

# PSRC PLAN REVIEW REPORT & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

## TOWN OF STEILACOOM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

October 29, 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.<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 Town of Steilacoom, adopted by the town on September 1, 2015. PSRC last certified the town of Steilacoom's comprehensive plan in April 2005. PSRC staff reviewed the updated 2015 comprehensive plan and coordinated with town staff in the development of this report.

### CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the review of the Town of Steilacoom 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 Town of Steilacoom 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 Town of Steilacoom 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 town 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 Town of Steilacoom'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:

- ☑ Policies T2.1-2.4 promote the use of alternative modes of transportation by providing and maintaining pedestrian and bicycle facilities and working with transit providers to enhance transit service and facilities.
- ☑ Policy T 3.6 calls for the town to reduce the cost of the transportation system through its operations, pricing program, demand management and system management strategies.
- ☑ Policy T 3.4 commits the town to improving safety in the transportation system by working toward the State of Washington's zero death and disabling injury target. Pedestrian, bicycle, and other safety projects listed in the 6- and 20-year project lists will help to implement this policy.

### 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.

## 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 town 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 Steilacoom comprehensive plan addresses the environmental policy topics in VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- ☑ Policy QL 5.7 encourages improving water quality and natural hydrological processes through land use regulation and implementation of low impact development techniques.
- ☑ Policy QL 5.9 supports improving air quality through measures such as implementing Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations.
- ☑ Policies 5.11-5.14 address climate change mitigation and adaptation through strategies such as supporting alternative energy sources, increasing the amount of vegetation and canopy cover in urban areas by coordinating the preservation and growth of open spaces and the use of street trees, and assessing the potential impacts of sea level rise.

#### 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 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 town's comprehensive plan effectively addresses many of the development patterns policies in VISION 2040. Highlights include:

- ☑ Policy LU 6.6 promotes the development of the town center as a walkable, compact, and transit-oriented community, which maintains the town's historical character with a mix of residential, commercial and cultural uses.
- ☑ Policy LU 1.2 encourages incorporating open space, natural buffers, public facilities, and recreational facilities with sufficient capacity to serve a dense population and designed to fill the needs of all types of households, particularly for neighborhoods with significant multifamily housing.
- ☑ Policy LU 6.3 supports developing a town square for outdoor public gatherings and special events in the downtown area.

### DISCUSSION: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

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

- ☐ The GMA requires local comprehensive plans to be updated to accommodate the growth that is anticipated for the succeeding 20-year planning period (see RCW 36.70A.070, .115, and .130). As documented on pages 39 and 64 of the plan update and in the countywide planning policies, Pierce County, in consultation with its cities, adopted growth targets for the Town of Steilacoom, reaching a total of 3,385 housing units and 788 jobs in the year 2030. The adopted comprehensive plan assumes slower growth than agreed upon through the coordinated countywide process, with targeted population and employment not attained until the year 2035. The town should consider increasing the population, housing, and employment planned for through 2035 in order to account for its share of the overall county growth that will occur in the 2030-2035 period. Doing so would achieve better alignment with the countywide planning policies and with the Regional Growth Strategy. PSRC staff are available to provide technical guidance in this area.

## 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 town's comprehensive plan effectively addresses the housing provisions contained in VISION 2040.

Highlights include:

- ☑ The plan addresses housing affordability through regional coordination around housing and human services funding, local regulations that accommodate affordable and special needs housing, and policies that direct the town to take an active role in securing funding for affordable housing.
- ☑ Policy H 2.2 encourages new residential developments to be designed to incorporate elements such as common open spaces, recreational areas, and sidewalks to provide residents with opportunities to live and play together.
- ☑ Policy H 3.8 calls for the town to periodically monitor and assess progress toward meeting its 20-year population allocation using the available data and analyses provided by federal, state, and town sources.

### 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 housing.

## 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 town's comprehensive plan effectively addresses many of the economic provisions of VISION 2040.

Highlights include:

- ☑ Policy Econ 2.6 supports efforts to assist small and start -up businesses.
- ☑ Policy Econ 5.1 encourages future economic planning efforts to include consideration of Joint Base Lewis McChord staffing levels, housing demand, and other conditions and needs.

## 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 Steilacoom 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 6.1 encourages reducing pollution in the town's vehicle fleet through the use of cleaner fuels, less polluting vehicles, and alternative fuels.
- ☑ Policy T 6.3 directs the town to locate and construct transportation facilities to discourage adverse impacts on water quality and other environmental resources. The policy also promotes low impact development techniques and other environmentally sound approaches for the design, construction and use of transportation facilities.
- ☑ Policy T 3.8 supports working with Pierce Transit, Pierce County and other agencies to increase mobility choices for people with special transportation needs, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, the young, and low-income populations.

### 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 transportation or Transportation 2040.

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

- ☑ Policy U 1.4 promotes recycling, energy conservation, yard waste, and other demand management programs to reduce the need for rate increases and new facilities created by future growth.
- ☑ Policy U 3.1 encourages the use of alternative energy sources within the town.

**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.

**COMMENTS AND GUIDANCE**

PSRC staff thanks the town 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 town has questions or needs additional information, please contact Erika Harris at 206-464-6360 or [eharris@psrc.org](mailto:eharris@psrc.org).