatives are low impact development strategies and the protection of critical areas, major wetlands, and drainage functions (UT8b).

- ☑ Policy TR4a directs the city to increase the percentage of its vehicle fleet that is comprised of hybrid, all-electric or other non CO2-emitting vehicles in order to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and to reduce the amount of gasoline consumed by city vehicles.

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 promotes development of the Downtown Business District as a mixed use, pedestrian-friendly center (LU11).
- ☑ Policy LU11c directs the city to develop programs in collaboration with downtown property and business owners to identify historical attributes that may be incorporated into new building designs or redesigns.
- ☑ The plan encourages mixed-use projects and land use relationships which decrease dependency on the automobile by locating a variety of land uses in the same area (TR11h).

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.115, providing sufficient capacity to accommodate growth targets is an important component of the periodic update. The plan states that the city has enough capacity to accommodate the 2035 population, housing and employment growth targets, and relies on the Snohomish County 2012 Buildable Lands Report to document that capacity. However, the Buildable Lands Report documents a shortfall in population capacity. The land use element should clearly demonstrate how the city can accommodate the population growth target, including updated density assumptions and changes to zoning that have increased zoned development capacity since the Buildable Lands Report was published.
- ☐ The plan contains many policies that support development of a vibrant, mixed use, and pedestrian-oriented Downtown Business District, consistent with VISION 2040's focus on supporting a variety of central places throughout the region. VISION 2040 also recommends that local jurisdictions prioritize infrastructure funding within their identified centers. Policies that prioritize transportation, public realm,

and other investments in the Downtown Business District would strengthen the plan's support for development in this location (MPP-DP-11 and 13, MPP-T-11).

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:

- Policy HO4d directs the city to pursue programs that will actively preserve existing affordable housing units, facilitate creation of additional affordable housing units, and assist private homeowners in maintaining their houses (HO4d).
- The plan promotes the inclusion of a wide variety of housing options in the city's residential and mixed use zoning districts to meet demands for housing, including affordable housing.

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 Growth Management Act requires jurisdictions to make adequate provisions for existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. The policies in the draft housing element go a long way to meeting GMA requirements and advancing VISION 2040's housing goals. The needs assessment clearly demonstrates a gap in affordable homeownership and rental opportunities. And policies HO-4 and HO-5 discuss the importance of increasing the affordable housing stock. The housing element should include more specific policies and programs to decrease the gap in affordability for homeowners and renters in Mukilteo. For policy guidance and resources, see PSRC's [Housing Innovations Program](#).

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 ED1a supports the creation of family-wage jobs and local jobs that allow residents to live and work in Mukilteo.
- ☑ Policy ED3a directs the city to work with the Mukilteo School District, technical schools, area colleges and universities to foster a well-trained and educated work force.

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 Mukilteo 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 directs the city to work in coordination with other agencies to develop outreach programs for educating the public about the negative impacts that vehicular traffic has on air quality and on ways to reduce traffic volumes (TR3c).
- ☑ The plan supports parking requirements that reduce parking demand and avoid creating more parking capacity than is necessary in order to minimize the negative impacts on quality of life created by surface parking lots, while ensuring new development provides sufficient parking to meet the demand (TR7).
- ☑ Policy TR14c directs the city to collaborate with BNSF and other entities in emergency response planning to potentially dangerous railroad incidents.

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 2 of this report):

- The Growth Management Act requires level-of-service standards for all locally owned arterials and transit routes, and the MPPs call for other modes, such as biking and walking, to be addressed as well (MPP-DP-54-56). PSRC commends the city for including many policies supportive of walking, biking and transit, and encourages the city to continue to work to develop policies, standards, and regulatory approaches that incorporate multiple travel modes. While there are many challenges involved in implementing multimodal level-of-service standards, making progress in this area would strengthen and reinforce the plan’s vision of supporting walking, biking and transit. One strategy is tailoring a concurrency program to encourage development in the town center area where it can be supported by transit, nonmotorized infrastructure, and mixed land uses. The plan could also support transit, pedestrian, and bicycle projects as mitigation for development impacts. 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](#).
- The multicounty planning policies call for protecting the transportation system against disaster and developing prevention and recovery strategies for disasters (MPP-T-8). PSRC commends the city for including a policy on emergency response planning for potentially dangerous railroad incidents. The plan should also address emergency planning for other transportation systems.

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

- ☑ Policy UT3 directs the city to coordinate with outside utility providers to encourage cost effective energy conservation measures, promote energy efficiency programs, and create renewable energy generation resources.
- ☑ Policy UT6 encourages water conservation programs to be created and implemented by both the city and water utilities.

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.