

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** February 2, 2021

**TO:** Pierce County Planning Commission

**FROM:** Dan Cardwell, Supervisor, Long Range Planning

**BY:** Jessica M. Nappi, Senior Planner, Long Range Planning

**SUBJECT:** **2021 Comprehensive Plan Text Amendment – Application No. 939858**  
The Planning Commission will review and consider proposed amendments to meet Puget Sound Regional Council’s requirement for jurisdictions to adopt “center” plans for regional growth centers and Manufacturing/Industrial Center.  
Applicant: Pierce County Planning and Public Works

**NOTICE:** Notice of the Planning Commission public hearing was published in the News Tribune on January 15, 2021.

**SEPA:** SEPA will be conducted pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act, Pierce County Code Title 18D, and provisions of the Growth Management Act.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Attachment A – PSRC Comment Letter on Frederickson M/IC (dated 2/26/2020)  
Attachment B – Proposed Amendments

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The proposed text amendments to the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan provide additional background and policies for the Frederickson Manufacturing/Industrial Center (M/IC), also known as the Frederickson Employment Center.

As part of Pierce County’s recent Community Plan Updates process to update the Frederickson, Mid-County, Parkland-Spanaway-Midland, and South Hill community plans, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) commented on the proposal and identified improvements relating to the Frederickson M/IC to ensure consistency between the County’s Comprehensive Plan and PSRC’s Multicounty Planning Policies (see **Attachment A**).

Topics addressed in the proposed text amendment include:

- Identification and protection of environmental resources within and near the M/IC.
- Strengthened policies to limit non-industrial growth within the M/IC.
- Emphasis on the need for more transportation options.
- Aim to reduce air pollution that may result from increased industrial development.

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Refer to **Attachment B**. Only those portions that are proposed to be amended or necessary for context are shown.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff supports the proposal for the following reasons:

- consistent with the PSRC's Regional Centers Framework;
- aligns with the Multicounty Planning Policies;
- supports the designation of Frederickson Employment Center as a regional Manufacturing/Industrial Center (M/IC); and
- ensures the County is compliant with PSRC's M/IC designation requirements.

## IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Not applicable.

## IMPACT ANALYSIS

*Procedures for Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan*, [PCC 19C.10](#), require

that the merits of all amendments to the Plan be evaluated based on the following ([PCC 19C.10.060 A](#)):

1. The effect upon the rate of growth, development, and conversion of land as envisioned in the Plan.

The proposal would limit commercial uses within the Frederickson M/IC and place more emphasis on allowing core industrial uses. The industrial uses would be encouraged to minimize impacts to air quality and the environment. This is consistent with the Multicounty Planning Policies, Countywide Planning Policies, and County Comprehensive Plan policies.

2. The effect upon the County's capacity to provide adequate public facilities.

The proposal would direct the County to explore opportunities to support more transportation options to achieve a balanced mode split.

3. The effect upon the rate of population and employment growth.

The proposal would not impact population growth since the area it impacts is already designated for industrial uses and prohibit residential uses. Employment growth would remain consistent with existing assumptions that the area is to primarily be used for industrial purposes with limited commercial uses.

4. Whether Plan objectives are being met as specified or remain valid and desirable.

The proposal helps the County Comprehensive Plan meet requirements for M/ICs in the Multicounty and Countywide Planning Policies.

5. The effect upon general land values or housing costs.

The proposal would not impact land value or housing costs.

6. Whether capital improvements or expenditures, including transportation, are being made or completed as expected.

Not applicable.

7. Whether the initiated amendment conforms to the requirements of the GMA, is internally consistent with the Plan and is consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies for Pierce County.

The proposal would further ensure the County Comprehensive Plan is more consistent with the Multicounty and Countywide Planning policies, and is internally consistent with existing policy. The proposed changes were requested by Puget Sound Regional Council for further consistency with Vision 2040 and the new Vision 2050 as well as M/IC certification.

8. The effect upon critical areas and natural resource lands.

The proposal would further identify critical areas and natural resource lands within and near the Frederickson M/IC.

9. Consistency with locational criteria in the Comprehensive Plan and application requirements established by this Chapter.

Not applicable.

10. The effect upon other considerations as deemed necessary by the Department.

This proposal was scheduled to be presented to the Frederickson Advisory Commission on December 17, 2020; however, due to a lack of quorum, the meeting was canceled.

### ***Applicable RCWs/Policies***

## **GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT (GMA)**

**RCW 36.70A.070:** The comprehensive plan of a county or city that is required or chooses to plan under RCW 36.70A.040 shall consist of a map or maps, and descriptive text covering objectives, principles, and standards used to develop the comprehensive plan. The plan shall be an internally consistent document and all elements shall be consistent with the future land use map. A comprehensive plan shall be adopted and amended with public participation as provided in RCW 36.70A.140.

## **MULTICOUNTY PLANNING POLICIES (VISION 2050)**

### **Regional Growth Strategy Policies (page 49)**

**MPP-RGS-10** Focus a significant share of employment growth in designated regional manufacturing/industrial centers.

### **Environment Policies (page 63)**

**MPP-En-21** Continue efforts to reduce pollutants from transportation activities, including through the use of cleaner fuels and vehicles and increasing alternatives to driving alone, as well as design and land use.

### **Centers: Supporting Connections to Opportunity (page 95)**

**MPP-DP-26** Implement the adopted framework to designate countywide centers to ensure compatibility within the region.

### **Economy Policies (page 121)**

**MPP-EC-22** Maximize the use of existing designated manufacturing/industrial centers by focusing appropriate types and amounts of employment growth in these areas and by protecting them from incompatible adjacent uses.

### **Transportation Policies (page 132-134)**

**MPP-T-12** Emphasize transportation investments that provide and encourage alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel and increase travel options, especially to and within centers and along corridors connecting centers.

**MPP-T-13** Increase the proportion of trips made by transportation modes that are alternatives to driving alone, especially to and within centers and along corridors connecting centers, by ensuring availability of reliable and competitive transit options.

### **Supporting the Economy (page 134)**

**MPP-T-29** Support the transition to a cleaner transportation system through investments in zero emission vehicles, low carbon fuels and other clean energy options.

## **PIERCE COUNTY COUNTYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES (CPPs)**

### **Countywide Planning Policy on Regional, Countywide, and Centers of Local Importance / Centers Overview (pages 95)**

**C-2.** The purpose of Manufacturing/Industrial Centers is to:

- Recognize strategically located concentrations of industrial activity as essential resources for the local economy;
- Protect and leverage critical and difficult-to-replace freight infrastructure;
- Preserve the industrial land base in the long term;
- Support family/living wage jobs;
- Emphasize the importance of freight movement; and
- Preserve the county's supply of industrial land.

### **Regional Manufacturing / Industrial Centers (MICs) (page 102)**

**C-24.** To be designated as a Regional Manufacturing/Industrial Center (MICs), the following criteria shall be met.

1. Consistency with specific criteria for Manufacturing/Industrial Centers adopted within the Countywide Planning Policies and the Multicounty Planning Policies;

7. Jurisdictions having a designated Manufacturing/Industrial Center shall:

- a. Plan for and fund capital facility improvement projects which support the movement of goods;
- b. Coordinate with utility providers to ensure that utility facilities are available to serve such

- Centers;
- c. Provide buffers around the Center to reduce conflicts with adjacent land uses;
  - d. Facilitate land assembly;
  - e. Assist in recruiting appropriate businesses; and
  - f. Encourage employers to participate in Commute Trip Reduction program.

## PIERCE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### **Land Use Element / Urban, Urban Industrial / Frederickson Manufacturing / Industrial Center (pages 2-40 to 2-41)**

**GOAL LU-57** Recognize the Frederickson Employment Center as a Regional Manufacturing/Industrial Center and focus employment growth to this area.

**LU-57.3** Establish center-specific employment targets, transportation-mode split goals, a market analysis for the area, and information on public service improvement financing and projects beyond roads.

### **Economic Development Element / Economic Vitality, Industrial Uses & Freight Movement (page 6-13)**

**EC-2.5** Ensure that Frederickson is maintained as a Regional Manufacturing/Industrial Center under the Puget Sound Regional Council criteria for centers.

### **Environment Element / Air Quality (pages 7-3 to 7-4)**

**ENV-3.6** Encourage development and implementation of transportation-based strategies that reduce pollutants, smog, and diesel air-toxins.

**GOAL ENV-4** Coordinate air quality improvement efforts with agencies and jurisdictions to monitor transportation demand management programs benefits, share technical information on air quality, and integrate land use and transportation policies.



# Puget Sound Regional Council

1011 WESTERN AVENUE, SUITE 500 ||| SEATTLE, WA 98104•1035 ||| psrc.org ||| 206•464•7090

February 26, 2020

Dan Cardwell  
Long Range Planning Supervisor  
Pierce County  
2401 S. 35th St.  
Tacoma, WA 98409  
dan.cardwell@piercecountywa.gov

Subject: PSRC Comments on Draft Frederickson Community Plan

Dear Mr. Cardwell,

Thank you for keeping us informed about your planning efforts and for providing an opportunity for the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) to review a draft of the Frederickson community plan update. Regional manufacturing/industrial centers (MICs) play an important role in accommodating new job growth and are key employment centers. We appreciate the substantial amount of time and effort the county has put into updating the Frederickson community plan to support continued job growth in the Frederickson MIC. As you know, the Regional Centers Framework provided a timeline to complete center plans by 2020. These locally-driven plans are an important step in outlining community vision and understanding how industrial centers contribute to the regional system of centers. PSRC supports local planning and can serve as a resource as local governments adopt subarea plans.

This collaboration to review draft materials helps to ensure consistency between the county's vision and the regional goals. After the community plan update is adopted, we hope that this coordination will ensure that timely subarea plan certification action can be taken by PSRC boards.

Many outstanding aspects of the draft plan support our regional goals. Particularly noteworthy aspects include:

- Merging center planning for the MIC with a larger community-wide planning effort is an inclusive approach that is unique from other industrial centers planning. We appreciate the work done to engage the community and really embrace the MIC as a community asset and beneficial to residents in the Frederickson community.
- Policy FR EC-8.1 regarding preparing a market assessment for the area supports goals set forth in the Regional Centers Framework and we hope the assessment could include recommendations for promoting additional job growth within the MIC.
- Land use goals and policies that preserve industrial land uses and protect adjacent residential uses from adverse impacts benefit both industrial businesses and residents. Furthermore, implementing policies that limit commercial uses within the Employment Center will help ensure the MIC meets Centers Framework criteria aimed at protecting core industrial uses within the center.
- Designation of the Frederickson community as a Potential Incorporation Area.

The draft community plan advances regional policy in many important ways; however, there are some items that should be considered in this community plan update or during the upcoming update of the county's Comprehensive Plan:

- VISION 2040 calls for jurisdictions to focus a significant share of employment growth in designated manufacturing/industrial growth centers by setting local employment targets (MPP-DP-3 and DP-5), and we recognize the county's comprehensive plan currently contains an employment target for Frederickson. As previously discussed, the county should update the MIC's employment target during the next round of countywide target setting to ensure the regional manufacturing/industrial centers' criteria is met (planning for at least 10,000 jobs, with at least 50% of jobs being industrial). To assist jurisdictions in setting growth targets for regional centers, PSRC developed this [guidance document](#).
- In the updated Regional Centers Framework, a new criterion for MICs requires at least 75% of the land area be zoned for core industrial uses, with commercial uses strictly limited. The county should consider strengthening policies that limit commercial uses in the Employment Center zone and create new policies to ensure the Towne Center portion of the MIC does not expand and allow commercial, residential, and other incompatible land uses to negatively impact the viability of adjacent industrial lands.
- Emphasizing the need for more transportation options in the center will improve mobility in and around the MIC and hopefully result in a more balanced mode-split. We recommend that the county adopt a mode-split goal for the center to measure how mobility improvements benefit overall travel patterns and work towards decreasing single-occupant vehicle trips. Guidance on setting mode-split goals is available [here](#).
- The draft plan includes a section on air quality and could benefit from adding policies or referencing programs that aim to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, especially that may result from increased industrial development.
- The draft plan contains many good policies that ensure environmental resources will be protected as growth occurs. It could be beneficial to include additional details about the existing critical and environmentally sensitive areas in and near the MIC specifically, with reference to specific policies and programs to protect these areas as additional industrial land uses occur.

Thank you again for working with us through the plan review process. There is a lot of excellent work in the draft community plan, and we are happy to help and review additional material as the plan moves through the adoption process. Once the community plan update is adopted, please let us know so we can proceed through the plan certification process. If you have any questions on regional centers planning or need additional information, please contact me at 206-464-6179 or [aharris-long@psrc.org](mailto:aharris-long@psrc.org).

Sincerely,



Andrea Harris-Long, AICP  
Senior Planner  
Puget Sound Regional Council

cc: PSRC Growth Management Services  
Washington State Department of Commerce

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

### **Land Use Element / Urban, Urban Industrial, Frederickson Manufacturing / Industrial Center (pages 2-40 to 2-41)**

#### FREDERICKSON REGIONAL MANUFACTURING/INDUSTRIAL CENTER

The Frederickson Regional Manufacturing/Industrial Center is located within the urban unincorporated area, southeast of Tacoma and south of Puyallup. The center contains the intersection of 176th St. E. and Canyon Road E., and goes as far south as 208th Street. The boundaries are depicted in Map 2-3.

The Employment Center in Frederickson was designated as a Regional Manufacturing/Industrial Center in 1995 in anticipation of future development. Employment doubled from 2000-2010 from 1,580 jobs to a total of 3,394. Since then it has reached close to 4,000 employees. The Frederickson Manufacturing/Industrial Center (M/IC) still contains a significant amount of vacant land for future development and is characterized by large blocks averaging 102.8 acres, and large industrial parcel sizes averaging 6.2 acres, which will enable it to accommodate large manufacturing and industrial development projects. Since designation, the boundary has been adjusted to remove properties with environmental constraints, vested residential plats, parks, and open space to focus on properties that are conducive to industrial development.

[Map 2-3: Frederickson Manufacturing/Industrial Center]

The Frederickson M/IC is considered medium sized in terms of total gross acreage (2,651 acres), and has a smaller number of jobs compared to other designated regional centers. The center contains mostly employment-oriented activity. Major industry sectors include Manufacturing (69%), Wholesale, Transportation, and Utilities (9%), and Suppressed/Other (22%). Of the total number of jobs, the vast majority are in goods-dependent industries that are typically appropriate for Regional Manufacturing/Industrial Centers. The two largest employers are The Boeing Company and Toray Composites (America), which combined make up more than half of the employment within the center. The current employment density is 1.5 employees per acre. The target for the Frederickson M/IC is 13,700 total employment (9,700 additional) within the 20-year planning period. This target would create employment density of 5.6 employees per acre.

The M/IC includes environmentally sensitive areas associated with Clover Creek, which runs through the northern portion of the M/IC boundary. Clover Creek crosses a property owned by Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) currently used for utilities and as a rifle range. Future industrial development is only expected on the TPU properties to the north that are not affected by the associated critical areas. There are floodplain, wetland, and oak presence indicators in the southern portion of the M/IC where there are existing industrial uses and a few vacant properties. Smaller wetland indicators are found on the northwest portion of the Boeing properties where development has not yet occurred and is not planned for intensive industrial uses. Policies in the Comprehensive Plan's [Environment Element](#) and the Critical Area Regulations in [Pierce County Code Title 18E](#) address protection of critical areas. The area surrounding the



M/IC includes critical areas primarily associated with Clover Creek and its associated streams and wetlands.

**GOAL LU-57** Recognize the Frederickson Employment Center as a Regional Manufacturing/Industrial Center and focus employment growth to this area.

**LU-57.1** Encourage the type of development that will focus a significant share of employment growth to the Frederickson M/IC.

**LU-57.1.1** Emphasize efficient size and shape, planning for transportation facilities and services, urban design standards, and protection from incompatible land uses.

**LU-57.1.2** Discourage developments with low employment rates that cover large expanses of land.

**LU-57.1.3** Allow primarily core industrial uses and limit commercial uses.

**LU-57.2** The County shall prioritize infrastructure funding for projects supporting the Frederickson Industrial Center.

**LU-57.2.1** Identify and implement infrastructure improvements which enhance the viability and attractiveness of the Frederickson Industrial Center.

**LU-57.2.2** Coordinate with stakeholders to provide critical infrastructure to encourage the concentration of urban manufacturing and industrial land uses in the Frederickson Industrial Center.

**LU-57.2.3** Explore opportunities to support more transportation options that result in a balanced mode split.

### **Environment Element/ Air Quality (page 7-3)**

**ENV-3.10** Encourage use of new technologies and strategies that minimize impacts on air quality and greenhouse gas emissions from increased industrial uses within the Employment Centers.