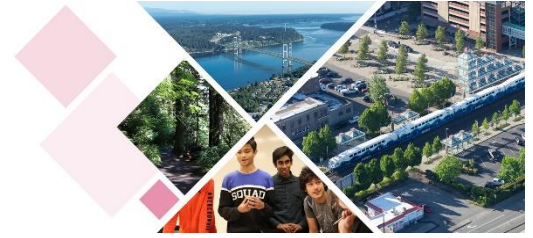


# COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES PLAN REVIEW CERTIFICATION REPORT



## SNOHOMISH COUNTY

MARCH 31, 2022

### BACKGROUND

Snohomish County adopted a major update to the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPS) in September 2021 (Ordinance 21-059). The CPPs were updated to align with the multicounty planning policies and the Regional Growth Plan in VISION 2050, reflecting local context for the regional policy framework and outlining a countywide vision for the future of Snohomish County and its cities. Notable changes to the policies include direction, across all chapters, to incorporate equity considerations into local comprehensive plans and jurisdictional decision-making. In February 2022, the county adopted 2044 growth targets (Ordinance 22-003) as an appendix to the CPPs to support the 2024 comprehensive plan updates and implement the VISION 2050 Regional Growth Strategy.

The Snohomish County CPPs were updated using the Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT) planning framework. The CPP Subcommittee consisted of planning staff from SCT jurisdictions, regional and state agencies, and tribes. Following adoption, Snohomish County staff completed the PSRC consistency tool for countywide planning policies and submitted the reporting tool along with a completed set of CPPs.

### COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES CERTIFICATION

VISION 2050, the region's long-range plan for growth, calls for countywide planning policies to be updated to address the multicounty planning policies included in VISION 2050 (MPP-RC-13). The adopted Plan Review process calls on PSRC to review the countywide planning policies based on a comparative analysis of countywide and multicounty planning policies, focusing on policy areas for regional planning identified in the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.210). The consistency certification of countywide planning policies and the regional transportation plan is based on a comparative analysis of the adopted countywide transportation-related planning policies and the regional transportation plan (RCW 47.80.023). PSRC coordinated with county staff and reviewed information provided by county staff to prepare this report.

### CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Staff reviewed the countywide planning policies and found that the policies are consistent with the VISION Consistency Tool for Countywide Planning Policies. 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 Countywide Planning Policies for Snohomish County are consistent with the multicounty planning policies and the regional transportation plan.**

The remainder of this report contains a summary of the PSRC review of the countywide planning policies. Under each heading, the scope of the certification review, as guided by the [Plan Review Manual](#) and the [VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Countywide Planning Policies](#), is listed in high-level bullets. Discussion in each topic area highlights exemplary provisions of the policies, as well as issues identified through the certification review where future work on the part of the county and its cities may more fully address VISION 2050 and the Regional Transportation Plan requirements.

## REVIEW OF COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES

VISION 2050 emphasizes the value of coordination to achieve shared regional objectives. CPPs complement multicounty planning policies and provide more specific level of detail to guide county and local comprehensive planning. CPPs are reviewed for consistency with the VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Countywide Planning Policies. The review contained in this section follows the format and content established in this tool, covering the policy chapters in VISION 2050 (regional collaboration, environment, climate change, land use/development patterns, economy, transportation, and public services).

### Regional Collaboration

#### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Countywide Planning Policies calls for policies to address the following concepts:

**Support joint planning and coordination** among jurisdictions, agencies, tribes, ports, military installations, special purpose districts and adjacent regions.

**Prioritize services and access to opportunity** for people of color, people with low incomes, and historically underserved communities.

**Recognize military installations** and their beneficial impacts and challenges.

**Prioritize transportation investments** to centers and high-capacity transit station areas.

**Promote existing and new funding sources** to implement the regional vision.

#### DISCUSSION: NOTABLE POLICIES

The Snohomish County CPPs effectively addresses the regional coordination provisions of the VISION Consistency Tool. Highlights include:

- A robust set of policies emphasizing joint planning and collaboration between the cities and the county. (JP-1 – 7)
- New policies recognizing the importance of working with Tribal governments and military installations. (JP 6 – 7)
- Significant focus to incorporate equity and inclusion provisions into the CPPs. New policies and updated goals throughout all topic chapters were added to address all aspects of racial equity and support local implementation.

#### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement to better align with regional expectations on collaboration.

## Regional Growth Strategy

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Countywide Planning Policies calls for policies to address the following concepts:

**Implement the regional growth strategy by providing direction for growth targets**, including growth in centers and near high-capacity transit, addressing jobs-housing balance, reducing the rate of rural growth, and supporting infill within the urban growth area.

**Ensure urban growth area stability and sustainability over the long term.**

Include a **process to reconcile discrepancies** between growth targets and local plans.

### DISCUSSION: NOTABLE POLICIES

The Snohomish County CPPs effectively addresses the Regional Growth Strategy provisions of the VISION Consistency Tool. Highlights include:

- Adopted growth targets consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy, supporting significant growth in Metro and Core cities and reducing the rate of rural growth over time. (Appendix B)
- Policies seek to ensure the long-term stability of the urban growth area over time (DP-1 – 3)

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The county and cities should address the following comments through future amendments or implementation steps for the countywide planning policies:

- Snohomish County is commended for a collaborative process to develop growth targets that implement VISION 2050. VISION 2050 states that PSRC will be looking for substantial consistency with adopted growth targets in certification review. It will be critical for jurisdictions to provide capacity and planning to accommodate growth targets in 2024 comprehensive plan updates. PSRC staff is available to provide assistance as local plans are developed.

## Environment

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Countywide Planning Policies calls for policies to address the following concepts:

**Coordinate and integrate environmental strategies** among jurisdictions, tribes, countywide and watershed groups.

**Promote environmentally sensitive development**, including minimizing impacts to natural features.

**Support protection of critical areas** and incentivize environmental stewardship.

**Plan for open space** and encourage protection of native vegetation and tree canopy.

**Promote the protection of water quality** and restoration of hydrological function.

**Avoid and/or mitigate environmental impacts** for vulnerable populations.

**Reduce pollution**, including air toxics, greenhouse gas and stormwater.

### DISCUSSION: NOTABLE POLICIES

The Snohomish County CPPs effectively addresses environmental provisions of the VISION Consistency Tool. Highlights include:

- Policies to support collaborative efforts to enhance the environment, including implementing the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan. (Ev 1 – 3)

- ☑ New policies to reduce and mitigate stormwater impacts and improve water quality. (Ev-7, Ev-8)
- ☑ Policies to reduce light and noise pollution, toxic pesticides, and the spread of invasive species. (Ev 9 – 11)
- ☑ Updated policies to ensure that all residents have equitable access to clean air and water. (Ev-8)

DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement to better align with regional expectations on the environment.

## Climate Change

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Countywide Planning Policies calls for policies to address the following concepts:

**Support achieving regional emission reduction goals** by encouraging electrifying the transportation system, prioritizing investments that reduce emissions, promoting reduced vehicle miles travelled, and expanding use of conservation, alternative energy sources and energy management technology

**Support reducing building energy**

Coordinate work to **sequester and store carbon**.

**Address impacts** on water, land, infrastructure, health, and the economy.

Address siting and planning for relocation of hazardous industries away from the **500 year floodplain**.

Address impacts to **vulnerable populations and areas disproportionately affected by climate change**.

DISCUSSION: NOTABLE POLICIES

The Snohomish County CPPs effectively addresses climate change provisions of the VISION Consistency Tool.

Highlights include:

- ☑ Updated policies consider how decisions will impact climate and emission reduction goals. (GF-3)
- ☑ Policies support adopting and implementing actions to achieve emission reduction goals adopted by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (CC-1, 6)
- ☑ Expanded policies to reduce carbon and support carbon sequestration with forests, wetlands, farmlands, and estuaries. (CC-4)
- ☑ New policies to plan for adaptation and resilience, focusing on minimizing impacts on highly impacted and vulnerable communities. (CC-5)

DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement to better align with regional expectations on climate change.

## Land Use/Development Patterns

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Countywide Planning Policies calls for policies to address the following concepts:

**Reduce disparities in opportunity** by supporting inclusive community planning, investments to expand opportunity, and strategies to mitigate displacement in centers and near high-capacity transit.

Implement the **Regional Centers Framework**.

**Maximize transit investments** through appropriate densities.

**Support center and station area planning**.

**Facilitate annexation and incorporation**, support joint planning, and affiliate unincorporated areas.

**Reduce rural growth** over time, ensure long-term **integrity of resource lands**, and avoid conversion to other uses.

**Prioritize reducing health disparities** and improving outcomes.

**Avoid incompatible uses** near airports, military installations, manufacturing/industrial centers, and Tribal reservation lands.

**Address impacts on culturally significant sites and tribal treaty** fishing, hunting, and gathering grounds.

### DISCUSSION: NOTABLE POLICIES

The Snohomish County CPPs effectively addresses the development patterns provisions of the VISION Consistency Tool. Highlights include:

- Expanded policies on working with tribal governments and addressing encroachments and impacts to culturally-significant sites and reservation lands. (JP-8, DP-37)
- Policies to encourage transit-oriented development, including planning for growth near high-capacity transit. (DP-18)
- New policies on reducing disparities, supporting inclusive community planning, and reducing residential displacement. (DP-38, DP-39)
- Policies to implement the Regional Centers Framework, including detailed criteria and procedures to designate centers and a list of candidate countywide centers. (DP-8, Appendix I)

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The county and cities should address the following comments through future amendments or implementation steps for the Snohomish County countywide planning policies:

- While the policies address joint planning and the process to affiliate urban unincorporated areas with cities, the countywide planning policies should support proactive, collaborative steps to identify strategies and remove barriers to annexation.

## Housing

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Countywide Planning Policies calls for policies to address the following concepts:

**Increase housing production opportunities** to address supply, including diverse types and styles.

**Address housing affordability needs**, with an emphasis on housing near transit and in centers.

**Promote jobs-housing balance** by providing housing choices accessible to workers.

Expand **moderate density housing** capacity.

Address **residential displacement**.

### DISCUSSION: NOTABLE POLICIES

The Snohomish County CPPs effectively addresses the housing provisions of the VISION Consistency Tool. Highlights include:

- New policies to evaluate and address residential displacement. (HO-5, HO-15)
- Policies to promote additional housing options in single family zones and moderate density housing. (HO-1, 4)

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The county and cities should address the following comments through future amendments or implementation steps for the Snohomish County countywide planning policies:

- The county has adopted population targets and is beginning work to translate those targets to housing units. Housing targets are a critical implementation step for VISION 2050 and HB 1220 (2021). PSRC is available to provide data or support to translate adopted population targets to housing units.

## Economy

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Countywide Planning Policies calls for policies to address the following concepts:

**Support recruitment and retention** to foster a positive business climate.

**Focus employment growth in centers.**

**Support industry clusters** recognized in the Regional Economic Strategy.

**Promote environmentally and socially responsible** business practices.

Expand **access to opportunity and remove barriers** for economically disconnected communities.

Support and empower **contributions of culturally and ethnically diverse communities.**

Address **commercial displacement**.

### DISCUSSION: NOTABLE POLICIES

The Snohomish County CPPs effectively addresses the economy provisions of the VISION Consistency Tool. Highlights include:

- Policies to expand economic development strategies to support people with historically low or very low access to opportunity. (ED-6)
- Updated policies to ensure that economic development respects the natural environment and supports sustainability and resilience. (ED-15)
- New policies that address the potential for commercial displacement. (ED-18)

#### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement to better align with regional expectations on the economy.

## Transportation

#### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Countywide Planning Policies calls for policies to address the following concepts:

**Prioritizing improvements** that support the Regional Growth Strategy, centers, and high-capacity transit areas.

**Maintain and preserve** the transportation system.

**Manage demand** and support alternatives to driving alone.

**Identify stable and predictable funding sources** and pursuit of alternative transportation financing.

Strategies and actions for changes in **transportation technologies and mobility**.

**Racial and social equity** as a core objective in transportation improvements, programs, and services.

**Provide mobility choices** for people with special needs.

**Promote human health** and the state's goal of zero deaths and serious injuries.

**Support the economy** and the movement of people and goods.

#### DISCUSSION: NOTABLE POLICIES

The Snohomish County CPPs effectively addresses the transportation provisions of the VISION Consistency Tool. Highlights include:

- Policies to minimize impacts on the natural environment, including reducing stormwater, improving fish passage, and promoting human health. (TR-6)
- Strategies that reduce emissions committing to climate change, including reducing vehicle miles traveled, encouraging investment in clean energy options, and encouraging alternatives to traveling alone. (TR-16)
- Support for planning for frequent and successful transit service. (TR-11 – 14, 17)

#### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement to better align with regional expectations on transportation.

## Public Services

### SCOPE OF REVIEW

The VISION 2050 Consistency Tool for Countywide Planning Policies calls for policies to address the following concepts:

- Protect and enhance the environment and public health** when providing services and facilities.
- Coordinate planning for services and facilities** to support the Regional Growth Strategy.
- Provide guidance to locate urban services** and regional facilities in urban areas and appropriately scale rural facilities.
- Serve new development** within urban areas with sanitary sewer and replace failing septic systems.
- Consider impacts of climate change** on public facilities.
- Plan for affordable and equitable access to public services**, especially to underserved communities.
- Encourage interjurisdictional coordination** of public safety and emergency management.
- Locate community facilities and services in centers and near transit.**
- Work with school districts** on siting, design, and strategies to provide adequate urban capacity.

### DISCUSSION: NOTABLE POLICIES

The Snohomish County CPPs effectively addresses the public services provisions of the VISION Consistency Tool. Highlights include:

- Policies to promote collaboration on equitable access of public services and facilities for all residents, especially those that are historically underserved. (PS-18)
- Working with school districts to plan for the siting and improvement of school facilities to meet the current and future community needs. (PS-21)
- Collaborating for long-term water and utility needs, particularly in the face of climate change (PS-8, 9)

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement to better align with regional expectations on public services.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

PSRC thanks the county and cities for working through the plan review and certification process for the CPPs. The policies effectively address the requirements of the VISION Consistency Tool for Countywide Planning Policies, demonstrating consistency with VISION 2050, and are recommended for certification.

For additional information regarding this certification report, please contact Liz Underwood-Bultmann at [LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org](mailto:LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org).