

PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION



CITY OF KENT

MANUFACTURING/INDUSTRIAL CENTER SUBAREA PLAN

November 12, 2020

KENT MANUFACTURING/INDUSTRIAL CENTER

The Kent Manufacturing/Industrial Center (MIC) is located in the Kent Valley just north of downtown Kent and was designated as a regional manufacturing/industrial center by PSRC in 2002. The center is generally bounded by SR-167 (Valley Freeway) on the east and south, SW 43rd Street on the north, and West Valley Highway on the west. The Kent MIC, approximately 1,970 acres, comprises the eastern half of the larger industrial area known as the Kent North Valley Industrial Area. The center is planned and zoned for more intense development than the remainder of the larger Kent industrial area. The Boeing Company is a major property owner and business presence on industrial lands immediately west of the Kent MIC. Boeing's Kent Space Center and Pacific Gateway Business Park are located just across West Valley Highway. The center is also adjacent to the Green River Natural Resource Area. On April 3, 2020, the city adopted the Rally the Valley plan, a subarea plan that evaluated the entire North Valley Industrial Area, including the MIC. Through this process, the city amended the regional center boundaries to encompass all of the contiguous industrial lands, resulting in an increase of the center size to 3,899 acres. The city completed the Rally the Valley plan to address PSRC regional center subarea plan requirements and submitted the plan to PSRC. PSRC staff worked with city staff in preparation of this report.

REGIONAL 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.¹

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 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 center is consistent with VISION 2040 and is an opportunity to identify additional planning work required by 2025.

CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the Kent Manufacturing/Industrial 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 Kent Manufacturing/Industrial Center Subarea Plan addresses planning expectations for regional manufacturing/industrial centers.

¹ 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 Manufacturing/Industrial Center Planning

PSRC worked with the city to complete the review and develop the remainder of this report, which contains a summary of the PSRC review of the Kent MIC 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 six major categories (center plan concept, environment, land use, economy, public services, and transportation).

Center Concept

SCOPE OF REVIEW

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

- Vision for the center**, including a commitment to preservation of an urban industrial land base.
- Identification of the area** designated as a regional center and relationship to other plans.
- A **market analysis** of the center's development potential.

DISCUSSION

The Kent MIC plan effectively addresses the Center Concept requirements.

- ☑ The Kent MIC presents a clear vision that seeks to preserve the urban industrial land base, maintain and enhance a comfortable public realm, optimize finances for public services and infrastructure, and promote the center as a regionally significant economic hub.
- ☑ The plan makes clear reference to VISION 2050, King County countywide planning policies, and City of Kent Comprehensive Plan.
- ☑ The plan references a recently completed market analysis that acknowledges the market potential of the MIC and examines how to innovatively grow and develop the local economy.

Environment

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Manufacturing/Industrial 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.
- Innovative stormwater management** policies and programs.
- Air pollution and greenhouse gas emission reduction** policies and programs.

DISCUSSION

The Kent MIC plan effectively addresses the Environment requirements.

- ☑ The plan acknowledges and addresses critical areas. This includes seismic hazard areas, which encompass the entirety of the MIC, and several wetlands, streams and FEMA flood zones that run throughout the center. Action items include:
 - Currently working with FEMA to update the Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the MIC.
 - Protecting Class 1, 2, and 3 streams and their associated buffers per Kent's Critical Areas Ordinance KCC 11.06.

- Working with partners including the King County Flood Control District and State of Washington to complete the following flood storage and levee projects, all of which are ongoing or recently completed: *Briscoe/Desimone Levee, Boeing Levee, Green River Natural Resources Area, Lower Russell Levee, SR 516 to S. 231st Way Levee, Downey Farmstead Restoration, Signature Pointe Levee, Hawley Road Levee, Riverview Park Channel Restoration, Lever Homestead Restoration, Foster Park Levee, Milwaukee 2 Levee, and Horseshoe Bend Levee.*
- ☑ Stormwater regulations are discussed in reference to the City’s Surface Water and Drainage Code and Surface Water Design Manual, which by reference adopts the 2016 King County Surface Water Design Manual. Policies support regulations that minimize water quality degradation and control runoff, protecting downstream property owners.
- ☑ The plan encourages development of zero-emission public transit to serve the center and states ambitious mode share goals to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Land Use

SCOPE OF REVIEW

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

Defined boundaries and shape for the center that fully encompass the manufacturing/industrial base.

Employment growth targets that accommodate a significant share of the jurisdiction’s manufacturing/industrial employment growth and demonstrate capacity to accommodate the levels of growth.

Existing and future land uses support manufacturing/industrial uses and are described and mapped. Incompatible uses are discouraged.

Design standards that help mitigate aesthetic and other impacts of manufacturing and industrial activities, both within the center and on adjacent areas.

DISCUSSION

The Kent MIC plan effectively addresses the Land Use requirements.

- ☑ The center has clearly defined boundaries, and through this subarea planning process, the boundaries have been expanded to encompass the majority of contiguous industrial lands within the city. The plan and proposed land uses continue to support manufacturing/industrial uses.
- ☑ The plan sets growth targets for 13,960 new jobs in Kent’s industrial lands, and 12,704 in the proposed regional MIC by 2035. The plan establishes a goal of achieving 80% core industrial jobs, with 50% in manufacturing sectors.
- ☑ The plan identified zoning code amendments that allow a wider mix of compatible industrial uses in the MIC, and the City adopted code amendments concurrent with the subarea plan adoption.
- ☑ The City conducted an in-depth analysis on site design requirements that influence the types of manufacturing and industrial uses that could result, further considering how those uses impact infrastructure costs and needs.

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

- ☐ During the upcoming countywide target-setting process, the city should ensure the adopted center employment growth target is consistent with the citywide employment allocation and takes into account employment growth planned for Downtown, Kent’s regional growth center.
- ☐ In addition to limiting the size of accessory commercial uses within the MIC, the city should consider additional measures to restrict incompatible uses to maintain the manufacturing and industrial core uses.

Economy

SCOPE OF REVIEW

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

Support or maintain manufacturing and industrial industries through innovative strategies.

Key sectors and industry clusters in the center.

DISCUSSION

The Kent MIC plan effectively addresses the Economy requirements.

- ☑ The plan details significant growth over the last decade in the manufacturing, transportation/warehousing/ and construction sectors and references advanced manufacturing and aerospace manufacturing as strong subindustry clusters in the MIC, specifically referencing large employers like Boeing and Blue Origin.
- ☑ Policies support coordination efforts, such as joining with industry groups, like the Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee (AJAC), to strengthen the industrial valley.
- ☑ The plan supports continuation of innovative funding sources for plan implementation, such as the Port of Seattle Economic Development grant that funded the Kent Valley Regional Trails Opportunity Study. This study identified opportunities along the Interurban and Green River Trail networks to increase visibility and utilization.

Public Services

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Regional Manufacturing/Industrial 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 Kent MIC plan effectively addresses the Public Services requirements.

- ☑ The plan details existing efforts from the Kent Comprehensive plan for capital and infrastructure improvements.
- ☑ Policies promote the development of adequate parks and open space in the center to provide a healthy environment for industrial workers. The plan details the challenges of funding parks and open spaces in industrial areas, and action items to address funding concerns, including evaluating the feasibility of a Parks Impact Fee within the MIC and completing of a rate study.
- ☑ The plan includes a detailed and organized Action Tracking Matrix that highlights funding sources for capital and infrastructure plans, namely the city's capital budget.

Transportation

SCOPE OF REVIEW

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

Integrated multimodal transportation network described, with deficiencies identified and addressed.

Freight movement strategies such as rail, trucking facilities, waterways, etc., including local and regional distribution.

Employee commuting, including demand management strategies and multimodal options.

Transit options should be described, with transit agency coordination encouraged.

Mode-split goals.

DISCUSSION

The Kent MIC plan effectively addresses the Transportation requirements.

- ☑ The plan describes the multimodal transportation network and identifies deficiencies with next steps. The plan acknowledges that Kent’s infrastructure is mostly built-out, so associated costs are mostly related to ongoing maintenance. Additionally, the plan details funding limitations of state-authorized traffic impact fees (TIF), which fund based on trips generated during the PM peak hour, a time strategically avoided by trucking-intensive industries to avoid congestion, thereby going undetected in TIF calculations. The plan describes efforts to address such funding shortfalls by rethinking TIF calculations and investigating impact fees in the forthcoming citywide Transportation Master Plan.
- ☑ Transportation action items emphasize continued coordination with King County Metro and Sound Transit to increase transit service for commuters. Sound Transit is opening two new light rail connections in Kent in 2024 as part of the Federal Way Link Extension project, and both King County Metro and Sound Transit have planned service expansion for bus transit over the next five years. King County Metro has also created the Community Connections program geared toward industrial workers, providing the following new transportation programs to the Kent Valley.
- ☑ The plan includes an ambitious mode-split goal for 2035. The goal seeks to reduce drive alone trips from 90% to 50%; increase combined carpool, transit, and company shuttle trips from 27% to 55%; and increase non-motorized transportation from 14% to 20%.

Conclusion

PSRC thanks the city for working through the plan review and certification process for the center subarea plan. The Kent MIC 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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