

# Local Comprehensive Plans Certification Report City of Tacoma Comprehensive Plan

August 28, 2025



The Puget Sound Regional Council conducted a certification review of the City of Tacoma comprehensive plan. Tacoma adopted its 2024 comprehensive plan update on June 24, 2025. PSRC staff provided comments on the draft plan in March 2025 to inform the final plan adopted by the city.

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 City of Tacoma 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.<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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 Tacoma comprehensive plan effectively addresses regional collaboration policies in VISION 2050. The plan describes how the city's policies and actions implement the Growth Management Act and VISION 2050. The plan describes coordination with neighboring jurisdictions, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Port of Tacoma, transit agencies, and other partners; and coordinated planning and development with specific projects. The plan includes policies throughout on consultation with Tribes. The plan includes an equity analysis to inform the update and an equity framework to identify measurable and observable goals. The plan seeks to prioritize access to opportunity for people of color, people with low incomes, and historically underserved communities.



# 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 Tacoma comprehensive plan effectively addresses the Regional Growth Strategy policies in VISION 2050. The plan accommodates another 42,865 new housing units and 70,000 new jobs by 2044, consistent with the adopted countywide growth targets. The city is planning for a significant share of growth in its regional growth centers and other mixed-use centers. The plan prioritizes growth and multimodal investments in centers and high-capacity transit station areas to support walkable neighborhoods, reduce vehicle miles traveled, and maximize transit access.

## 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 Tacoma comprehensive plan effectively addresses the environmental policies in VISION 2050. The plan evaluates a variety of environmental assets, hazards, air quality, urban heat island index, and tree canopy to understand equity outcomes related to existing environmental conditions. The plan advances environmental justice by seeking to collaborate with Tribal governments, Indigenous-led organizations, local environmental groups, and residents to develop stewardship programs for Tacoma's waterways, wetlands, urban forests, and passive urban spaces. The plan effectively addresses air quality and water quality standards, including policies to acquire property to benefit stormwater management and partner with other jurisdictions to develop regional green stormwater parks. The plan identifies goals to provide all residents with equitable access to high-quality parks and includes policies and actions to enhance and protect these resources.

## 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 Tacoma comprehensive plan effectively addresses the climate change policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes goals and policies to address climate change, including support for state, regional and local greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. The city has adopted a separate Tacoma Climate Action Plan, which outlines specific actions to address climate change. The plan includes policies addressing the impacts of climate change, including coordinating with the Port of Tacoma and Puyallup Tribe of Indians on mitigation and adaptation strategies for sea level rise.

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

- The city 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 city



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 Tacoma comprehensive plan effectively addresses the land use and development patterns policies in VISION 2050. The plan development included a robust and inclusive public engagement process. The plan emphasizes the role of mixed-use centers throughout the city and providing walkable access to amenities, retail, and services. The plan includes policies to facilitate annexation, including anticipating public facility and service needs, conducting joint planning with Pierce County and adjacent jurisdictions, and providing for active participation by affected residents and property owners. The plan includes policies to protect the viability of existing airports by limiting incompatible uses and land use compatibility related to industrial uses.

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

- PSRC will complete an in-depth review of regional centers in 2025. PSRC's [Regional Centers Framework](#) requires adopted center plans for manufacturing/industrial centers. The city has worked for many years to develop a subarea plan for the manufacturing/industrial center in the Tideflats area. The city should work to finalize and adopt this plan to comply with the Regional Centers Framework.



# 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 Tacoma comprehensive plan effectively addresses the housing policy topics in VISION 2050. The plan demonstrates sufficient land capacity to accommodate the city's 2044 housing allocation for all income levels, including emergency shelter. The plan addresses racially disparate impacts, exclusion and a variety of anti-displacement policies in housing. The plan includes strategies to accommodate the full spectrum of housing needs, including implementing density bonuses, fee waivers, tax incentives, and transfer of development rights. The plan includes a policy to explore the potential development of a community-led social housing developer to address gaps in housing production.

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

- The region is facing a housing crisis, and jurisdictions should act with urgency to address the housing needs of all residents. PSRC encourages the city to continue to work with regional partners to monitor housing conditions, to implement housing strategies, and to 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 Tacoma comprehensive plan effectively addresses the economy policies in VISION 2050. The plan provides a detailed baseline of Tacoma's economic conditions and the city's relationship to the broader county and regional economy. The plan identifies employment concentrations by major sector across the city and policies to support a diverse economic base with a range of employment opportunities. The plan identifies policies for equitable household prosperity, including supporting public efforts to reduce racial, gender, ethnic and disability-related disparities in income and employment opportunities. The plan also includes policies addressing the city's image, role of regional growth centers, and industrial districts.





## 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 Tacoma comprehensive plan effectively addresses the transportation planning requirements of the Growth Management Act and the transportation policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes bicycle and pedestrian components, policies to create a welcoming environment for walking and biking, and projects to complete a nonmotorized network. For each transportation mode, the plan discusses groups and communities that have specific transportation needs or require additional considerations. The plan identifies a tiered, long-term project list based on policy criteria and discusses funding sources and projected revenue for the 20-year planning period.

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

- Consistent with VISION 2050, the plan references policies and measures to implement multimodal level of service standards. The state will require multimodal level of





service standards by 2029, and additional guidance may be available in the future to refine adopted 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 Tacoma comprehensive plan effectively addresses the public services policies in VISION 2050. The plan promotes coordinated and efficient use of public services through working with service providers, regional governments, institutions, and others to ensure public facilities and services can meet service standards. The plan includes a policy to anticipate the public facilities and service needs of potential annexation areas and incorporate displacement impact analysis to equitably meet annexation demand. The plan addresses equity in the context of public services by requiring equity impact assessments for all new public facility and service projects to evaluate potential impacts on historically underserved communities.

### Conclusion and Next Steps

PSRC found the City of Tacoma 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 city 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 city has questions or needs additional information, please contact Liz Underwood-Bultmann at [LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org](mailto:LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org) or 206-464-6174.

