

Local Comprehensive Plans Certification Report

Town of South Prairie Comprehensive Plan

March 27, 2025



The Puget Sound Regional Council conducted a certification review of the Town of South Prairie comprehensive plan. South Prairie adopted their 2024 comprehensive plan update on November 26, 2024. PSRC staff provided comments on the draft plan in September 2024 to inform the final plan adopted by the town.

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 Town of South Prairie 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 South Prairie comprehensive plan effectively addresses regional collaboration policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes policies to encourage coordination with other jurisdictions and agencies in the housing, transportation, critical areas, and capital facilities elements. It has a robust assessment of funding resources to help support infrastructure and service needs.



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 South Prairie comprehensive plan effectively addresses the Regional Growth Strategy policies in VISION 2050. The plan demonstrates the town has sufficient capacity to accommodate its adopted growth targets of 11 additional housing units and 10 additional jobs. It has policies to promote mixed-use, retail, office and residential projects in South Prairie's downtown to enhance the sense of community, encourage pedestrian and bicycle mobility, and reduce the number and length of motorized shopping trips.

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 South Prairie comprehensive plan effectively addresses the environmental policies in VISION 2050. The plan has many policies promoting environmental stewardship through



protecting, enhancing and promoting the natural environment in the town. It has policies to protect water quality through regulation, monitoring, education, and incorporating low impact development practices into the construction and operation of all town facilities.

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 South Prairie comprehensive plan effectively addresses the climate change policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through strategies such as encouraging energy efficiency, green building, and alternative travel modes such as transit, walking, and biking. It calls for the town to mitigate the environmental health effects of climate change, including air quality, stormwater, and heat impacts, through the acquisition of parks and open space and tree planting, prioritizing overburdened communities.

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

- The town 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 town 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 South Prairie comprehensive plan effectively addresses the land use and development patterns policies in VISION 2050. The plan promotes a healthy community through supporting walkability, tree canopy, and access to services, parks, open space, and healthy and culturally relevant foods. It includes policies supporting orderly and efficient annexation of urban unincorporated areas.

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 South Prairie comprehensive plan effectively addresses the housing policy topics in VISION 2050. Plan policies address a range of strategies to support the development of affordable housing. It analyzes housing needs and demonstrates capacity to meet its overall housing target, including capacity for multifamily housing. The plan includes a policy on identifying potential physical, economic, and cultural displacement of low-income households and marginalized populations and using a range of preventative strategies accordingly.

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

- The plan identifies lack of sewer supply as a significant barrier to housing development. The town should continue to monitor available sewer connections and coordinate with Pierce County to ensure housing needs can be met in this and future plan updates.
- Information in the plan indicates the town can accommodate housing needs at various income levels; however, future updates should provide clear quantitative documentation to address Commerce guidance. PSRC encourages the town to continue to monitor housing production and affordability, implement housing strategies, and 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 South Prairie comprehensive plan effectively addresses the economy policies in VISION 2050. The plan promotes the development of South Prairie's downtown through working with property and business owners to market South Prairie, providing parking solutions, creating anchor projects with public gathering places, and supporting the development of mixed-use retail, office and residential projects. It encourages the creation of public-private



partnerships that nurture entrepreneurship, innovation, business growth, environmental stewardship, and economic diversification.

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 South Prairie comprehensive plan effectively addresses the transportation planning requirements of the Growth Management Act and the transportation policies in VISION 2050. The plan promotes a sustainable transportation system and includes many policies on encouraging alternatives to automobile travel and reducing the number of vehicle miles traveled. It includes a policy to coordinate with transit agencies and encourage transit use if transit is extended to the town. The plan calls for the town to develop a network of safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists to schools, parks, government buildings, and commercial mixed-use areas.



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

- The Growth Management Act requires local comprehensive plans to include a multiyear transportation financing plan for how the jurisdiction will meet the mobility needs identified for the planning period (RCW 36.70A.070(6)). The capital facilities element includes a budget summary with revenues for fiscal year 2024; however, the town should include estimated revenues available for transportation projects for the planning period. In addition to transportation project costs and revenues through 2044, the plan should also include an analysis of the sufficiency of funding resources compared to estimated costs identified, and a reassessment strategy in the event revenues fall short of costs. Find further guidance on how to address the financial analysis in the plan in Commerce’s [Transportation Element Guidebook](#), pages 202–212.
- VISION 2050 calls for multimodal level of service standards (MPP-DP-52–53). The town includes policies supportive of walking and biking, and the town should work to develop standards and regulatory approaches that incorporate multiple travel modes. Making progress in this area would strengthen and reinforce the plan’s goals. PSRC’s [Transportation Element Guide](#) provides minimum standards for addressing multimodal level of service 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 South Prairie comprehensive plan effectively addresses the public services policies in VISION 2050. The plan calls for joint planning with other jurisdictions to ensure the achievement of capital facilities goals, policies, and service standards and to ensure consistency among jurisdictions. It includes a joint policy with Puget Sound Energy to install electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout the community to support the decarbonization of the transportation sector.



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

- VISION 2050 calls for new development within the urban growth area to be served with sanitary sewer systems (MPP-PS-10). The plan identifies lack of sewer supply as a significant barrier to development. PSRC encourages the town to coordinate with Pierce County on sewer availability and growth expectations in this and future plan updates.

Conclusion and Next Steps

PSRC found the Town of South Prairie 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 town 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 town has questions or needs additional information, please contact Erika Harris at 206-464-6360 and eharris@psrc.org.

