

PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

CITY OF UNIVERSITY PLACE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

January 28, 2016



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 University Place, adopted by the city on November 16, 2015. PSRC last certified the City of University Place's comprehensive plan in April 2006. 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 University Place 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 University Place 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 University Place comprehensive plan update. Under each heading, the scope of the certification review, as guided by the [Plan](#)

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.

[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 University Place' 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:

- ☑ Goal TR3 and policies TR3A-H strive to improve the safety of the transportation system through supporting strategies that reduce automobile speeds, improve nonmotorized facilities, limit trucks to designated truck routes, and add landscaped buffers between pedestrians and traffic.
- ☑ Goal TR6 and policies TR6A-F encourage development of a walkable community to support active and independent living, health, environmental quality and cost savings for travel.
- ☑ Goal TR10 and policies TR10A-F direct the city to implement demand management strategies to reduce congestion, emissions, fuel consumption and the need for new transportation facilities through coordinating with transit agencies, implementing commute trip reduction programs, and building infrastructure that provides safe, convenient alternatives to driving.

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:

- RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iv) requires local plans to include a multiyear transportation financing plan for the mobility needs identified for the 20-year planning period. The plan provides important information such as lists of transportation projects with estimated costs and estimated revenues by revenue source through 2035. Financing needs could be more clearly identified if the costs and revenues were assembled and summed in a table. Based on the comparison of estimated costs and revenues, it may be necessary to revise and expand on the current reassessment strategy to document steps the city could take to close the gap, if any, between costs and revenues. Commerce’s [Transportation Element Guidebook](#) discusses finance on pages 202 through 212.

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. The city describes throughout the plan how the comprehensive plan addresses regional policies and provisions adopted in VISION 2040.

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

- ☑ Goal EN2 and policies EN2A-H promote conserving environmental resources through measures such as preserving open space in new subdivisions, discouraging incompatible uses near critical habitat areas, and maintaining buffer areas adjacent to steep slopes, wetlands, and streams.

- ☑ Policies EN3F-I support strategies that improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to creating a walkable community, other strategies mentioned include education, retaining trees, supporting alternative energy and conservation, and encouraging the use of electric and low emission vehicles.
- ☑ The plan protects water quality by requiring new development, redevelopment, and properties that have failing septic systems to connect to the sanitary sewer system.

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:

- ☑ Goal LU12 and policies LU12A-I support planning for and development of the University Place Regional Growth Center. These provisions support the center through subarea planning, encouraging economic development, and prioritizing funding for transit and infrastructure improvements for the center.
- ☑ The plan supports the efficient use of urban land through encouraging infill development on suitable vacant parcels and redevelopment of underutilized parcels (Policy LU1E).
- ☑ Policy LU1F supports opportunities for shops, services, recreation and healthy food sources to locate within walking or bicycling distance of homes, work places and other gathering places.

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 development patterns.

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:

- Goal HS2 and policies HS2A-H encourage the city to achieve a mix of housing types to meet the needs of diverse households at various income levels through strategies such as encouraging cottage housing, small lot development, cluster housing, and accessory dwelling units.
- Policy HS3I directs the city to consider inclusionary zoning measures as a condition of major rezones and development.
- Goal HS4 and policies HS4A-I support opportunities for the provision of special needs housing, including group homes, assisted care facilities, nursing homes and other facilities.

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 housing needs assessment should include future housing needs by income level, as guided by the affordable housing goals in the Pierce County countywide planning policies. PSRC's [Housing Element Guide](#) can provide additional guidance in this work.

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 LU12I calls for the city to partner with the business community to promote vibrant, successful mixed-use districts within the Regional Growth Center. This collaboration will develop district-centered

plans, identify a market position for each district, and develop marketing materials to promote the district and its businesses.

- ☑ The plan promotes economic development and safety through the promotion of transportation corridors within the Regional Growth Center and other commercial mixed-use areas where slower traffic is desirable (TR7C).

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:

- ☐ PSRC commends the city for creating and implementing an Economic Development Strategic Action Plan. Now that a regional growth center has been designated in University Place, the city should add an economic development element to the comprehensive plan that builds upon the Economic Development Strategic Action Plan. This element should also 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 University Place 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 supports the newly designated regional growth center in University Place by prioritizing infrastructure funding for the center and committing to coordinate with Pierce Transit and Sound Transit to improve transit service in the center (TR5C and TR6A).
- ☑ The plan contains an extensive pedestrian and bicycle component with goals, policy and discussion included throughout the plan. As a means to encourage individual and community health, improve access, serve the non-driving public and provide an alternative to driving, the plan calls for construction of sidewalks, paths, trails and bicycle improvements in the community character, land use, environmental management, transportation, capital facilities, parks, recreation and open space, and shoreline management elements.

- ☑ Goal TR9 and policies TR9A-C call for the city to maintain the public street system to promote safety, comfort of travel, and cost effective use of public funds.
- ☑ Goal TR13 and policies TR13A-C promote clean transportation alternatives by directing the city to consider the benefits and impacts to health in the design of transportation infrastructure by providing opportunities for exercise and reducing exposure to air, water and noise pollution.

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 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 as well (MPP-DP-54-56). PSRC commends the city for including multimodal “Quality Service Corridors” and 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. For example, the plan could 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](#).

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

- ☑ Goal CF4 and policies CF4A-D encourage the city to locate capital facilities for maximum public benefit while minimizing negative impacts. For example, facilities should encourage physical activity, and minimize impacts on residential neighborhoods and sensitive environmental areas.
- ☑ Goal UT3 and policies UT3A-C promote reducing demand for new resources through support of conservation strategies and the use of innovative technologies.

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.

COMMENTS AND GUIDANCE

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.