

# PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

## THE CITY OF LYNNWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

August 27, 2015



### BACKGROUND

A major emphasis of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) is the need to coordinate local, regional, and state planning efforts. To advance this coordination, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is required to formally 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 (MPPs) have been established as the regional guidelines and principles under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 47.80.026. Certification of local plans and policies 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 Lynnwood, adopted by the city on June 22, 2015. PSRC last certified the Lynnwood comprehensive plan in 2012. PSRC staff reviewed the 2015 comprehensive plan and coordinated with city staff in the development of this report.

### CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the City of Lynnwood 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 Lynnwood 2015 comprehensive plan 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 Lynnwood comprehensive plan update. Under each heading, the scope of the certification review, as guided by the [Plan Review Manual](#) and

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<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 2040, Part IV: Implementation.

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 is needed to more fully address VISION 2040, Transportation 2040, or GMA 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 Lynnwood's comprehensive plan satisfies the transportation planning requirements of the GMA and includes adequate air quality policies and provisions. Highlights include:

- ☑ The transportation element covers all of the required components of transportation planning required in the GMA in a clear and well-organized framework. In particular, tables and maps on pages 5.19 through 5.25 summarize short- and long-term transportation investments to meet LOS needs. Land use assumptions are clearly documented and are consistent internally and with regional and countywide forecasts and targets.
- ☑ Pedestrian and bicycle planning is addressed through priorities established on pages 5.26 and 5.27. The "skeleton system" for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, mapped in Figures T-7 and T-8, shows existing facilities and prioritized investments to achieve a more complete network of non-motorized facilities that connects with major destinations within the city.

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The city should address the following comments at the earliest opportunity through future amendments to the comprehensive plan, subarea plans, or functional plans:

- The growth management act requires that local comprehensive plans include a multiyear transportation financing plan (see RCW 36.70A.070(6)) for how the jurisdiction will meet the mobility needs identified for the planning period. The financing plan should include a list of investments to meet transportation needs over the planning period, estimated costs for those investments, estimated probable revenues available to the local jurisdiction, and a reassessment strategy in the event revenues fall short of costs. While the plan’s transportation element includes a list of projects for the planning period, identified funding sources, and principles to guide future reassessment decisions, the city should add additional detail to the financing plan, including:
  1. Provide cost estimates for roadway, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements identified through the 2035 plan horizon
  2. Develop a more detailed forecast of probable funding resources for transportation through the 2035 plan horizon
  3. Provide an analysis of the sufficiency of funding resources compared to estimated costs of identified improvements, including maintenance
  4. Revise and expand on the current reassessment strategy to address steps the city could take to close the gap between costs and revenues, as needed.

Further guidance on how to address the financial analysis in the plan can be found in the Department of Commerce’s Transportation Element Guidebook, pages 202 - 212.

- RCW 36.70A.115 requires local jurisdictions to provide sufficient development capacity to accommodate housing and employment targets adopted through a collaborative countywide process. Finding LU-8 of the plan makes a general claim of sufficient capacity for targeted growth. Strategy LU-A further commits to providing sufficient capacity to meet future needs. The city should add more detailed quantitative documentation of estimated capacity for additional housing units and jobs provided by the adopted land use plan.

## **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 plan includes a description of 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 plan addresses the environmental policy topics in VISION 2040 with strong goals and actionable policies in all topic areas. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan includes an environment element that applies a systems approach to protecting and enhancing habitat and natural landscapes, air and water quality, and critical areas through policies on municipal operations, land development, and other activities.
- ☑ The plan includes an innovative community character element that addresses in an integrated fashion a very broad range of topics from physical design to public health to cultural diversity to environmental quality. The community character element includes environmental sustainability goals and policies that promote efficiency in energy and resource use, green building, and mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions.

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement of the plan to better align with regional environmental guidelines and principles.

## Development Patterns – Including the 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 addresses the development patterns policies in VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan focuses housing and employment growth in the city center, a designated regional growth center and location for future light rail service, and through transit oriented development (TOD) along the SR-99 corridor with existing bus rapid transit service. Policy LU-23 commits the city to future development of subarea plans for key TOD locations. Policies LU-27, LU-33, and LU-38 promote transit-supportive density and mixed use along with variety in housing types in the center. Strategy LU-C adopts ambitious growth targets for the city center.
- ☑ The community character element contains goals and policies on healthy communities. Policies on active living prioritize capital improvements that expand facilities and amenities that promote pedestrian and bicycle travel. Policies on sustainable food systems focus on expanding opportunities for local food production and availability through community gardens, markets, and other efforts.

**DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK**

The city should address the following comments at the earliest opportunity through future amendments to the comprehensive plan, subarea plans, or functional plans:

- ☐ The comprehensive plan update provides high-level direction for land use and capital facilities investments in the city center. Pursuant to LU-23, the city should complete an updated subarea plan for the city center as a priority for the short term, and sufficiently in advance of Link light rail investments to provide a basis for coordination with Sound Transit and other agencies and to influence private land investment.

## 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 addresses the housing provisions contained in VISION 2040. The plan incorporates a number of best housing practices that address identified housing needs. Highlights include:

- ☑ The housing element includes a thorough needs assessment and demographic profile for the community that includes clear documentation of the estimated future need for housing that is affordable for lower income households.
- ☑ The plan recognizes existing affordable housing in the city and emphasizes its preservation. Policies H-27, 28, and 29 promote preservation of mobile home parks as a unique stock of affordable housing currently located in the city. Policy H-32 calls for replacement of affordable units lost to redevelopment.

**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:

- ☐ In furtherance of the housing goal of GMA, VISION 2040 (especially MPP-H-5 and H-6), and the Growing Transit Communities Strategy, future development of subarea plans for the city center or other areas planned for transit oriented development should consider a full range of regulatory tools, incentives,

and programs to preserve and expand the stock of affordable housing within walking distance of high-capacity transit.

## 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 through the provision of infrastructure.

### DISCUSSION: EXEMPLARY PLAN PROVISIONS

The comprehensive plan update contains an economic development element that addresses many of the economic provisions of VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- The economic development element focuses on retention and expansion of employment in sectors that have potential for high growth and offer opportunities for living wage jobs. The element also addresses the land use needs of businesses in these sectors and identifies priorities for public investments, especially within the city center, that are intended to attract business investment and generally improve the quality of life and attractiveness of the community.

### 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 economic development.

## 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 city's 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 shows a commitment to promoting and achieving alternatives to single-occupant vehicle (SOV) travel. Policy T-9 sets a goal for the city center to increase the share of non-SOV trips to 35% by the year 2035. Achievement of this goal is supported by a range of policies that advance the availability of transit and non-motorized travel options, transit-oriented development, and demand management programs.
- ☑ Policy T-3 and subsequent implementing strategies provide a roadmap for coordination with multiple transit providing agencies to ensure service quality through facility design, traffic management, and multimodal transit access.

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The city should address the following comments at the earliest opportunity through future amendments to the comprehensive plan, subarea plans, or functional plans:

- ☐ VISION 2040 calls for adoption of concurrency approaches that recognize and support mobility via multiple modes of travel (see MPP-DP-53, 54, and 55). Level-of-service standards and concurrency, as described in the transportation element, address auto travel exclusively. Strategy T-5.2 tailors concurrency requirements and LOS standards to incentivize development in the city center with greater opportunity for transit and non-motorized travel. The city should continue to explore approaches to integrating LOS measures for transit and non-motorized travel into its concurrency program.

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

- ☑ The capital facilities and utilities element provides a framework for meeting long-term service needs of the growing community through coordination with land use plans and development and close coordination with other agencies and governments (see policies CF 3.1-3.6).

### 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.

## Conclusion

PSRC staff thank the jurisdiction for working through the plan review process. PSRC is available to provide assistance for future plan updates and 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 Michael Hubner at 206-971-3289 or [mhubner@psrc.org](mailto:mhubner@psrc.org).