

This PDF compiles two documents:

- 1.) Certification memo dated June 16, 2016 (see p. 2). As of this Executive Board action, the City of Newcastle comprehensive plan is now fully certified for consistency with the transportation-related provisions of the Growth Management Act, VISION 2040, and Transportation 2040.
- 2.) Certification report dated September 24, 2015 (see p. 4). This report summarizes complete review of the 2015 comprehensive plan update and a certification condition for the city to address by June 2017.



Puget Sound Regional Council

CONSENT AGENDA

June 16, 2016

To: Executive Board

From: Councilmember Rob Johnson, Chair, Transportation Policy Board
Deputy Mayor Ryan Mello, Chair, Growth Management Policy Board

Subject: **Approve Certification of Comprehensive Plan for the City of Newcastle**

IN BRIEF

The Growth Management Policy Board and Transportation Policy Board recommend that the Executive Board certify the 2016 comprehensive plan amendments for the City of Newcastle, including amendments that respond to conditions for regional certification.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Executive Board should certify that the transportation-related provisions in the City of Newcastle's 2016 comprehensive plan amendments are consistent with the multicounty planning policies and the regional transportation plan and conform to the Growth Management Act requirements for transportation planning ([certification report link](#)).

DISCUSSION

PSRC conditionally certified Newcastle's 2015 periodic update of the city's comprehensive plan on October 1, 2015. The October 2015 certification report identified that employment growth assumptions in the land use and transportation elements of the Newcastle comprehensive plan were inconsistent.

In March 2016, the city adopted amendments to the plan that addressed the conditions, and resubmitted the plan for further review and full certification. The transportation, land use, housing, capital facilities, and parks, trails, and recreation appendices were amended to document consistent 2015-2035 population, housing, and employment growth assumptions that fully align with the King County growth targets. Newcastle's 2016 comprehensive plan amendments adequately address the conditions in the October 2015 certification report and are recommended for certification. The amendments have been reviewed in accordance with the [adopted plan review process](#). They were found to be consistent with the multicounty planning policies and the regional transportation plan and to conform to transportation planning requirements in the Growth Management Act. PSRC staff coordinated with city staff in the

review of the amendments and the development of the certification report. In their June meetings, the Growth Management and Transportation Policy Boards recommended that the Executive Board certify Newcastle's 2016 comprehensive plan amendments.

For more information, please contact Erika Harris at eharris@psrc.org or (206) 464-6360.

PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

CITY OF NEWCASTLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

September 24, 2015



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.¹ 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 major update to the comprehensive plan for the City of Newcastle, adopted by the city on June 2, 2015. PSRC last certified the Newcastle comprehensive plan in 2006. PSRC staff reviewed the comprehensive plan and coordinated with city staff in the development of this report.

CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the City of Newcastle 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 conditionally certifies that the transportation-related provisions in the City of Newcastle 2015 comprehensive plan conform to the Growth Management Act and are consistent with multicounty planning policies and the regional transportation plan.

¹ 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.

Conditional status is in place until the city amends the comprehensive plan to address inconsistent land use assumptions in the plan according to the following schedule:

- 1. Newcastle City Council adoption of a plan of work that addresses the condition identified in the certification report by March 1, 2016.**
- 2. Submission of a draft amended comprehensive plan and supporting documents that address the condition to PSRC for review and comment in advance of adoption.**
- 3. Once the condition is adequately addressed, submission of the adopted amended comprehensive plan and supporting documents by June 30, 2017 for review and certification by PSRC.**

The city acknowledges and understands these conditions.

The remainder of this report contains a summary of the PSRC review of the City of Newcastle comprehensive plan update. Under each heading, the scope of the certification review, as guided by the [Plan Review Manual](#) and [checklist for local comprehensive plans](#), 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's comprehensive plan effectively addresses many of the transportation planning requirements of the GMA and includes adequate air quality policies and provisions. Highlights include:

- ☑ Policy TR-G4 supports establishing a safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle circulation system linking residential communities with key destinations, including schools, parks, civic and commercial services, and transit.
- ☑ Policy TR-P34 supports the city’s participation in regional efforts to improve air quality by promoting alternatives to travel by single occupant vehicle, use of cleaner fuels, and by maintaining or improving the operating efficiency of the transportation system.
- ☑ Policy TR-P68 promotes rideshare and transit programs by calling for the city to provide development incentives, encourage subdivision and commercial and retail project design that facilitates effective transit service, and require employers to provide preferential treatments for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, carpoolers and vanpoolers.

DISCUSSION: CONDITIONS FOR CERTIFICATION

The city must address the following provisions of the Growth Management Act and VISION 2040 in order to maintain certified status:

- ☐ 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 (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 employment growth assumptions in the land use and transportation elements of the Newcastle Comprehensive Plan are currently not consistent. The land use element assumes 735 new jobs, while the transportation element plans for only 250 net new jobs. The city should amend the plan to document consistent land use assumptions across all elements. PSRC staff is available to provide relevant data and guidance on methodology.

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:

- ☐ In the transportation element, the city should identify I-405 as a state-owned facility that is designated as a Highway of Statewide Significance. The city should reflect the level-of-service standard for this facility, which is set by WSDOT. For more information on level-of-service standards for state routes, see PSRC’s [level-of-service webpage](#). In addition, the city's transportation element should also more directly address the GMA requirement to include estimated traffic impacts to state-owned transportation facilities resulting from land use assumptions (RCW 36.70A.070 (6)(a)(ii)).
- ☐ The city is commended for providing a multiyear transportation financing plan for how the city will meet the mobility needs identified for the planning period. The financing plan includes a list of investments to meet transportation needs over the planning period, estimated costs for those investments, and estimated probable revenues. To complete the financing plan, the city should include a reassessment strategy in the event revenues fall short of costs (RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iv)). Further guidance on how to develop a reassessment strategy can be found in Commerce’s [Transportation Element Guidebook](#), pages 209 through 212.

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. 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. 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 includes a general description of VISION 2040 in the plan. The city should more explicitly describe how the plan addresses VISION 2040 when the city next amends the comprehensive plan. Examples of context statements are provided in PSRC’s [Plan Review Manual](#), page 2-1.

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 city’s comprehensive plan addresses the environmental policy topics in VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- Policy LU-P44 supports environmental stewardship education for residents and establishment of partnerships with other entities that share similar environmental concerns or stewardship opportunities.
- Policies LU-P29-33 encourage the preservation and enhancement of open space throughout the city.

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:

- MPPs-En-13 and 14 in VISION 2040 call for maintaining natural hydrological functions within the region’s ecosystems and watersheds and, where feasible, restoring them to a more natural state. The plan has many outstanding policies to protect wetlands, floodplains and streams. These policies could be more consistent with VISION 2040 by adding provisions to restore hydrological functions where feasible, such as promoting low impact development and enhancing natural drainage systems. The Washington State Department of Ecology has a [website](#) with more information on protecting and restoring water resources.
- The multicounty planning policies in VISION 2040 and the strategies in Transportation 2040 call for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to impacts related to climate change. See page 42 of [VISION 2040](#) for an overview of climate change and related policies and page 34 in [Transportation 2040](#) for information on the four-part greenhouse gas reduction strategy (land use, user fees, choices, and technology). The plan already includes some policies that support positive actions to reduce greenhouse gases, such as promoting transit and increasing nonmotorized transportation options. However, the plan should be strengthened by directly addressing the climate change-related multicounty planning policies and including additional strategies such as energy-efficiency building codes, urban forestry provisions,

electric vehicle charging facilities, emissions reductions from municipal operations, and additional transportation demand management strategies.

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:

- Policy LU-P5 supports density incentives that encourage innovative low-cost affordable housing, additional open space, and historic preservation.
- Policy LU-P16 promotes infill development by encouraging accessory units, carriage houses, and townhouses.
- Policy LU-P20 calls for development standards and zoning and subdivision regulations that encourage and facilitate the preservation of historic and natural features, privacy, pedestrian safety and accessibility, reduction of motorized transportation impacts, and the creation of useable open space, community space and community facilities.

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 land use element should clearly document the city's 2035 land use assumptions and apply them consistently throughout the document. The plan should make clear: (1) how land use assumptions relate to and are consistent with adopted growth targets, (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. The *King County Buildable Lands Report* shows adequate capacity for the city's growth targets adopted in the CPPs. The comprehensive plan should clearly demonstrate adequate capacity for the city's land use assumptions as well.
- The plan contains many policies that support development of a vibrant, mixed use, and pedestrian-oriented commercial center, which are supportive of VISION 2040's focus on supporting a variety of central places throughout the region. VISION 2040 also contains policies to prioritize infrastructure funding within centers. Policies to prioritize transportation, public spaces, and other investments in Newcastle's center should be added to further support development and redevelopment in the center (MPP-DP-11,13, MPP-T-11,23).

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 policies in VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- Policy HO-P36 supports maintaining and creating opportunities for affordable housing in the Community Business Center, where most housing growth is planned and there is good access to transit, employment, and services.
- Policies, such as HO-P15, support the creation of affordable housing through coordinating and partnering with non-profit agencies, private housing developers, housing authorities, and regional housing coalitions.

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 housing element advances many of the VISION 2040 policies on housing and housing affordability (MPP-H-1-3). The adopted plan includes a commitment to develop a housing strategy with more detail and direction on implementation tools. The city should prioritize adoption of a housing strategy over the near term, if possible within the next year, including any amendments to the comprehensive plan that may be appropriate. For more information on housing issues, see PSRC's [housing webpage](#).

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 city's comprehensive plan addresses many of the economic policies in VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- Policy ED-S3 supports existing businesses by calling for the city to develop a toolkit for building expansion, parking management, and façade improvements.

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 city is commended for including an economic development appendix which contains many provisions to support business development. The multicounty planning policies provide a framework that focuses on the theme of business, people, and place in economic development planning. When next updating its plan, the city should review and incorporate relevant economic development policies that have not been addressed in regard to this item. These could include, for example, provisions addressing industry clusters and support for disadvantaged populations. See MPP-Ec-1 – 22. PSRC’s [Planning for Whole Communities Toolkit](#) has tools on enhancing economic opportunity.

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 effectively addresses the policies in VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040. Highlights include:

- Policy TR-P9 supports multimodal circulation by encouraging the connection of streets when considering subdivisions and street improvement proposals.
- Policy TR-P49 commits the city to working with King County Metro, Sound Transit, and the Washington State Department of Transportation to explore opportunities for expanding transit services in Newcastle.
- Policy TR-P36 supports reducing the amount of impervious surfaces created by transportation improvements to the extent practicable.

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 multicounty planning policies call for protecting the transportation system against disaster and developing prevention and recovery strategies for disasters. If such work has been completed by the city, such as an emergency management plan, these efforts should be incorporated in the transportation element (MPP-T-8).

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 city's comprehensive plan effectively addresses the public services provisions of VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- Policy UT-P23 calls for the city to implement a public education program focusing on solid waste management, recycling, waste reduction, and the proper storage and disposal of hazardous wastes.
- Policy CF-P13 commits the city to promote programs to conserve and minimize water use.

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 contains policies in several areas that promote energy conservation, renewable energy, and alternative energy sources (MPP-PS-12-13; MPP-En-21-23; MPP-T-6). While the plan has policies to promote conservation of water, it would be strengthened by adding a policy to address energy. MRSC has information on this topic under its [energy efficiency and conservation](#) and [renewable energy](#) webpages.

Conclusion

PSRC staff thank the city for working through the plan review process. PSRC is available to provide assistance for 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 Erika Harris at 206-464-6360 or eharris@psrc.org.