

Local Comprehensive Plans Certification Report Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan

August 28, 2025



The Puget Sound Regional Council conducted a certification review of the Kitsap County comprehensive plan. Kitsap County adopted its 2024 comprehensive plan update on December 2, 2024. PSRC staff provided comments on the draft plan in February 2024 to inform the final plan adopted by the county.

This document is organized into two primary parts: a statement of certification and any applicable conditions to certification; and a discussion of conformity with the Growth Management Act and consistency with VISION 2050 by topic area.

Certification Action

The Puget Sound Regional Council conditionally certifies that the transportation-related provisions in the Kitsap County 2024 comprehensive plan conform to the Growth Management Act and are substantially consistent with multicounty planning policies and the Regional Transportation Plan.

Conditional status is in place until Kitsap County updates its comprehensive plan to achieve compliance related to the plan's appeal to the Growth Management Hearings Board (GMHB) and addresses other identified conditions. The county acknowledges this and commits to addressing the conditions according to the following schedule:

1. Board of Commissioners adoption of a work plan to address the conditions identified in the certification report by November 30, 2025.
2. Submission of a draft amended comprehensive plan and supporting documents that address the conditions to PSRC for review and comment in advance of adoption.
3. Once the conditions are adequately addressed, submission of the adopted amended comprehensive plan and supporting documents by June 30, 2026, for review and certification by PSRC.

Conditions for full certification are described in more detail in the body of this report. Specifically, conditions related to the updated land use and housing element information are described on page 4. A conditionally certified plan will revert to "not certified" status if the jurisdiction fails to meet any of the conditions.



Within the central Puget Sound region, local governments and PSRC have worked together to develop an overall process for reviewing and certifying local, countywide, regional center, and long-range transit plans.¹ Transportation-related provisions that are key for certification are based on RCW 47.80.026 and the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A). This report may recommend additional work to fully address the requirements of the Growth Management Act, VISION 2050, or the Regional Transportation Plan, although such revisions may not be strictly required for certification. Jurisdictions are encouraged to address those items during upcoming comprehensive plan updates and other planning efforts.

Conformity with Growth Management Act Transportation Planning Requirements and Consistency with Regional Plans and Policies

OVERVIEW

This section discusses conformity with the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070(6)) and the transportation-related requirements for local comprehensive plans. It also discusses consistency with the adopted multicounty planning policies (established regional guidelines and principles under RCW 47.80.026) adopted in VISION 2050 and the Regional Transportation Plan. In addition to the multicounty planning policies, VISION 2050 contains a regional growth strategy with a preferred distribution of the region's residential and employment growth, as well as several implementation actions for local governments to carry out. Each policy area addressed in VISION 2050 is discussed in turn below. More information about the requirement to review and certify local plans is provided in the [Adopted Policy and Plan Review Process](#).

Plans are reviewed using PSRC's [VISION 2050 Consistency Tool](#). This report documents where the plan meets requirements, highlights outstanding provisions of the plan, and identifies where additional work is needed to fully address VISION 2050, the Regional Transportation Plan, or Growth Management Act planning requirements. This section is organized by the sections in VISION 2050. While this may align with plan elements, many of these concepts may be addressed in various parts of local comprehensive plans.

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 2050: Implementation](#).



Regional Collaboration

Scope of Review

The Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070(6)) and VISION 2050 call for local comprehensive plans to:

- **Coordinate** with other jurisdictions, agencies, tribes, ports, military installations, and special purpose districts.
- Prioritize **access to opportunity** for people of color, people with low incomes, and historically underserved communities.
- Address opportunities and challenges related to **military installations** when applicable.
- Prioritize investments in **centers**.
- Explore **funding sources** and fiscal tools to meet infrastructure and other needs.

Certification Findings

The Kitsap County comprehensive plan effectively addresses regional collaboration policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes policies to collaborate with jurisdictions, agencies, service providers and other organizations. Policies in the plan support equity in planning and public engagement, including exploring the use of racial equity assessment tools to evaluate development proposals. The plan includes a land acknowledgement and policies to work with Tribes on development proposals that may have impacts to cultural and historic resources, identify joint areas of interest with Tribes, and work with Tribes on a variety of housing strategies, including residential displacement.

Regional Growth Strategy

Scope of Review

VISION 2050 calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Incorporate **housing and employment targets**.
- Use **land use assumptions** substantially consistent with countywide growth targets.
- Demonstrate sufficient zoned **development capacity** to accommodate targets.
- Use consistent **land use assumptions** throughout plan.
- Maintain a **stable urban growth area** with densities that support the Regional Growth Strategy.
- Support growth in designated **centers and high-capacity transit station areas**.
- Manage and reduce **rural growth** and protect natural resource lands.

Certification Findings

The Kitsap County comprehensive plan effectively addresses many of the Regional Growth Strategy policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes adopted countywide targets for both



urban and rural areas. The plan focuses growth in the urban growth area, particularly in the Silverdale regional center and unincorporated areas served by high-capacity transit. The county made notable changes to development regulations to plan for more multifamily housing in this update, more than tripling the overall capacity for multifamily housing in the unincorporated area. Residential heights and densities were increased in all urban residential and commercial zones, paired with other changes such as reduced or eliminated lots size minimums, setbacks and parking requirements.

CONDITIONS FOR CERTIFICATION

Kitsap County will address the following provisions of the Growth Management Act and VISION 2050 in order to maintain certified status:

- **Update plan and development regulations to provide sufficient housing capacity for all economic segments and address other Growth Management Hearings Board compliance requirements.** The Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070(2)) requires that the housing element document sufficient capacity for moderate, low, very low, and extremely low-income households and to make adequate provisions for these needs within the community. The adopted plan documents that the county does not have capacity to accommodate its housing need allocations, in particular needs below 80% of the Area Median Income. The county will update the plan to provide capacity for its allocated housing needs and adopt adequate provisions. The county should resolve compliance issues consistent with Growth Management Hearings Board direction.
- **Update plan and development regulations to provide sufficient employment capacity.** The Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.115) requires that the plan document sufficient capacity to accommodate allocated employment growth. The county's plan shows a deficit of employment capacity countywide and in most individual urban unincorporated areas, including the Silverdale regional center. The county will amend the plan to demonstrate capacity for the employment growth targets.
- **Include required air quality policy.** Transportation plans are required to include policies that promote the reduction of air quality pollutants (WAC 173-420-080 and MPP-En-22). The Transportation element will be amended to include a policy to ensure all federal and state air quality standards are met and reduce emissions of air toxics and greenhouse gases.

The county should address the following comments in future updates to the plan:

- PSRC will complete an in-depth review of regional centers in 2025. PSRC's [Regional Centers Framework](#) requires adopted center plans for regional growth centers. The county has completed the Silverdale Subarea Plan element and is continuing to prepare a new subarea plan and design standards for the center. The county should work to finalize this plan to address all aspects of the Regional Centers Framework.
- The rural growth targets reflect a commitment to reduce the rate of rural growth, and the county is commended for work to date to address rural growth. Managing rural growth consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy will be a long-term effort. The county should continue to identify strategies, tools and development regulations to help reduce rural growth consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy.



Environment

Scope of Review

VISION 2050 calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Ensure **air quality standards** are met and reduce emissions of air toxics and greenhouse gases.
- Protect **critical areas and habitat** through coordination and environmental stewardship.
- Plan for **park, trail, and open space** resources and needs.
- Protect and enhance **tree canopy and native vegetation**.
- Protect and restore **water quality**, including actions to restore shorelines and estuaries, remove fish-passage barriers, reduce toxic products, and manage stormwater.
- Ensure **access to healthy environments** for all residents, prioritizing the reduction of impacts for vulnerable residents.

Certification Findings

The Kitsap County comprehensive plan effectively addresses the environmental policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes policies to conserve habitat, enhance urban tree canopy and coordinate ecosystem recovery strategies with Tribal, federal, state, local jurisdictions and watershed groups. The plan includes policies to reduce health impacts to vulnerable populations that are disproportionately affected by noise, air pollution and other environmental hazards. The plan includes policies to treat natural resources as essential assets, educate residents and businesses about the function and benefits of a healthy ecosystem, and work with Tribes and other partners to restore aquatic ecosystems by removing fish passage and migration barriers.

Climate Change

Scope of Review

VISION 2050 calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Reduce **greenhouse gas emissions** in support of state, regional, and local reductions goals.
- Protect and restore natural resources that **sequester and store carbon**.
- Address impacts to **vulnerable populations** that have been or will be impacted by climate change.
- Retrofit **existing buildings** to reduce building energy use.
- Increase **resilience** by identifying and addressing the impacts of climate change and natural hazards.
- Address **rising sea levels** by siting and planning for relocation out of the floodplain.



Certification Findings

The Kitsap County comprehensive plan effectively addresses the climate change policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes a Climate Change element with policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and advance community resilience to the impacts of climate change. The plan supports the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions consistent with regional goals and incorporates information from the countywide emissions inventory. The plan includes a variety of policies and strategies to reduce emissions, decarbonize the transportation system and prepare for hazards due to climate change.

The county should address the following comment in future updates to the plan:

- The county has made important progress on addressing climate change in the comprehensive plan. The Department of Commerce plans to release final guidance on climate planning consistent with House Bill 1181 in 2025, which will apply to the implementation progress report for jurisdictions in the Puget Sound region. The county should be aware of this upcoming deadline and monitor whether the plan's current state reflects the new requirements.

Land Use/Development Patterns

Scope of Review

VISION 2050 calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Build **thriving urban communities** through inclusive engagement.
- Support **centers** as connections to opportunity.
- Address **healthy environment**, physical activity and well-being, and safety, while reducing disparities.
- Support **annexation and incorporation** by planning for phased growth of communities.
- Preserve **rural areas and natural resource lands**.
- Evaluate potential **residential and commercial displacement** and mitigate impacts.
- Limit **incompatible uses** adjacent to military lands, industrial centers, and tribal reservation lands.

Certification Findings

The Kitsap County comprehensive plan effectively addresses the land use and development patterns policies in VISION 2050. The plan includes policies addressing the urban growth area, centers and rural areas. The plan supports the GMA goals to annex or incorporate urban growth areas through strategies such as working with cities to develop annexation agreements, creating a program to assess all stages of the annexation/incorporation process, and evaluating future opportunities to remove urban unincorporated areas that are unlikely to annex. The plan recognizes the importance of military installations to the county and includes policies to discourage the siting of incompatible uses near bases. The plan also



includes policies to provide for quality of life, including planning for open space amenities within the urban growth area, planning for an expanded trail network, and promoting access to healthy food.

Housing

Scope of Review

The Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070) and VISION 2050 call for local comprehensive plans to:

- Provide an **inventory and analysis** of existing housing and housing needs at each income level.
- Document **sufficient land capacity** to accommodate housing for all income levels and emergency shelters.
- Identify **actions** to provide housing for all income levels.
- Identify and address **racially disparate impacts, displacement, or exclusion** in housing.
- Expand housing capacity for **moderate-density housing**.
- Promote **jobs-housing balance**.
- Support the **development and preservation of affordable housing** by considering inclusionary and incentive zoning and promoting affordable housing near high-capacity transit.
- Promote **homeownership** opportunities.

Certification Findings

The Kitsap County comprehensive plan effectively addresses the housing policy topics in VISION 2050. The plan documents capacity to accommodate the county's allocated share of emergency housing in the unincorporated area. The plan provides supporting data and analysis on racially disparate impacts, exclusion, and displacement and includes analysis of housing availability and affordability. The plan includes strategies to increase affordable housing, such as voluntary inclusionary zoning, Multifamily Tax Exemption, improved permit review and additional opportunities to develop a variety of housing types.

The county should address the following comments in future updates to the plan:

- The plan documents a deficit of capacity for housing and must be amended to provide capacity for allocated housing needs. More information on applicable conditions is provided under the Housing section on p. 4 of this report.
- The region is facing a housing crisis, and jurisdictions should act with urgency to address the housing needs of all residents. PSRC encourages the county to continue to work with regional partners to monitor housing conditions, to implement housing strategies and to amend the plan periodically to adjust to changing conditions.



Economy

Scope of Review

VISION 2050 calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Identify and enhance **industry clusters**, including those that provide goods and services for export.
- Support retention and recruitment of **family wage jobs** and small businesses that are **locally, women-, and minority-owned**.
- Develop a **range of employment opportunities** to create a closer balance between jobs and housing.
- Address and prevent potential **physical, economic, and cultural displacement** of existing businesses.
- Expand **access to opportunity** and remove barriers for disconnected communities.
- Recognize and empower the contributions of the region's **culturally and ethnically diverse communities**.

Certification Findings

The Kitsap County comprehensive plan effectively addresses the economy policies in VISION 2050. The Economic Development element includes strategies to support workforce development programs, promote high-quality education and increase broadband offerings, particularly access and affordability for underserved residents. The plan seeks to provide infrastructure and land for industrial uses and bolster maritime and health care industries to become larger economic clusters. The plan also recognizes the role of U.S. Naval operations in the county's economy and identifying opportunities to leverage naval investments.



Transportation

Scope of Review

The Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070(6)) requires local comprehensive plans to:

- Use **internally consistent land use assumptions** and forecasts of travel demand and that are consistent with growth targets.
- Provide **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.
- Include a **multiyear financing plan** and reassessment strategy to address potential funding shortfalls.
- Direct **demand management**, including programs to implement the Commute Trip Reduction Act.
- Plan for **pedestrians and bicycles**, including capital investments, education, and safety.
- Discourage **incompatible uses adjacent to airports**.
- Address **air quality** and the reduction of pollutants consistent with WAC 173-420-080.

VISION 2050 also calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Plan for **system maintenance, safety and emergency management**.
- Support the **Regional Growth Strategy**.
- Provide **alternatives to driving alone**.
- Plan facilities and services for **special needs transportation**.
- Avoid the creation of new and expanded facilities in **rural areas**.
- Identify **racial and social equity** as a core objective when implementing transportation projects.
- Protect the **environment** and reduce stormwater pollution.

Certification Findings

The Kitsap County comprehensive plan effectively addresses the transportation planning requirements of the Growth Management Act and the transportation policies in VISION 2050. The Transportation element includes policies to reduce vehicle miles traveled per capita and to encourage walk, bike, transit, and other strategies to manage transportation demand. The plan includes policies to use complete streets system design approaches within urban growth areas, address resilience to natural and human-caused hazards through project design and operations, and coordinate with school districts to identify and address transportation safety concerns near schools.

The county should address the following comments in future updates to the plan:

- The plan does not include a policy about meeting air quality standards. More information on applicable conditions is provided on p. 4 of this report.



- Transportation facility inventories and supporting data for the Transportation element were included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement but were not included in an adopted portion of the plan. The county should consolidate and adopt required technical information for the Transportation element to ensure the plan's supporting information is clearly documented and easily accessible.
- VISION 2050 calls for multimodal level of service standards, and the Growth Management Act will also require these standards by 2029 (MPP-DP-52- 53). The county includes many policies supportive of walking, biking and transit, and the county should work to develop policies, standards, and regulatory approaches that incorporate multiple travel modes. PSRC's [Transportation Element Guide](#) provides minimum standards for addressing multimodal level of service standards. Additional guidance may be available in the future to refine adopted standards.

Public Services

Scope of Review

VISION 2050 calls for local comprehensive plans to:

- Promote **coordinated and efficient** use of public services.
- Protect **water quality** by serving urban development with sewer systems and replacing failing septic systems.
- Consider the **impacts of climate change on public facilities** and promote renewable energy.
- Promote **affordable and equitable access to public services**, especially for underserved communities.
- Promote working with school districts on **school siting and design** to support safe, walkable access.

Certification Findings

The Kitsap County comprehensive plan effectively addresses the public services policies in VISION 2050. The plan promotes coordinated and efficient use of public services and prioritizes public facilities and services in the urban growth area to encourage infill development. The Capital Facilities and Utilities element underscores the county's focus on climate by supporting renewable energy incentives, evaluating how climate hazards change the life span for facilities and equipment, and supporting green building and retrofit of public buildings.

Conclusion and Next Steps

PSRC found the Kitsap County comprehensive plan is substantially consistent with the transportation-related provisions of the Growth Management Act, VISION 2050 and the Regional Transportation Plan, provided additional amendments are incorporated into the comprehensive plan. This report identifies conditions to ensure full consistency.



PSRC encourages the county to address areas identified for additional work in upcoming plan updates and other planning efforts. These may be areas where additional work would make the plan more consistent with the Growth Management Act or VISION 2050 and areas that may be necessary to address prior to the 2029 Growth Management Act Implementation Progress Report.

PSRC is available to provide assistance with future plan updates. Find additional planning resources on [PSRC's Plan Review webpage](#). If the county has questions or needs additional information, please contact Liz Underwood-Bultmann at 206-464-6174 or LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org.

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