

# PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION



## PUYALLUP-SOUTH HILL SUBAREA PLAN

September 10, 2020

### PUYALLUP – SOUTH HILL

Puyallup-South Hill was designated as a regional growth center by PSRC in 1995. The Puyallup City Council adopted the South Hill Regional Growth Center (RGC) Subarea Plan as an element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan in 2017.

The regional center is located on top of the South Hill bluff above the Puyallup River valley and is centered around the South Hill Mall and other large retailers. The subarea plan anticipates considerable growth in the area over the next decade and includes provisions to transform the center to a more walkable urban form and move away from the auto-centric land use pattern that currently characterizes the area. Planning for the subarea began in 2006, and a vision and land use framework were adopted in 2009. The city completed the subarea plan to address PSRC regional growth center subarea plan requirements and submitted the plan to PSRC. PSRC staff worked with city staff in preparation of this report.

### REGIONAL GROWTH CENTERS CERTIFICATION

VISION 2040 includes DP-Action-17 (p. 98) that directs jurisdictions with regional growth centers and/or manufacturing/industrial centers to develop subarea plans for those centers. This expectation has been in place since 2003 and is required for all new regional centers. The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and local governments have worked together to develop an overall process for reviewing and certifying that regional center plans are consistent with VISION 2040, the Regional Transportation Plan, and the Adopted Policy and Plan Review Process.<sup>1</sup>

In 2018, PSRC adopted the Regional Centers Framework Update. VISION 2050, an update to VISION 2040, is anticipated to be adopted in fall 2020. The Regional Centers Framework calls for review of centers in 2025, following local plan updates. All regional growth centers are expected to have subarea plans adopted and updated to be consistent with the Framework and VISION 2050 by that time. Certification of a subarea plan now reaffirms the planning work for the regional growth center is consistent with VISION 2040 and is an opportunity to identify whether any additional planning work is required by 2025.

### CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the South Hill Regional Growth Center Subarea 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 Puyallup South Hill Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan addresses planning expectations for regional growth centers.**

<sup>1</sup> The specific requirements for center planning are provided in [PSRC’s Plan Review Manual](#), and the process is also described in [VISION 2040, Part IV: Implementation](#). Certification of the jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan for consistency with the regional transportation plan, regionally established guidelines and policies, and Growth Management Act requirements for transportation planning is completed through a separate board action.

# Review of Regional Growth Center Planning

The remainder of this report contains a summary of the PSRC review of the South Hill subarea plan. Under each heading, the scope of the certification review, as guided by the [Plan Review Manual](#) and [Regional Center Plans 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 may more fully address VISION 2040, the Regional Transportation Plan, and center planning requirements. Future work should be considered as jurisdictions update local plans in 2024 to be consistent with VISION 2050 and the Regional Centers Framework.

The review contained in this section follows the format and content established in the Regional Center Plans Checklist, covering the seven major categories (center plan concept, environment, land use, housing, economy, public services, and transportation).

## Center Concept

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following center concepts:

- Vision for the center**, including a commitment to compact, pedestrian and transit-oriented development.
- Identification of the area** designated as a regional growth center and relationship to other plans.
- A **market analysis** of the center's development potential.

### DISCUSSION:

The South Hill plan effectively addresses the Center Concept requirements.

- ☑ The vision for the South Hill regional center is well-articulated and centered around building a “Complete Community” with measures to create a thriving retail core, compact neighborhoods, and employment and educational opportunities. The vision also emphasizes pedestrian-scale design and multi-modal transportation options.
- ☑ The center is identified in the city's comprehensive plan and its relationship to PSRC's Centers Framework and Pierce County's Countywide Planning Policies is described.
- ☑ The plan includes a market study completed in 2015 that describes the center's existing economic conditions and market potential. The study describes South Hill's economic potential, strong outlook for retail, and its robust market for apartment construction.

## Environment

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following environmental policy topics:

- Critical/environmentally sensitive areas**, including inventories and relevant policies and programs.
- Parks and open space**, including public spaces and civic places, and provisions to encourage accessible open space.
- Innovative stormwater management** policies and programs.
- Air pollution and greenhouse gas emission reduction** policies and programs.

### DISCUSSION

The South Hill plan effectively addresses many of the Environment requirements.

- ☑ The plan prioritizes protection of critical areas in South Hill. Policies are included to promote the use of public rights-of-way for green infrastructure and adopting standards appropriate for development near wetlands. Critical areas are also identified in a map.

- ☑ The plan describes and maps existing parks and open/public spaces and includes numerous policies to create an interconnected system of amenities for people who live, work, and spend time in South Hill.
- ☑ The plan establishes stormwater management as a key area, with policies outlining measures to expand stormwater treatment and detention on sites spread throughout the center.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the subarea policies:

- ☐ A more detailed discussion of existing conditions related to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as policies to reduce them, would support better health outcomes and improve quality of life for people who live and work in South Hill.

## Land Use

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for center plans to address the following land use topics:

**Defined boundaries and shape for the center** that are compact and easily walkable.

**Residential and employment growth targets** that accommodate a significant share of the jurisdiction’s growth, as well as residential densities and building intensities with capacity to accommodate these levels of growth.

**Mix, distribution and location of existing and future land uses** described and mapped. Encourage a mix of complementary uses.

**Design standards** for pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented development and other transit-supportive planning that orients land uses around transit.

### DISCUSSION

The South Hill plan effectively addresses many of the Land Use requirements.

- ☑ The plan calls for more than 2,000 new housing units and 2,500 new jobs in South Hill by 2030 – roughly one-third of the city’s overall housing and employment growth.
- ☑ The plan includes a detailed description of existing land uses and future land use designations, which include replacing the current one-size-fits-all zoning with three area-specific mixed-use zoning designations. Future land uses and designations are also mapped.
- ☑ Design standards are carefully considered and oriented to primarily serve pedestrians and encourage denser residential development.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the subarea policies:

- ☐ Centers should range in size from 200 to 640 acres (1 square mile), unless served by an internal high-capacity transit system. The city should consider refinements to the South Hill center boundary to support a compact, walkable center.
- ☐ During the upcoming countywide target setting process, the city should ensure citywide population and employment allocations enable the city to adopt new center growth targets for South Hill that meet minimum planning expectations for regional growth centers (planning for at least 45 activity units/acre).
- ☐ Current data shows that existing activity unit densities are low in the center. During the next centers monitoring review period in 2025, urban regional growth centers with densities below 18 activity units per acre must complete a new market study to evaluate the potential for and opportunities to best support center growth.

## Housing

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following housing policy topics:

**Existing and targeted housing units.**

**Tailored provisions for a variety of housing types**, affordable housing, and special housing needs.

**Implementation strategies** for addressing housing targets and goals.

### DISCUSSION

The South Hill plan effectively addresses many of the Housing requirements.

- ☑ Existing and targeted housing units are identified. The center is expected to accommodate a large share of the city's growth, with 2,000 new housing units anticipated by 2030.
- ☑ A number of provisions for mixed-use development are included to encourage context-sensitive design and appropriately scaling development.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the subarea policies:

- ☐ The housing assessment and policies should be updated to inventory the existing housing stock by type within the center and encourage a variety of housing types accessible and affordable at different income levels and for special needs populations.
- ☐ The Comprehensive Plan's Housing element includes provisions for a wide range of housing types, affordable housing, and actions to increase the supply of housing throughout the city. The city should update these actions and provisions to South Hill to strengthen the plan and provide a clearer pathway for expanding housing options within the center to meet center growth targets.

## Economy

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following economy policy topics:

**Key sectors and industry clusters** in the center.

**Economic development policies and programs** for the center.

### DISCUSSION:

The South Hill plan effectively addresses many of the Economy requirements.

- ☑ Key sectors for South Hill are described in detail. The center is focused around the South Hill Mall and other national retailers, which account for a major share of economic activity in the center. Other sectors include medical services, small-scale industrial businesses, and chain restaurants.
- ☑ Policies to manage economic development by creating a business association, neighborhood service center, and opportunities for networking and advocacy support current activities and encourage economic growth in the center.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the economy policies:

- ☐ The city should consider updating the market study for South Hill to better understand current economic conditions and explore strategies to meet its target for 2,500 new jobs by 2030.

## Public Services

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Center Subarea Plan Checklist calls for center plans to address the following public services topics:

**Local capital plans for infrastructure**, such as sewer, water, gas, electric and telecommunications, including financing and strategies to ensure facilities are provided consistent with planned growth.

## DISCUSSION:

The South Hill plan effectively addresses the Public Service requirements.

- ☑ Policies and implementation measures to coordinate growth in South Hill with increased capacity of public service infrastructure are included. Coordination with the city's update of the Sanitary Sewer System Comprehensive Plan is highlighted.
- ☑ The plan identifies using Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT) grants to plan and build public service infrastructure.

## Transportation

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Center Plans Checklist calls for subarea plans to address the following transportation policy topics:

**Integrated multimodal transportation network**, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, as well as linkages to adjacent neighborhoods and districts.

**Regional high-capacity transit**, local transit and coordination with transit agencies.

**Complete streets provisions** for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, vehicles, and – where appropriate – freight.

**Context-sensitive design** provisions for transportation facilities.

**Environmentally friendly street treatments** (green streets).

**Level-of-service standards and concurrency** provisions tailored for the center to encourage transit.

**Parking management strategy** that addresses supply of parking, on-street parking and mitigating effects of parking.

**Mode-split goals.**

### DISCUSSION

The South Hill plan effectively addresses many of the Transportation requirements.

- ☑ The plan identifies coordination with Sound Transit and Pierce Transit to improve local transit access and plan for high capacity transit to better connect South Hill with regional destinations.
- ☑ The plan includes provisions for complete streets and maps out specific streets for new vehicular and bike facilities, priority pedestrian routes, and transit stops to improve safety and access.
- ☑ The plan prioritizes designing transportation facilities to be at the pedestrian scale with features like mid-block crossings, small block sizes, nonmotorized trails, minimum sidewalk widths, lighting, seating, and wayfinding.
- ☑ The plan calls for considering transitioning to a multimodal level-of-service standard that is more consistent with the city's vision for South Hill and reduces single-occupancy vehicle travel.
- ☑ Plans to implement a Transportation Management Association will provide ongoing support for and enhance access to transit in South Hill.
- ☑ The plan recommends strategies to manage parking supply and mitigate demand by establishing parking maximums, shared parking, and carpooling. The plan also identifies strategies to better integrate parking into the urban form.
- ☑ Mode-split goals have been adopted for the center. The city is planning for a reduction of single-occupancy vehicle trips from 83% in 2010 to 70% in 2035.

The following comments should be considered in future review of the subarea policies:

- ☐ The city should consider long term strategies to reduce superblocks and create a more compact street grid to enhance connectivity and promote nonmotorized transportation.

## Conclusion

PSRC thanks the city for working through the plan review and certification process for the center subarea plan. The Puyallup South Hill plan effectively addresses the requirements of the Regional Center Plan Checklist, demonstrating consistency with VISION 2040, and is recommended for certification. The adopted Regional Centers Framework calls for review of centers and center plans again in 2025, following the adoption of VISION 2050 and local plan updates. In 2025, PSRC review will ensure that center plans, center growth targets, and local comprehensive plans have been updated to be consistent with VISION 2050 and the Regional Centers Framework.

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