CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL
Chair Bill Judd, Vice Chair Paul Max, Chele Dimmett, Jennifer Gilbert-Smith, Jonathan Ingram, Jim Langehough, & Alex White

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS - Election of Officers

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes from November 17, 2016

CITIZEN COMMENTS - Note: The Citizen Comment period is to provide the opportunity for members of the audience to address the Commission on items either not on the agenda or not listed as a Public Hearing. The Chair will open this portion of the meeting and ask for a show of hands of those persons wishing to address the Commission. When recognized, please approach the podium, give your name and city of residence, and state the matter of your interest. If your interest is an Agenda Item, the Chair may suggest that your comments wait until that time. Citizen comments will be limited to four minutes for Citizen Comments and four minutes for Unfinished Business. If you require more than the allotted time, your item will be placed on the next agenda. If you anticipate your comments taking longer than the allotted time, you are encouraged to contact the Planning Department ten days in advance of the meeting so your item may be placed on the next available agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Action Required

2. Final Discussion of Proposed 2017 Planning Commission and Staff Work Plan

PUBLIC HEARING – None

NEW BUSINESS – None

ATTENDANCE VOTE

PUBLIC COMMENT: (Same rules apply as stated in the 1st CITIZEN COMMENTS)

COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS OF COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

ADJOURN

Any person requiring a disability accommodation should contact the City at least 24 hours in advance. For TDD relay service please use the state’s toll-free relay service (800) 833-6384 and ask the operator to dial (253) 480-2400.

Web Page: www.covingtonwa.gov
CITY OF COVINGTON
Planning Commission Minutes

November 17, 2016    City Hall Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER
The regular meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order at 6:35
p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT
Chele Dimmett, Bill Judd, Jim Langehough and Alex White

MEMBERS ABSENT- Paul Max, Jennifer Gilbert-Smith and Jonathan Ingram

STAFF PRESENT
Salina Lyons, Principal Planner
Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS- Election of Officers

Commissioner Dimmett nominated Bill Judd for the position of Chair.
Commissioner White seconded the nomination. The nomination passed with four
votes.

Commissioner White nominated Commissioner Dimmett for the position of Vice-
Chair. The nomination passed with four votes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND AGENDA

1. Commissioner White moved and Commissioner Dimmett
seconded to approve the October 20, 2016 minutes and agenda.
Motion carried 4-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

PUBLIC HEARING - None

NEW BUSINESS

Principal Planner, Salina Lyons reviewed the staff time breakdown of the 2016
Work Program Items and percentages of completion. She explained how added
work plan items over the course of the year can cause priorities to shift.
The Planning Commission discussed how it is determined whether staff is added versus hiring a consultant to complete tasks.

Ms. Lyons reviewed the criteria for prioritizing the work plan items and reviewed the 2017 Work Program Notes. She shared that the estimated hours are estimates to bring a task to completion.

Ms. Lyons reviewed the list of the staff driven task items and Master Builders requests. She shared that if the Master Builders Association were so inclined, they have the option to apply for a code amendment and pay the associated fees.

Chair Judd felt it was not necessary to number the lower level priorities and felt that could be handled at the staff level.

After discussing the Work Program Items for 2017, the Planning Commission opted to not specifically number the priorities and allow staff to prioritize tasks. As new tasks are often added to the work plan throughout the year, staff will continue to monitor and prioritize tasks.

Commissioner Dimmett suggested adding a notation indicating how long a task has been carried forward from year to year. Commissioner Dimmett also appreciates seeing a percentage of completion. Ms. Lyons proposed a mid-year check in and evaluation based on any added priorities.

**ATTENDANCE VOTE**

- Commissioner moved Dimmett and Commissioner White seconded to excuse the absence of Commissioner Gilbert-Smith and Commissioner Max. Motion carried 4-0.

  The record is noted that proper notice was, in fact, received from Commissioner Ingram.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Covington resident, Elizabeth Porter, commented with regard to side yard setbacks.

**COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF**

December meetings are cancelled.
ADJOURN

The November 17, 2016 Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

_____________________________________________
Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary
To:          Planning Commission

From:  Richard Hart, Community Development Director  
        Salina Lyons, Principal Planner  
        Ann Mueller, Senior Planner

Date:  January 11, 2017


Overview
Attached is the final revised 2017 Planning Commission Work Plan. Staff incorporated comments from the Planning Commission’s recommendations presented at the November 17, 2016 regular Planning Commission meeting, as well as, internal feedback from other departments to create the final task list. The final work plan results in four prioritization categories Mandatory, High, Medium, and Future which are defined in the work plan notes. Tasks were assigned to each category with Mandatory and High tasks filling the 2900 staff hours available for allocation. If the estimations in those categories prove to be lower, time will be allocated to Medium prioritized tasks. Future tasks remain on the list and will be evaluated with each subsequent yearly work plan based on the prioritization definitions. It is the intention to keep the work plan within the 2900 staff hours available. If it is determined that additional tasks should be added to the Mandatory and High categories, then we will need to identify additional resources and provide a request to the city council.

City Council/Planning Commission Joint Meeting
The Planning Commission is meeting with the City Council on February 14, 2017 to discuss the attached work plan. Staff is anticipating that additional work plan items could very well be added mid-year as a result of the Council Strategic Planning process currently underway and scheduled for completion by June of this year. The Strategic Plan may identify additional tasks, not currently on the work plan, that will then need to be incorporated and prioritized accordingly. At that time, staff will provide the Planning Commission an updated 2017 work plan.

At the January 19, 2017, Planning Commission meeting, staff is requesting any final feedback and questions regarding the proposed work plan, specifically about the prioritization definitions and categorizations. We will also need to discuss the strategy for the presentation to the council.
# Community Development Department & Planning Commission

## Work Program Items for 2017-

(*) Council Budget Allocation  
(**) Development Reimbursed staff time  
(***+) Indicates Staff Hour Threshold (2900 hrs.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Plan Item</th>
<th>Requirement Type</th>
<th>Est. Staff Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Final 7-Year Comprehensive Plan Update Final Certification from PSRC</td>
<td>State Legislature GMA Compliance *$5,000</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Carry-over &amp; Completion of Tasks from 2016]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Comprehensive Plan &amp; Development Code Regulation Amendment Annual Docket</td>
<td>State Legislature Annual Ongoing</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for 2017 (City Needed Policy and Code Updates)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Critical Area Ordinance Revisions (CMC 18.65) FEMA &amp; Shoreline Updates</td>
<td>State Legislature GMA Compliance</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Carry-over from 2016]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Update Traffic Concurrency Program (Title 12) &amp; Transportation Impact Fee</td>
<td>State Legislative GMA Compliance *$24,000</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculation (Title 19) [Carry-over from 2016]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sign Code Amendments &amp; Public Outreach Process for Compliance with</td>
<td>Supreme Court</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supreme Court Decision in Reed v. Town of Gilbert CMC 18.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mandatory Work Plan Hours** 1400

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Plan Item</th>
<th>Requirement Type</th>
<th>Est. Staff Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Cont.) [2016 Carry-over]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Hawk Property 204th Ave SE Design &amp; Stormwater Management discussions</td>
<td>Council/Private Developer</td>
<td>200 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate agreement for management &amp; maintenance of infrastructure.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Anticipated amendments to the Hawk Property Development Agreement/Planned</td>
<td>Council/Private Developer</td>
<td>300**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action EIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Park Impact Fee &amp; [Carry-over since 2015]</td>
<td>Council/Parks</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Fire Impact Fee Code Changes with Kent Regional Fire Authority [Carry-</td>
<td>Council/ Kent RFA</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over since 2013]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Critical Area/Wetland Monitoring System [2016 Carry-over]</td>
<td>Council/Staff *$16,000</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**High Priority Work Plan Hours** 1600

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**TOTAL ESTIMATED WORK HOURS FOR 2017 PROPOSED PROGRAMS** 3000  
**TOTAL ESTIMATED WORK HOUR AVAILABLE FOR 2017** 2900

*Work Plan Items above this line account for available staff hours in 2017. Additional work plans items will be prioritized accordingly within the available hours or staff will request additional resources.*
## Medium Priority Work Program Items for 2017 – Cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement Type</th>
<th>Est. Staff Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. Update to Hearing Examiner’s (HE) Rules &amp; Procedures</td>
<td>Staff/HE 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Sewer Code Amendments (Title 13)</td>
<td>Staff/SCWSD 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Update Landscaping Code &amp; Street tree list (Title 18 &amp; Street Standards)</td>
<td>Staff (CD/PW) 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Update Franchise Agreement Codes (Title 12)</td>
<td>Staff (CD/PW) 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Draft New Zoning Code Regulations on Food Trucks (Title 18)</td>
<td>Staff (CD/ED) 150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Medium Priority Work Plan Hours** 550

## Future Work Plan Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement Type</th>
<th>Est. Staff Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. Study sustainability strategies to implement Comp Plan policies (Code Amendments)</td>
<td>Staff (CD/PW) 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Clean-Up of Landmark &amp; Historic District Code Provisions (CMC 18.75)</td>
<td>Staff (CD) 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean-up of old KC code.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Study Reducing Residential Side Yard Setbacks from 7.5 ft. to 5.0 ft., density calculations, and lot sizes (CMC 18.30 &amp; Forms) [Carry-over since 2014]</td>
<td>Master Builders Request/No Application submitted 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Increase Short Plat Yields from 4 to 9 units and SEPA Thresholds &amp; SEPA exemptions for SFR from 9 to 30 units (Title 18 &amp; Forms) <em>Note: the city updated the SEPA threshold to 9 units in 2014.</em></td>
<td>Master Builders Request/No Application submitted 200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Future Work Plan Items Hours** 850

**TOTAL ESTIMATED WORK HOURS FOR 2017 MEDIUM AND FUTURE TASKS** 1400
Available Staff Hours
Available hours in 2017 for work program items with proposed staffing levels are approximately 2900 hours. These 2900 hours reflect the total hours each community development staff position can devote to Long Range Planning/Special Projects as follows: 40% Director, 75% Senior Planner, 20% Principal Planner, 25% Associate Planner, 10% Building Official, and 5% Sr. Permit Center Coordinator. The remaining percentage of staff time is devoted to normal work activities of the positions outside of the special projects listed on the Work Plan, such as permitting, plan review, counter assistance, public inquires, code implementation and other administrative duties directly related to general customer service and development review. In addition, the Director has other department administrative functions and responsibilities.

The majority of the community development department staff are salaried employees, with the exception of the senior and associate planners, so there is limited opportunity for the council to allocate overtime funds to this staff. While the work plan has been established through allocating the full 2900 hours of available staff time, it is important to note that additional new work plan tasks are assigned throughout the year. Further, the estimated staff hours are strictly an estimate and that once the task is scoped the estimation may change or result in additional work not provided for in the list.

Attorney Review Hours
Not included within the hours of proposed work tasks for the CD staff are city attorney review hours. The availability of attorney review hours may affect the timeline for any public hearing, ordinance adoption, and implementation, and in some cases, can change the overall priority or delay completion.

2017 Work Plan Prioritization
Work plans are not processed in a linear fashion, and often involve cross coordination with other department and input from the legal department. While each task is assigned a number, that is not necessarily the order in which the task will be completed. Rather, staff will focus on the tasks designated Mandatory and High and then will focus efforts to the Medium and Future prioritized tasks. Mandatory, High, Medium and Future prioritizations are defined as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prioritization Designation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>These tasks are requirements based on legislative and legal actions or ongoing annual requirements under state law. They are often associated with a strict timeline and in most instances cannot be postponed or delayed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>These tasks are “mission critical” meaning that the work plan items have been deemed important by the council through a clear directive or financial support in the city budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>These tasks are seen as necessary to the long term operations related to development review, maintenance, and cross department processes, but could wait an be carried forward in a subsequent year. These are also the next set of task that staff will evaluate if time is made available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>These are a collection of tasks that would be nice to complete when resources are available or the implementation of the task becomes critical to the city’s objectives. This list also includes code amendments that have been requested by the public or other entity which could otherwise be applied for through our code amendment process. The Council may move any of these items to a higher designation by removing a higher prioritization or allocating budgetary resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In an effort to manage the work plan and staff time, if a work plan item is added to the list (through a state or council directive, or in response to a mission critical scenario), each task will be evaluated accordingly and re-prioritized within the 2900 hours available for staff. Staff may need to request additional resources, such as allocating funds for consultants, as necessary to achieve the medium and future priorities if they are expected to be completed in 2017.

**2017 Work Plan Summary**

**Carry-Over Tasks**
The chart denotes the duration of time a task has been on the work plan and/or if it is a carry-over from a previous year. In short, there are four carry-over work plan items from 2016 into 2017 and three items that have been on the list for more than two years. While the carry over items are not complete, it does not mean that staff has not allocated some time to the task, as shown on the 2016 End of Year Work Plan Overview.

There are also various projects that have an assigned budget item to assist with completing the task through the help of a consultant. The hours shown for these tasks are only staff’s time to manage and complete the project and are not reflective of time spent by consultants.

**Hawk Property/Lakepointe Development**
Hawk Property (Item 6, 7 & 8) is unique in that the developer is responsible for reimbursing the city for staff time related to the project. Also, the city has hired a consultant team to provide support to staff which helps to alleviate the true amount of staff time devoted to reviewing and managing the project.

**Private Requests**
While a significant number of the items listed on the 2017 work plan, are council, staff or agency initiated, there is opportunity for the public to file for code amendments, such as the Master Builder’s requests. By formally submitting a code amendment for council consideration, the applicant is required to pay a review fee and reimburse for any consultant time associated with processing the request. Cost to cover staff’s time for the processing of the code amendment is borne by the applicant. It also guarantees that the work item will be completed, ideally within a 12-18-month time period depending on the scope of the amendment.

**On-going Modifications**
We anticipate that Planning Commission and staff responsibilities can fluctuate throughout the year with efficiencies in some areas and additional work hours in other areas, and the balance is actualized over multiple years. Staff will provide a mid-year update on work program progress and percentage completion to the Planning Commission and City Council. It is also further anticipated that the Community Development work plan will change as the City Council implements the city wide strategic plan.
To: Planning Commission  
From: Richard Hart, Community Development Director  
Date: January 11, 2017  
Re: Request to Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) for “Full Certification” of 2015 Covington Comprehensive Plan & Council Resolution with Mayor’s Letter of Request.

Overview
As we have discussed at previous meetings with the Planning Commission, Covington received “Conditional Certification” of our 2015 Comprehensive Plan from PSRC in February, 2016. All cities that belong to PSRC must receive “Full Certification” by December, 2017 and address certain points of inconsistency between our Plan and PSRC’s VISION 2040 and its Regional Growth Strategy. Covington only received “Conditional Certification” because we had planned for growth beyond growth targets for housing and jobs that were assigned to Covington in 2010. A major issue is that PSRC changed their growth policy in 2016, to view assigned growth targets as a ceiling to which cities should not exceed within their plans, rather than floors to which city plans and zoning must accommodate. PSRC switched from targets that a city shows they can accommodate to a ceiling to which a city cannot grow beyond if they desire “Full Certification” of their Plans. Failure to receive “Full Certification” means cities are not eligible for any federal transportation dollars, so the consequence is substantial.

The “Conditional Certification” from PSRC is based on their assertion that Covington is growing too fast and should adopt measures to slow our growth. When asked how to legally slow growth, PSRC has failed to provide any concrete and specific examples of how that task might be accomplished. To address the issue, Covington has reiterated several policies and narratives in the city’s adopted Plan that show Covington’s support of VISION 2040, the Regional Growth Strategy, and our commitment to improving transportation infrastructure on a local and regional basis. The city has implemented programs, encouraged by PSRC, to support Level of Service (LOS) standards for parks and transportation, affordable housing, environmental protection, and requiring growth to pay for its impact to the systems. Plus, we have committed to monitoring our growth beyond the targets and provide reports to PSRC on a periodic basis during our 7-year planning horizon until the next required Update in 2022. Covington has experienced substantial growth in the last 6 years, with a large amount of growth and development projects already in our “pipeline”, including development already vested in the Hawk Subarea Plan (Lakepointe Urban Village).

Staff has worked with the PSRC staff, the PSRC Executive Board, their Growth Management Planning Board (GMPB) and King County’s Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) in efforts to resolve the issues of planning beyond our growth targets, the “ceiling” versus “floor” controversy, and ways to further support VISION 2040 and the Regional Growth Strategy. The attached Resolution and letter from our Mayor to PSRC will be reviewed and approved by the City Council on February 14, 2017, and then forwarded to PSRC for their action, and hopefully resulting in “Full Certification” of our Plan. We would like the Planning Commission to review the resolution and letter and provide your endorsement and recommendation to council for approval.
RESOLUTION NO. 2017-02

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON, KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON, RELATED TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CERTIFICATION BY THE PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL (PSRC); DOCUMENTING CERTAIN CITY POLICIES AND ACTIONS THAT SUPPORT LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION OF PSRC’S VISION 2040 AND THE REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY THEREIN; AND REQUESTING FULL CERTIFICATION OF THE COVINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015-2035 BY THE PSRC EXECUTIVE BOARD.

WHEREAS, the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires the City of Covington (the “City”) to develop, adopt, and implement a comprehensive plan pursuant to Chapter 36.70A of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW); and

WHEREAS, the GMA further requires that comprehensive plans be subject to continuing review and evaluation and requires that these plans be updated on a periodic basis to ensure continuing compliance with the GMA; and

WHEREAS, the City initiated a major period update of its comprehensive plan in 2015 as required by Chapter 36.70A RCW; and

WHEREAS, on January 12, 2016, the Covington City Council (the “Council”) adopted the major periodic comprehensive plan update, titled as the Covington Comprehensive Plan 2015-2035 (the “2015 Comprehensive Plan”), pursuant to Ordinance No. 02-2016; and

WHEREAS, the projected housing and employment growth (or jobs) numbers incorporated within the 2015 Comprehensive Plan were based upon a market demand study conducted by the City in 2014; and

WHEREAS, a goal of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan was continued support, integration, and implementation of PSRC’s Vision 2040 at the local level; and

WHEREAS, the 2015 Comprehensive Plan was reviewed by state and regional agencies pursuant to applicable state and local laws and policies; and

WHEREAS, on February 25, 2016, the PSRC issued a Plan Review Report and Certification Recommendation for the City’s Comprehensive Plan (the “PSRC Plan Review Report”); and
WHEREAS, on April 28, 2016, PSRC’s Executive Board unanimously voted to conditionally certify the City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan and indicated that the conditional status would remain until the City addresses the inconsistency between the anticipated growth included in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan and the housing and employment growth targets adopted by King County, as further described in pages 6 and 7 of the PSRC Plan Review Report; and

WHEREAS, on May 24, 2016, the Council adopted Resolution No. 2016-19, committing to address the conditions of certification pursuant to the PSRC Executive Board’s decision on April 28, 2016, and the PSRC Plan Review Report; and

WHEREAS, City staff and elected officials met and coordinated with King County, PSRC, and other cities within King County to address and resolve the City’s conditional certification conditions in the PSRC Plan Review Report; and

WHEREAS, City staff held meetings with the Covington Planning Commission throughout 2016 to review the PSRC Plan Review Report conditions and status and to outline potential options for resolving said conditions; and

WHEREAS, City staff attended multiple Growth Management Planning Board and Growth Management Planning Council meetings and presented findings in both written form and through public testimony to establish the City’s position that the growth targets assigned to the City by the King County target allocation process, and used by PSRC, are inconsistent with economic factors specific to the City and, accordingly, that PSRC should consider reclassifying the City as a “Larger City” under VISION 2040; and

WHEREAS, in its written findings and public testimony, the City addressed the conditions of certification of the City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan pursuant to the PSRC Plan Review Report, specifically addressing the points of inconsistency with the housing and employment growth targets identified in the City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan and PSRC’s VISION 2040 and the Regional Growth Strategy therein; and

WHEREAS, the introduction to the Land Use Element of the City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plane (page LU-8) specifically addresses the challenges and opportunities in planning for growth that is expected under private sector market conditions and already identified such growth in the “pipeline” and as part of the Subarea Plan and Planned Action EIS for the Hawk Property development approved by the Council in 2014, prior to adoption of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes the importance of the Regional Growth Strategy adopted in VISION 2040 and is committed to working toward it in the long-term; and

WHEREAS, the Council has determined that the City’s projected growth does not conflict with the Regional Growth Strategy adopted in VISION 2040 and that the City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan preserves the integrity of VISION 2040 and King County Planning
Policies, as evidenced by Land Use Policies LU-3, LU-7, LU-22, and LU-23 in the City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Council deems the conditions of certification pursuant to the PSRC Executive Board’s decision on April 28, 2016, and the PSRC Plan Review Report to be satisfactorily resolved, that no update of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan is necessary, and requests that the PSRC Executive Board grant full certification to the City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Covington, King County, Washington, as follows:

Section 1. After reviewing the Executive Board’s decision on April 28, 2016, and the PSRC Plan Review Report, specifically the points of inconsistency with the housing and employment growth targets identified in the City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan and VISION 2040 and the Regional Growth Strategy therein, the Covington City Council deems the City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan to support and advance the integrity and mission of PSRC’s VISION 2040 and the Regional Growth Strategy therein for the following reasons:

a. **Alignment with Vision 2040.** The City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan, including the policies and goals, were developed under the checklists provided by PSRC during the comprehensive plan update process. Accordingly, the City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan clearly and specifically recognizes and supports Vision 2040 and its Regional Growth Strategy, as identified in various Land Use Policies in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan, such as LU-3, LU-7, LU-22, and LU-23.

b. **Growth Targets.** King County did not reexamine their growth targets and city classifications prior to the City’s adoption of its 2015 Comprehensive Plan. Had the county done so, the City would have qualified to be reclassified as a “Larger City” under Vision 2040 and, if reclassified, would have received growth targets more in-line with the regional geography policies of allocation, which are also supported by the market demand study undertaken by the City in 2012 and cited in the City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan. Although the City’s planned growth may exceed the county’s otherwise artificial and out-of-date growth targets, growth projected in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan embodies policies to ensure that growth is consistent with the goals of GMA and Vision 2040.

c. **Historical Commitments / Pipeline Developments.** The City has identified all projects in our development “pipeline” that are vested for development within the 2035 planning horizon. These developments represent historical growth and infrastructure improvements to which the City is legally committed. (One example of pipeline development that will account for a vast majority of the City’s assigned growth and job targets is the Hawk Subarea Plan and Planned Action EIS, adopted by the City in 2014, which is expected to be completed within the next decade and will account for 1500 new dwelling units and approximately 1000 new jobs within the City.)

d. **No Request to Expand the Urban Growth Area (UGA).** The City’s new growth and development as identified in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan for the 20-year planning
horizon is wholly within the existing city limits. The projected growth can be accommodated within the City’s existing boundary and no expansion of the UGA is contemplated in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan.

e. Affordable Housing Policies. The City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan contains strong policies to support the very important GMA goal of creating affordable housing. Prior to the adoption of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan, in an effort to further support affordable housing the City adopted the Multifamily Tax Exemption program, incentive programs for other affordable housing, and a development agreement process for accommodating unique development opportunities in the housing arena. These policies resulted in a 200-unit affordable housing project, named Polaris at Covington, which opened in 2016.

f. Transportation Mitigation. The City has an established transportation impact fee program that requires growth to pay for the impacts of growth and an established transportation concurrency program that requires growth to be consistent with infrastructure needs. In fact, the City has historically denied development projects due to a failure to meet transportation concurrency standards in accordance with RCW 36.70A.070.

g. Leader in Coordinating Transportation Impacts. The City actively plans and coordinates with surrounding cities and King County to improve the southeast King County regional transportation system. In 2010, the City negotiated an agreement with the master plan developer of the Lawson Hills and Villages projects in Black Diamond to capture and mitigate transportation impacts to the City’s street infrastructure and Level of Service deficiencies caused by the Black Diamond development. The City required this same level of coordination of the master developer of the Hawk Subarea Plan and Planned Action EIS, whereby the developer must mitigate impacts from their development on the cities of Maple Valley and Kent, as determined by those cities.

h. Commitment to Transportation Funding. The City has two major state highways bisecting its community: SR 18 and SR 516. In the past two years alone, Covington has successfully pursued and received over $40 million in transportation dollars from the State of Washington to improve portions of SR 516 and the localized transportation system, which will help to support localized level of service requirements and the regional transportation system as identified in VISION 2040.

i. Protection of Critical Areas and Resource Lands. The 2015 Comprehensive Plan contains clearly identified polices for protecting and preserving critical areas and resource lands. While the City does not have agricultural lands within its boundaries, it does have three major streams that drain to the upper Green River, which are important and valuable resources to the City, as well as represent cultural significance to the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe. The City’s critical areas policies, as well as the City’s adopted development regulations, ensure that growth does not have an impact on or threaten important environmental resource lands. The city also works closely with the Muckleshoots and various environmental groups to further create land use and environmental policies for long-term protection of these critical areas, which is directly in-line with PSRC’s VISION 2040.
Section 2. The Council pledges its commitment to continue to support, integrate, and implement PSRC’s Vision 2040, and included Regional Growth Strategy.

Section 3. For all of the above reasons, the Covington City Council finds that it has reasonably addressed the conditions of certification pursuant to the PSRC Executive Board’s decision on April 28, 2016, and the PSRC Plan Review Report and, accordingly, requests that the PSRC Executive Board grant full certification of the City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Covington is committed to making periodic reports to PSRC to document actual growth and permitting activity in the City during the period between the City’s full certification and the next required periodic update of the City’s 2015 Comprehensive Plan under GMA requirements.

ADOPTED in open and regular session on this 14th day of February 2017 and signed in authentication thereof.

_____________________________________
Jeff Wagner, Mayor

ATTESTED:

_____________________________________
Sharon Scott, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM ONLY:

_____________________________________
Sara Springer, City Attorney
January 10, 2017

The Honorable John Marchione  
President, Puget Sound Regional Council Executive Board  
15670 NE 85th Street  
P.O. Box 97010  
Redmond, WA 98073  

Dear Mayor Marchione:

As you are aware, the City of Covington is one of six cities that received “Conditional Certification” of its Comprehensive Plan earlier this year because our Plan identified growth beyond allocated housing and job targets. Covington was instructed by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) staff to work directly with them between May 2016 and December 2017 to make modifications in our Plan to better align with Vision 2040’s Regional Growth Strategy.

Specifically, our letter of conditional certification requested that the Covington staff address the following three points of inconsistency:

- Amend the plan to more fully recognize the objective of aligning with the Regional Growth Strategy, including the role of designated Small Cities and the objective to limit growth in those cities.
- Adjust the plan’s anticipated housing and employment growth to more closely align with adopted countywide targets. It is recognized that the city’s ability to reduce planned growth levels may be limited by unavoidable factors, such as actual growth since the target base year and development in the pipeline.
- Identify and prioritize strategies the city will take to manage growth and work toward better alignment with the Regional Growth Strategy and address more fully the impacts of planned growth on regional and local infrastructure and services and on the environment.

Covington’s staff had numerous conversations with the PSRC staff during the past eight months, specifically requesting direction how the city’s plan might be amended to address the above three points. No definitive direction was provided by the PSRC staff nor were specific policies or actions identified that Covington could take to align with Vision 2040’s “Regional Growth Strategy”.

**Covington’s Reclassification Request**

First, we have reviewed and evaluated the many policies within our Covington Comprehensive Plan for better alignment with the “Regional Growth Strategy”, including the role of designated Small Cities and the objective to limit growth in such cities. While Covington is technically classified as a “Small City” in VISION 2040 adopted in 2008, it has met the threshold for reclassification to a “Larger City” for several years. As you are aware, the PSRC Executive Board on December 15, 2016, declined to reclassify Covington from a “Small City” to a “Larger City” through a minor technical amendment. That doesn’t change the fact that Covington technically is a “Larger City” as defined by PSRC thresholds and lies directly adjacent to the “Core City” of Kent on the west and directly adjacent to a “Larger City” of Maple Valley on the east.

Kent, Covington, and Maple Valley are linked by State Route 516 (SR 516), also known as Kent-Kangley Highway, or SE 272nd St. The location of Covington between Kent and Maple Valley with direct access to SR 18, which provides access to Interstate 5 and Interstate 90, has rapidly stimulated Covington to grow as a destination for both
commerce and medical services to surrounding jurisdictions, including a significant amount of rural King County. Covington has also been successful, in recent years, with receiving over 40 million dollars in state funds to mitigate transportation impacts within our city. The city councils of Covington, Maple Valley, and Black Diamond meet annually to discuss transportation planning and how to make improvements to the transportation capacity for our southeast King County regional system. We have historically continued to work in conjunction with adjacent cities, as well as Black Diamond, to monitor development and mitigate impacts that affect SR 18 and SR 516 through our city, especially because we serve as a commerce center for Southeast King County.

While we understand the desire to have a measureable tool to plan for regional growth, the growth targets used by PSRC and calculated and assigned by King County, lend little consideration to economic factors of the private sector and how they contribute to regional growth and jobs. The private sector market does not factor in governmental classifications of cities when making investment decisions. If the investment decision makes economic sense, they move forward with the new development based upon existing zoning that has been in place for years, and cities have to respond to that development request. Since incorporation in 1997, the city has not increased its zoned capacity. In fact, the previously approved comprehensive plan in 2002 forecasted greater growth than what is identified in our 2015 plan. One could argue that the economic forecasting the city undertook in 2009 and previously shared with PSRC, indicated growth that was occurring and could be expected. The city completed another market analysis during the current Comprehensive Plan Update process that supported the findings in 2009 and the anticipated growth we’ve identified in our most recent Comprehensive Plan. The market forces in Covington already exist and have existed, even under a previously certified plan. It’s unclear why Covington’s growth wasn’t previously recognized, despite the information we continuously provided to King County and PSRC. VISION 2040 does not identify the growth shares as caps, but instead growth numbers are by county and category and NOT by individual city or municipal boundary. Additionally, counties allocate growth under GMA, not PSRC; the county merely attempts to work with cities to “bend the trend” through the allocation process. Further, the city asserts that there are no specific goals or policies within our plan that are out of alignment with the “Regional Growth Strategy” and need to be amended; therefore, we will continue to pursue reclassification from a “Small City” to a “Larger City” through the PSRC Executive Board during 2017.

**Covington’s Pipeline and Expected Growth**

Second, we have reviewed the already vested development projects in the pipeline that will cause the city to nearly reach the allocated growth targets within a few short years. In 2014, the city adopted a Subarea Plan and Planned Action Ordinance for Lakepointe Urban Village on 210 acres, wholly within our UGA and city limits. The project which is anticipated to be under construction in 2018 /2019, includes a mix of 1500 new housing units (mostly multifamily) and 800,000 sq. ft. of new regional commercial development including a hotel and movie theater, resulting in about one thousand new jobs. The development of the Lakepointe Urban Village along with existing pipeline projects represents about 100% of our housing targets and over 100% of our jobs targets for our 20-year planning period. This Subarea Plan development and other “pipeline” development is vested and will happen in the next ten years, in spite of our very low housing and jobs targets assigned by King County and used for evaluation of our current Comprehensive Plan by PSRC. While this growth does exceed our assigned targets, it actually consumes all of our planned growth during the 20-year planning period in our Comprehensive Plan.
All of Covington’s growth, as permitted or otherwise projected in our Comprehensive Plan, is within the assigned UGA and city limits of Covington, in accordance with the GMA and its policies. Our plan does not propose, reclassify, or up-zone any portion of the city, with the exception of the Lakepointe Urban Village, which was reclassified from Mineral to Mixed-Use and adopted in 2014, to accommodate our projected growth. In fact, the city’s planning documents, as referenced in the Comprehensive Plan, are based on sound planning and will result in developments that provide compact growth, in multi-story, mixed-use developments, both in our Town Center and within the Lakepointe Urban Village. The city applies transportation concurrency standards and has limited growth on the eastside of the city due to infrastructure deficiencies. This restriction, which has been in effect for the past 20 years, has not stifled our growth. Development within Covington has no major impact on rural resource lands (we have none), and has continuously created plans that give strong consideration to transportation, utilities and walkable, pedestrian level developments which is in line with good planning principles as identified in the PSRC tool boxes and in accordance with state GMA mandates.

Covington’s Position in the “Regional Growth Strategy”

Third, we have evaluated how Covington might address more fully the impacts of our planned growth on regional and local infrastructure and services, and specifically on the environment.

- The Covington Comprehensive Plan must be reviewed against the entire Vision 2040 document and the Growth Management Act (GMA), and not just against the subsection of Vision 2040 that constitutes the Regional Growth strategy. Both Vision 2040 and GMA emphasize the need for cities to be built at urban densities to support pedestrian mobility, transit, affordable housing, and an efficient use of land. Covington has zoned for urban densities and mixed-use development and planned for capital improvements within the planning period to support those needs and principles. The Regional Growth Strategy states on p. 14 that “part of the intent of designating the urban growth area is to help channel investments in infrastructure within already built-up areas, especially cities, and to discourage growth in rural areas.” Since adoption of the GMA and establishment of Covington’s UGA, the city has been planning urban growth and investments in infrastructure in accordance with this stated strategy and as necessary to provide for public health, safety, and welfare totally within our UGA and city limits. All of our growth is projected within our UGA and does not envision expanding that UGA and protects rural land and other environmental resources.

- Affordable housing is one of the principle challenges of small cities and represents a major goal of GMA, especially consistent with the greater PSRC region. The GMA directs cities to encourage the availability of affordable housing to all segments of the population. Covington has made great inroads with the addition of over 200 units of affordable housing in 2016, much of which takes up a good portion of our housing targets. To reduce or slow growth in the future to align with housing targets as a “ceiling” rather than a “floor” will only increase the cost of housing and be counter-productive to the goals of GMA.

- While the Vision 2040 Regional Growth Strategy categorizes Covington as a “Small City”, the community is a regional hub of employment and jobs as well as a regional retail center for a larger area of southeast King County that encompasses a retail trade area of approximately 80,000 residences. As such jobs are created here, new businesses seek to locate here, and developers desire to build here.

- The paradigm shift to which growth targets are implemented has significant adverse impacts to a city’s ability to plan, budget, and deliver the public infrastructure required to support urban densities envisioned under GMA. A shift of this magnitude must be done in concert with an economic analysis to ensure that a “Small City” such as Covington will be able to provide the economies of scale needed to deliver the costly urban services (police, fire, water, sewer, transportation) envisioned by both GMA and Vision 2040.
Covington continues to plan and implement best practices in growth management to meet our community’s needs and to be a good partner to surrounding jurisdictions and the region.

- Impact Fees: The City of Covington currently assesses traffic impact fees for all new development assuring that growth pays for growth. We will be revising and modifying those traffic impact fees in 2017, as well as imposing a new park impact fee during the same calendar year. Covington and Maple Valley have a practice of charging reciprocal impact and mitigation fees.

- Design Review and Environmental Regulations: We apply strong design review principles to our mixed use and commercial development. For all development we implement critical area regulations comparable to King County, coordinate with Kent on shared groundwater concerns during development review, and apply the strictest stormwater management rules and practices. Development is held to high standards to meet our community’s character and values.

- Growth Monitoring: Covington will also commit to document, monitor and track new growth and report those figures to PSRC several times before the next Comprehensive Plan Update cycle with suggestions that might be appropriate to better align Covington’s growth with the Regional Growth Strategy.

- Planning Collaboratively: Covington plans together with neighboring jurisdictions and special districts serving the City on infrastructure, transportation, human services, hazard reduction, and shoreline and critical area protection.

- Solving Transportation Concerns for the City and Southeast King County: The City has lobbied the State for major transportation improvement funds for improving SR 516 and the “Covington Connector” linking SR 516 to SR 18, which will help mitigate transportation impacts from our new 210-acre Subarea Plan known as the Lakepointe Urban Village and solve connectivity and congestion problems for Covington and abutting cities. This clearly demonstrates Covington’s commitment to solving much of our transportation needs through our own means. And we continue to assess all new development for conformance with our Level of Service (LOS) Standards in our Comprehensive Plan to ensure mitigation of transportation impacts, and sometimes actually deny development projects which fail to meet our transportation levels of service. The City will continue to document our negotiations of the Lakepointe Subarea Plan and its Development Agreement for transportation mitigation, the funding for the “Covington Connector”, and the interagency coordination with WSDOT and abutting cities to address regional transportation needs.

- Further, the City will address specific policies in our Comprehensive Plan to improve our non-motorized transit planning in our attempts to reduce the number of auto trips on the regional transportation system, including efforts with a Tri-City Trail between Covington, Maple Valley, and Black Diamond, as well as partnering with King County on an extensive regional trail system encompassing our regional park system and the Soos Creek drainage system.

To the best of our knowledge Vision 2040 does not require or envision individual cities placing a cap on either housing or job growth, but being able to meet the needs of a growing population with expanding housing opportunities and new job growth within the community. Covington has gradually improved its job-housing balance over recent decades and is adding new jobs in the health care niche, including a 56 bed hospital under construction and scheduled for completion in 2017. Any restriction on a city’s ability to foster high quality, proactive, smart growth planning principles at urban densities in line with GMA will only exacerbate that city’s ability to financially support the necessary urban services that the state law mandates. Given our location, one could argue that the adjacent rural areas would then also be underserved and forced to drive further for services. By limiting growth,
Covington’s ability to provide services would also restrict the people who live in the city, since economic
development will forcibly be curtailed.

As part of Vision 2020 and 2040, we are not aware of any PSRC action for “conditional certification” for cities that
failed to meet their assigned housing and job growth targets. Singling out cities that exceed their growth targets
for conditional certification and not singling out cities that failed to meet their targets doesn’t seem equitable and
can appear rather arbitrary on the surface through its application. Placing limits on growth may result in restricting
access to grant funding over other cities giving an unfair advantage to the latter. Reduced economic development
leaves those restricted cities scrambling to come up with revenue to provide “core services” to their constituents.

**In Summary**

Staff has concluded that our adopted 2015 Comprehensive Plan and policies are not out of compliance with GMA,
nor have we identified any policies that should be changed, as we’ve historically shown that growth in all planning
documents. We are currently experiencing new growth and will continue to experience growth in the future based
on private market forces and people’s strong desire to live where they choose. We manage growth well with tools
designed to achieve urban levels of service, to ensure growth pays for growth, and to achieve an attractive urban
character and environmental sustainability; we continually evaluate our plans and regulations to achieve better and
better outcomes for our community. We recognize the desire of the PSRC staff to have policies in local
Comprehensive Plans to “bend the trend” of growth that is occurring in our communities to match Vision 2040
categories. However, the Vision 2040 community categories do not apply individual targets to individual
communities and “bending the trend” to meet the out of date small city category is simply at odds with the current
market forces causing growth in Covington; we have shaped the growth based on past good planning efforts in
Covington.

The few suggestions offered by PSRC have been to meter permits and consider adjusting zoning on property to slow
or moderate future growth. Both of those actions have already been settled in the courts and are not policies the
city council desires to pursue as they are at odds with the vision of our community. Covington has a desirable
housing stock, housing variety, and housing prices lower than the larger urban centers in the region. People choose
to live in Covington because of the quality of life balance and housing costs compared to other areas in the Puget
Sound region. Our expanding employment and jobs in the medical sector, as well as, a new hospital is also driving
the creation of family wage jobs. These factors have been historically identified in previous comprehensive plans,
planning documents and the proposed 2015 Comprehensive Plan, all of which have been provided to multiple
agencies, including PSRC, for feedback and consideration. The issue is simple, the growth in Covington was not
fairly recognized in Vision 2040, and this is a great opportunity for PSRC to fact check the regional vision and adjust
it accordingly.

PSRC staff does not recognize that our updated 2015 Comprehensive Plan contains the community's vision of
Covington’s growth based on the excellent job of public outreach and planning that has been accomplished under
the leadership of the Covington City Council, the Covington Planning Commission, and its citizens, business
community, and stakeholders over the past ten years.

Given the extensive discussion that has taken place over the past eight months between PSRC and the various cities
given “conditional certification” of their Comprehensive Plans, including Covington, concerning the issue of growth
targets being used as a “ceiling” not to be exceeded rather than a “floor” just to be reached; and the fact that this issue has not been resolved and may not be resolved for a few years, we feel it is appropriate to grant final certification to our Comprehensive Plan at this point in time.

Based on the above stated facts, the City of Covington respectfully requests that the PSRC Executive Board provide full certification of our 2015-2035 Comprehensive Plan, primarily because all of our projected growth is within our UGA and city limits and meets both the requirements of GMA and the spirit of VISION 2040.

Respectfully,

Jeff Wagner, Mayor  
City of Covington

Cc: Covington City Council Members  
    Regan Bolli, City Manager of Covington  
    Reagan Dunn, King County Councilmember  
    Josh Brown, Executive Director, PSRC