

# PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

## CITY OF MAPLE VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

February 25, 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.<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 Maple Valley, adopted by the city on January 25, 2016. PSRC last certified the City of Maple Valley's comprehensive plan in September 2007. 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 Maple Valley 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 Maple Valley 2015 comprehensive plan update conform to the Growth Management Act and 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 City of Maple Valley 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 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 Maple Valley's 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:

- ☑ The plan promotes developing and implementing non-motorized transportation systems, such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connections. These are consistent with regional non-motorized plans. The plan also promotes coordinating with adjacent jurisdictions and King County Parks Department to ensure the interconnectedness of the local trail system (Policy T-P4).
- ☑ The plan supports the development of an integrated, multimodal, regional transportation system that serves the needs of Maple Valley and provides alternatives to the drive-alone commute. The plan directs the city to work with regional transit providers to develop and operate a regional system that is efficient and easy to use (Policy T-P44).
- ☑ The plan supports promoting commute trip reduction programs, telecommuting, electronic communications, variable work weeks, and flextime. It also supports a variety of transportation demand management strategies aimed at reducing the number and length of car trips and increasing the efficiency of the transportation system (Policy T-P46).

## 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 plan elements use consistent land use assumptions. Specifically, travel demand forecasts and transportation need assessments should be based on land use assumptions that correspond with the most recently adopted growth targets, and apply those assumptions consistently throughout the plan (RCW 36.70A.070(6)). Using consistent land use assumptions ensures that a local jurisdiction is planning effectively and in a coordinated fashion for needed land uses, housing, and capital facilities. The plan's land use element references the 2031 countywide planning policies' targets. The transportation element references a 2035 horizon year with land use assumptions based on Transportation Analysis Zones, an area larger than the city. The city should clearly document land use assumptions using the same horizon year and, where a different geography applies, explain how the elements are consistent with each other.

## Part II: Consistency with Regional Plans and Policies

### OVERVIEW

This section discusses consistency with the 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 does this in the Vision section of its plan.

### 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 Maple Valley comprehensive plan addresses the environmental policy topics in VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- The plan promotes strategies to address air quality standards and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Strategies include promoting compact development, efficiently managing the operation of the

transportation system, implementing Transportation Demand Management programs, and expand local employment growth (T-P66).

- ☑ In addition to its regulatory authority, the plan directs the city to use incentives such as buffer averaging, density bonuses, and lower tax assessments for land preserved in open space whenever practicable. This would protect or enhance the natural environment. Additionally, the plan promotes water conservation, reclamation and reuse, renewable energy, and alternative energy resources (Policy EQ-P3).
- ☑ The plan supports incentives, regulations, and programs to manage the city’s water resources (groundwater, streams, lakes, and wetlands) and to protect and enhance their multiple beneficial uses, including flood and erosion hazard reduction, aesthetics, recreation, water supply, gardening, and fish and wildlife habitat (Policy EQ-P11).

#### **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 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 effectively addresses many of the development patterns policies in VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan encourages the efficient use of urban land by promoting infill development (Policies LU-P5.2 and LU-P7.6).
- ☑ Policies and provisions in the plan promote vibrant town centers and new mixed-use and multifamily projects that maximize pedestrian and bicycle access and amenities onsite and connect to nearby sites, walkways, and trails (Goal LU-8, Policies LU-P8.1.1-5, LU-8.2-11, and LU-P8.3).
- ☑ Policies and provisions in the plan promote access to healthy food resources for all residents through urban agricultural activities such as farmers markets, farm stands, community supported agriculture drop-off sites, community gardens, pea patches, school gardens, home gardens, and urban farms (Goal LU 16 and Policies LU 16.1-4).

#### **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:

- We commend the city for affirmatively planning for a limited share of the county’s growth, as called for in the regional growth strategy in VISION 2040. The land use element documents household and employment growth assumptions through 2031 that are consistent with the adopted King County countywide planning policies’ targets. The King County Buildable Lands Report documents adequate capacity to accommodate that growth. The plan should document: (1) the city’s land use assumptions through 2035, (2) the method used to extend the city’s target from 2031 to 2035, and (3) how the development capacity provided for in the plan’s land use element accommodates those growth assumptions.

## 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:

- ☑ The plan encourages the provision of workforce housing as a component of the work training campus in the Regional Learning and Technology Center (HO-P2.4).
- ☑ The plan promotes a range of housing types to provide adequate choice of living accommodations for those desiring to live in Maple Valley, regardless of income level (Goal HO-3 and Policy HO-P3.4).
- ☑ The plan directs the city to maintain incentives available to both single-family and multifamily developments that provide rental or ownership housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households (Policy HO-P4.2).

### 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 housing needs assessment could be strengthened to include information on people with special needs. It could also quantify future affordable housing needs specific to Maple Valley. This should be done with respect to the affordability of its existing housing stock and its role in meeting countywide affordable housing needs, as guided by the King County countywide planning policies. PSRC’s [Housing Element Guide](#) can provide additional guidance in this work. For more tools and strategies to consider, see the [PSRC Housing Innovations Program](#).

## 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:

- ☑ The plan includes a thorough economic development element with a detailed analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for economic development in Maple Valley and many strategies to help the city achieve long-term economic development success.
- ☑ The plan directs the city to attract family-wage employers to diversify the city's revenue base, provide employment opportunities for Maple Valley residents, and increase the city's daytime population (Goal ED-4).

#### **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 Maple Valley comprehensive plan addresses the major transportation emphases in VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040, including maintenance, management, and safety. It supports the regional growth strategy and provides greater options and mobility. Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan encourages the city to protect the existing and future street system and associated facilities (e.g., sidewalks, transit stops, landscaping) through an ongoing street maintenance and preservation program (Policy T-P21).
- ☑ The plan encourages shorter vehicle trips, access to transit, and travel by bicycle and pedestrian modes by encouraging a mix of complementary land uses throughout Maple Valley (T-P59). For example, the city

will condition proposed new developments to ensure convenient walking and bicycling systems that are attractive and safe, provide system continuity, and provide access to transit and other destinations, as appropriate (T-P33).

- ☑ The plan supports designing transportation facilities to advance cleaner, more sustainable mobility that fits within the context of the built or natural environments in which they are located. This includes green streets and context-sensitive designs (Policy T-P71).

#### **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 (MPPs) call for other modes, such as biking and walking, to be addressed as well (MPP-DP-54-56). While there are many challenges involved in implementing multimodal level-of-service standards and concurrency, adoption of levels of service and a concurrency approach that includes multiple modes would strengthen and reinforce the many plan policies that support walking, biking and transit. One strategy is tailoring a concurrency program to encourage development in the town center areas where it can be supported by transit, nonmotorized infrastructure, and mixed land uses. The plan could also 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). PSRC also 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 Maple Valley comprehensive plan update contains policies that address many of the public services provisions of VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- ☑ Goal EQ-G3 promotes communitywide stewardship of the natural environment to preserve environmental quality for future generations. Provisions include environmentally friendly and energy-efficient buildings and projects that promote water conservation and reuse, as well as alternative energy resources.
- ☑ The plan directs the city to support recycling and waste reduction efforts throughout the community (UT-P1.17).
- ☑ The plan promotes increasing community awareness of human service needs and the resources available to meet them. For example, it recommends regular coordination between the city and the Maple Valley Library and Community Center to help inform residents about programs and services (CF-P23).

## **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 encouraging connection to the sanitary sewer system. Please consider adding a policy to more directly address MPP-PS-9 on serving new development with sewer.

## **Conclusion**

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](mailto:eharris@psrc.org).