

PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

CITY OF SAMMAMISH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

December 31, 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 periodic update to the comprehensive plan for the City of Sammamish, adopted by the city on October 13, 2015. PSRC last certified the City of Sammamish's comprehensive plan in December 2003. 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 Sammamish 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 Sammamish 2015 comprehensive plan update 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 Sammamish comprehensive plan update. Under each heading, the scope of the certification review, as guided by the [Plan Review Manual](#) and

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.

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, 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 Sammamish'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 encourages increasing the proportion of trips made by transportation modes other than driving alone (Policy T.2.1).
- ☑ Policy T.3.4 supports the design or redesign of arterial and connector streets, including retrofit projects, to improve traffic flow, accommodate a range of motorized and nonmotorized travel modes in order to reduce injuries and fatalities and to encourage nonmotorized travel. The design should include well-defined, safe and appealing spaces for pedestrians and bicyclists. This supports Policy T.3.9 which directs the city to continue to improve the safety of the transportation system to achieve the state's goal of zero deaths and disabling injuries.
- ☑ Policy T.3.5 encourages applying technologies, programs and other strategies that optimize the use of existing infrastructure in order to improve mobility, reduce congestion, increase energy efficiency, reduce maintenance requirements, and reduce the need for new infrastructure.

DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

The certification review did not identify any major areas for improvement of the plan to better align with transportation-related provisions of the Growth Management Act (see comments addressing consistency with regional guidelines and principles on transportation and Transportation 2040 on page 6).

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 city describes how the comprehensive plan addresses regional policies and provisions adopted in 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 Sammamish comprehensive plan addresses the environmental policy topics in VISION 2040 with strong goals and actionable policies. Highlights include:

- ☑ Policy EC.1.6 directs the city to promote and lead public education and involvement programs to raise awareness about environmental issues and to encourage the wise use of renewable natural resources while conserving nonrenewable natural resources.
- ☑ Policies EC.3.1-16 call for the city to protect wetlands and other water resources from encroachment and degradation and encourage restoration of such resources.
- ☑ The plan supports regional efforts in mitigating and adapting to climate change and considers a multi-pronged approach to climate change mitigation, including support for energy efficiency, vehicle trip reduction, reforestation, environmental protection and flood control (Goal EC.7 and Policy EC.7.3).

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 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 transit oriented development in the town center, including housing and a lively mix of activities, such as specialty retail and restaurants, professional services, pedestrian walkways, transit access, community gathering, and recreation (Policies LU.3.1 and T.2.16). Further, the plan prioritizes transportation investments in the town center to promote mixed-use and compact development and provide multimodal access to regional transit facilities (Policy CF.4.7).
- ☑ Many policies promote community health through improving nonmotorized connectivity within and between neighborhoods, supporting urban agriculture, and encouraging land use choices that facilitate nonmotorized trips (LU.7.1-10).
- ☑ Policies LU.9.3 and EC9.1-5 support green building practices and infrastructure measures.

DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

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

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:

- ☑ Policy H.2.4 supports residential and mixed use development in the town center and other commercial areas where combining such uses would promote the vitality and economic viability of the area.
- ☑ Policy H.3.3 supports housing affordability by directing the city to offer regulatory incentives such as priority processing of permits, fee waivers or reductions, and/or property tax relief for builders who provide very low-, low- or moderate-income housing.
- ☑ Policy H.5.2 encourages a coordinated regional approach to homelessness by supporting public and private housing and services for people who are homeless and working with other jurisdictions and health and social service organizations.

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 plan would be strengthened by taking the housing needs analysis and affordable housing policies further. The housing profile provides valuable insight on demographic, housing, and affordability characteristics within Sammamish, but does not quantify the future needs that are to be addressed in the plan. The housing element should estimate the future need for affordable housing by income category, based on King County housing affordability goals, which will aid in developing more specific policies and strategies to address this need. In addition to information available from ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing), PSRC's [Housing Element Guide](#) can provide additional guidance in this work. For housing tools and strategies, 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 addresses some of the economic provisions of VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- ☑ Policy LU.3.4 supports education and training programs through cooperative planning efforts with other agencies.
- ☑ Policy LU.3.5 directs the city to foster public/private partnerships to implement economic development programs and projects.

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 adding Policy LU.3.6 which encourages the addition of an economic development element to the comprehensive plan. This element should build on VISION 2040's framework of people, business, and places for economic development and address the region's industry clusters identified in the region's economic strategy (See VISION 2040 Economy section).

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 Sammamish 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:

- ☑ Policy T.2.18 supports active transportation by calling for new development and redevelopment in the city to be designed to provide and encourage nonmotorized access to transit.
- ☑ Policy T.3.2 prioritizes safety improvements to the existing transportation system to protect mobility and lower overall life-cycle costs.
- ☑ Policy T.3.13 promotes transportation investments that provide and encourage alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel and increase travel options, especially to and within commercial and mixed use areas and along corridors served by transit.

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). PSRC commends the city for including many policies supportive of walking, biking and transit, and encourages the city to continue to work to develop policies, standards, and regulatory approaches that incorporate multiple travel modes. While there are many challenges involved in implementing multimodal level-of-service standards and concurrency, making progress in this area would strengthen and reinforce the plan's vision of supporting walking, biking and transit. One strategy is tailoring a concurrency program to encourage development in the town center area 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), and PSRC 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 Sammamish comprehensive plan update contains policies that address the public services provisions of VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- ☑ Policies LU.9.2 and UT6.1 promote water conservation by encouraging a variety of technologies, including smart meters, water efficient fixtures, rainwater harvesting and re-use of greywater.
- ☑ Policy UT.5.1 encourages opportunities that help individual businesses and homeowners to become more energy independent by reducing energy use and/or generating a portion of their energy needs on site.
- ☑ Policy UT.6.3 protects water quality by directing the city to ensure that new development is connected to sanitary sewer and supporting a long-term strategy to convert existing development from septic systems to sanitary sewer.

DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

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

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.