

## **Designation Procedures for New Regional Growth and Manufacturing Industrial Centers**

Adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council Executive Board  
September 22, 2011

### **THE ISSUE**

VISION 2040 directs PSRC to provide a regional framework for designating and evaluating regional growth and manufacturing industrial centers. The Designation Procedures provide the Growth Management Policy Board and Executive Board with a tool to review and act on the designation of new proposed centers. Regional designation is made at the discretion of the Executive Board after considering the recommendation of the Growth Management Policy Board.

The Designation Procedures clarify the intent of centers policies and guidance adopted in VISION 2040 and address: Purpose and Objective; Eligibility and Designation Process; and Designation Criteria. For jurisdictions seeking regional designation, a separate *Regional Center Designation Application Form* is provided.

### **BACKGROUND**

Focusing growth into centers has been a key strategy in the central Puget Sound region since the 1990 version of VISION 2020. The 1990 VISION called for the establishment of a hierarchy of centers and provided a center typology. Center planning became more refined in the 1995 update of VISION 2020, wherein 21 Regional Growth Centers and 8 Regional Manufacturing Industrial Centers were included.

In 2003, designated regional centers became the policy focus in the regional Transportation Improvement Program's Policy Framework and part of the primary criteria in the Economic Development District's Public Works Program. Based on the heightened importance of centers and the lack of consistent designation procedures across the region, the Growth Management Policy Board developed and the Executive Board adopted the Designation Procedures in June 2003. The Designation Procedures have now been revised to address VISION 2040.

## **VISION 2040 & REGIONAL CENTERS**

Regional centers remain at the heart of VISION 2040's regional growth strategy and multicounty planning policies. Centers allow cities and other urban service providers to maximize the use of existing infrastructure, make more efficient and less costly investments in new infrastructure, and minimize the environmental impact of urban growth.

Regional growth and regional manufacturing industrial centers, with their concentration of people and/or jobs, form the backbone of the transportation network for the four-county region. Linking these centers with a highly efficient transportation system helps the region reduce the rate of growth in vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions by providing and expanding transportation choices.

*Regional growth centers* are located in either Metropolitan Cities or Core Cities and are characterized by compact, pedestrian-oriented development with a mix of residences, jobs, retail, services, and entertainment. These centers are intended to provide proximity to a diverse collection of services, shopping, recreation, and jobs, as well as a variety of attractive and well-designed residences. Centers are to be focal points for new growth and are identified to receive a significant portion of the region's population and employment growth. Regional growth centers are expected to achieve densities sufficient to support high-capacity transit through long-term growth and development over the 20-year comprehensive planning period and beyond.

*Regional manufacturing industrial centers* are locations of more intensive industrial activity. These centers are characterized by large contiguous blocks served by the region's major transportation infrastructure, including roads, rail, and port facilities. VISION 2040 discourages non-supportive land uses in regional manufacturing industrial centers, such as retail, non-related offices, or housing, in order to preserve the basic sector industries located in these centers. These centers are expected to accommodate a significant share of the region's manufacturing industrial employment growth.

Regional centers play a role in accommodating growth and serving as primary locations for civic, employment, and recreational activities within a regional context as well as within their countywide context. While all regional centers have to meet minimum criteria and demonstrate regional significance, VISION 2040 recognizes that they will have different characteristics and scales that are appropriate to their countywide context.

# Designation Procedures for New Regional Growth Centers

The Designation Procedures address the following: Purpose and Objective; Eligibility and Designation Process; and Designation Criteria. For jurisdictions seeking regional designation, a separate *Regional Center Designation Application Form* is provided.

## **PART 1. Purpose and Objective.**

The regional growth centers designation procedures are designed to:

- a. Document that the proposed center has the desire, capacity, and development potential to play a regional role in attracting and accommodating a significant share of the region's population and employment growth.
- b. Limit the number and geographic distribution of regional growth centers. The region needs to maintain a reasonable number and distribution of regionally significant centers in order for them to:
  - i. Serve as an organizing framework for the regional multimodal transportation system.
  - ii. Serve as focal points for regional investments in urban services and amenities.
  - iii. Have the potential to generate sufficient market demand to make centers successful.
- c. Provide regional consistency regarding the type, location, distribution, and development potential of new regional growth centers.
- d. Ensure that regional growth centers meet the goals and expectations established in VISION 2040, as described below.

## **PART 2. Eligibility and Designation Process.**

- a. To be eligible for consideration as a designated regional growth center, the jurisdiction must:
  - i. Demonstrate that the proposed center is located within an urban growth area. New regional growth centers should be located within a city.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Designation of centers outside of cities may occur, but only in limited circumstances. Applications for a center outside of a city will need to demonstrate a history of, and collaborative agreement regarding, joint planning and service provision, as well as joint plans for annexation or incorporation. VISION 2040 states that annexation is preferred to incorporation and that unincorporated urban area growth should occur in areas that can be annexed.

- ii. Identify the center as a candidate for a regional growth center designation in the local jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.
  - iii. Identify the center as a candidate for a regional growth center designation in the countywide planning policies.
  - iv. The jurisdiction must adopt an ordinance or resolution requesting the PSRC to designate it as a regional growth center and authorizing the staff of the jurisdiction to submit an application.
- b. Applications submitted to PSRC will be reviewed to ensure they meet eligibility and minimum requirements, including required activity level thresholds, before the application and staff report are provided to the Growth Management Policy Board.
  - c. Designation of regional growth centers will be made by the Executive Board based on the recommendation of the Growth Management Policy Board, the jurisdiction's application and presentation, and a report prepared by PSRC staff.
  - d. Once designated by PSRC's Executive Board, the center will receive "provisional" status. This status will exist until the jurisdiction has adopted a center subarea plan into their comprehensive plan and it has been certified by PSRC's Executive Board.<sup>2</sup>
    - i. Subarea Plan Expectations: Jurisdictions with regional growth centers are required to adopt a center subarea plan as part of their comprehensive plan no later than two years after designation.
      - a. The required topics to be addressed in the center subarea plan are described in the *Growth Center Plan Checklist* in PSRC's *Plan Review Manual* (see Part 3 below).
      - b. Center subarea plans will be reviewed for certification as part of the comprehensive plan. If the subarea plan does not meet certification requirements, PSRC staff will work with the Growth Management Policy Board to determine whether or not the regional designation is to be retained.
      - c. Either at initial adoption or through subsequent updates, the planning horizon and update cycle for the center subarea is to be concurrent with the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.
      - d. Any changes to the center subarea plan – including boundaries, growth targets, zoning, etc. – are to be incorporated in the plan and submitted to PSRC for review and, as necessary, certification.

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<sup>2</sup> If a jurisdiction has completed a center subarea plan and submits it at the time of application, once the plan is certified the provisional status will be removed.

- ii. During the "provisional" status period, the newly designated center will have equal status to existing designated regional centers.
- iii. To ensure that new regional centers are taking on the responsibility of a regionally designated center at the onset of its designation (during the time period of the "provisional" status), jurisdictions are expected to commit, to the extent practicable, to the planning expectations defined in the designation procedures and the jurisdiction's application.
- iv. If the newly designated center is in a jurisdiction other than a Metropolitan City or Core City (based on VISION 2040 regional geography classifications), PSRC staff will estimate the revised amount of growth to the regional geographies. This revised amount, as well as the jurisdiction's existing adopted growth target, will form the basis for subarea planning.
- e. After two years, if the center subarea plan has not been adopted and submitted for review and certification, a "provisional" center will lose its status as a regional center. At the discretion of the Growth Management Policy Board, however, the jurisdiction may be given additional time to work with PSRC staff to address outstanding issues and meet the planning expectations. If expectations cannot be met, the center will lose its regional designation.

**PART 3. Designation Criteria.**

Proposed regional growth centers must demonstrate and document the following:

- a. **Compatibility with VISION2040.** The jurisdiction's vision for the proposed regional growth center must reinforce the centers concept within the VISION2040 regional growth strategy and multicounty planning policies.
- b. **Required Activity Levels - Population + Employment Thresholds.**
  - i. Must have a minimum **existing activity level** (population + employment) of at least 18 activity units per gross acre. The required existing activity level must be met before regional designation can be pursued.
  - ii. Must have a minimum **target activity level** of 45 activity units per gross acre. The required target activity level is based in the jurisdiction's adopted growth target<sup>3</sup> and the allocated portion<sup>4</sup> to the center.

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<sup>3</sup> Growth Targets are the amount of growth a jurisdiction has agreed, through the countywide process, to plan for throughout its comprehensive plan elements over the 20-year horizon of the comprehensive plan. The targets include both the baseline density (current) plus the 20-year growth.

<sup>4</sup> VISION 2040 (MPP-DP-3) states that jurisdictions are to establish housing and employment targets citywide, as well as for their designated regional growth center.

- iii. Must have sufficient **zoned development capacity**<sup>5</sup> to adequately accommodate targeted levels of growth. Because it is not time-bound, zoned capacity can allow levels of development that are higher than the 45 activity unit target. This allows a jurisdiction to support long-term higher levels of density that achieves the regional vision for a more compact, complete and mature urban form in regional centers.
- c. **Commitment to Center Planning Expectations.** The jurisdiction must address each topic listed in the *Growth Center Plan Checklist* in PSRC's *Plan Review Manual* in their subarea plan.

It is expected that significant planning will have occurred prior to application for regional designation. At the time of application, the jurisdiction will describe the current status of planning and implementation efforts for each of these topics. Where planning and implementation gaps exist, describe how these will be addressed in the subarea planning process. A summary of the topics in the Checklist is as follows:

- i. *Center Plan Concept or vision* (including commitment to a pedestrian-oriented scale and urban form, center relationships and context, and development potential).
- ii. *Environment* (including critical areas, parks and open space, public spaces, stormwater, air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions).
- iii. *Land Use* (including defined boundaries with appropriate size and shape, residential and employment growth targets and capacity, a balanced mix of uses, and urban design).
- iv. *Housing* (including housing targets, housing types, affordable housing).
- v. *Economy* (including economic role of center in city and region, and industry clusters).
- vi. *Public Services* (including capital facility plans and financing that are consistent with growth targets).
- vii. *Transportation* (including physical design guidelines, multimodal networks and complete streets, transit supportive planning, context-sensitive design, green streets, tailored concurrency standards, and mode-split goals).

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<sup>5</sup> Zoned Development Capacity is the amount of development allowed under adopted zoning based on parameters in the zoning regulations such as allowed heights and densities, lot coverages and setbacks, floor area ratios, etc. Zoned Development Capacity is not bound to a specific planning horizon. Jurisdictions must have adequate zoned capacity to accommodate their Growth Target, and this is evaluated under Buildable Lands.

# **Designation Procedures for New Regional Manufacturing/Industrial Centers**

The Designation Procedures address the following: Purpose and Objective; Eligibility and Designation Process; and Designation Criteria. For a jurisdiction(s) seeking regional designation, a separate *Regional Center Designation Application Form* is available.

## **PART 1. Purpose and Objective.**

The regional manufacturing industrial centers designation procedures are designed to:

- a. Document that the proposed center has the desire, capacity, and development potential to play a regional role in attracting and accommodating a significant share of the jurisdiction's employment growth.
- b. Limit the number and geographic distribution of regional manufacturing industrial centers. The region needs to maintain a reasonable number and distribution in order for manufacturing industrial centers to:
  - i. Serve as an organizing framework for the Freight and Goods component of the region's Metropolitan Transportation System.
  - ii. Serve as the primary concentrations of industrial and manufacturing related jobs that are important to the region.
  - iii. Have the potential to generate sufficient market demand to make centers successful.
- c. Provide regional consistency regarding the type, location, distribution, and development potential of new manufacturing industrial centers.
- d. Ensure that regional manufacturing industrial centers meet the goals and expectations established in VISION 2040, as described below.

## **PART 2. Eligibility and Designation Process.**

- a. To be eligible for consideration as a designated regional manufacturing industrial center, the jurisdiction<sup>1</sup> must:

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<sup>1</sup> In cases where an application for a MIC crosses a jurisdiction's boundaries the application must describe the manner and structure (e.g., an interlocal agreement or memorandum of understanding), within which the parties will plan together over the long-term.

- i. Demonstrate that the proposed center is located within an urban growth area. Although preferred, it is not required that proposed manufacturing industrial centers be located in a city.<sup>2</sup>
  - ii. Identify the center as a candidate for a regional manufacturing industrial center designation in the local jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.
  - iii. Identify the center as a candidate for a regional manufacturing industrial center in the countywide planning policies.
  - iv. The jurisdiction must adopt an ordinance or resolution requesting the PSRC to designate it as a regional manufacturing industrial center and authorizing the staff of the jurisdiction to submit an application.
- b. Applications submitted to PSRC will be reviewed to ensure they meet eligibility and minimum requirements, including required activity level thresholds, before the application and staff report are provided to the Growth Management Policy Board.
  - c. Designation of regional manufacturing industrial centers will be made by the Executive Board based on the recommendation of the Growth Management Policy Board, the jurisdiction's application and presentation, and a report prepared by PSRC staff.
  - d. Once designated by PSRC's Executive Board, the center will receive "provisional" status. This status will exist until the jurisdiction has adopted a center subarea plan into their comprehensive plan and it has been certified by PSRC's Executive Board.<sup>3</sup>
    - i. Subarea Plan Expectations: Jurisdictions with regional manufacturing industrial centers are required to adopt a center subarea plan as part of their comprehensive plan no later than two years after designation.
      - a. The required topics to be addressed in the center subarea plan are described in the *Manufacturing Industrial Center Plan Checklist* in PSRC's *Plan Review Manual* (see Part 3 below).
      - b. Center subarea plans will be reviewed for certification as part of the comprehensive plan. If the subarea plan does not meet certification requirements, PSRC staff will work with the Growth Management Policy Board to determine whether or not the regional designation is to be retained.

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<sup>2</sup> Designation of centers outside of cities may occur, but only in limited circumstances. Applications for a center outside of a city will need to demonstrate a history of, and collaborative agreement regarding, joint planning and service provision, as well as joint plans for annexation or incorporation. VISION 2040 states that annexation is preferred to incorporation and that unincorporated urban area growth should occur in areas that can be annexed.

<sup>3</sup> If a jurisdiction has completed a center subarea plan and submits it at the time of application, once the plan is certified the provisional status will be removed.

- c. Either at initial adoption or through subsequent updates, the planning horizon and update cycle for the center subarea is to be concurrent with the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.
- d. Any changes to the center subarea plan – including boundaries, growth targets, zoning, etc. – are to be incorporated in the plan and submitted to PSRC for review and, as necessary, certification.
- ii. During the "provisional" status period, the newly designated center will have equal status to existing designated regional centers.
- iii. To ensure that new regional centers are taking on the responsibility of a regionally designated center at the onset of its designation (during the time period of the "provisional" status), jurisdictions are expected to commit, to the extent practicable, to the planning expectations defined in the designation procedures and the jurisdiction's application.
- e. After two years, if the center subarea plan has not been adopted and submitted for review and certification, a "provisional" center will lose its status as a regional center. At the discretion of the Growth Management Policy Board, however, the jurisdiction may be given additional time to work with PSRC staff to address outstanding issues and meet the planning expectations. If expectations cannot be met, the center will lose its regional designation.

### **PART 3. Designation Criteria.**

Proposed regional manufacturing industrial centers must demonstrate and document the following:

- a. **Compatibility with VISION 2040.** The jurisdiction's vision for the proposed regional manufacturing industrial center must reinforce the centers concept within the VISION 2040 regional growth strategy and multicounty planning policies.
- b. **Required Activity Levels - Employment Thresholds.**
  - i. Must have a minimum **existing employment level** of at least 10,000 jobs. The required existing activity level must be met before regional designation can be pursued.
  - ii. Must have a minimum **target employment level** of at least 20,000 jobs. The required target activity level is based on the jurisdiction's adopted growth target<sup>4</sup> that guides the center subarea plan.

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<sup>4</sup> Growth Targets are the amount of growth a jurisdiction has agreed, through the countywide process, to plan for throughout its comprehensive plan elements over the 20-year horizon of the comprehensive plan. The targets include both the baseline density (current) plus the 20-year growth.

- iii. Must have sufficient **zoned development capacity**<sup>5</sup> to adequately accommodate targeted levels of growth. Because it is not time-bound, zoned capacity can allow higher levels of development and a more compact and mature urban form in regional centers.
- c. **Planned Land Use and Zoning.** At least 80% of property within the proposed new regional manufacturing industrial center boundaries must have planned future land use and current zoning designations for industrial and manufacturing uses.
- d. **Commitment to Center Planning Expectations.** The jurisdiction must address each topic listed in the *Manufacturing Industrial Center Plan Checklist* in PSRC's *Plan Review Manual* in their subarea plan.

It is expected that significant planning will have occurred prior to application for regional designation. At the time of application, the jurisdiction will describe the current status of planning and implementation efforts for each of these topics. Where planning and implementation gaps exist, describe how these will be addressed in the subarea planning process. A summary of the topics in the Checklist is as follows:

- i. *Center Plan Concept or vision* (including commitment to preservation of the urban industrial land base, center relationships and context, and development potential).
- ii. *Environment* (including critical areas, stormwater, air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions).
- iii. *Land Use* (including defined boundaries with appropriate size and shape, employment growth targets and zoned capacity, discouraging incompatible uses, and urban design).
- iv. *Economy* (including economic role in city and region, manufacturing industrial supportive strategies, and industry clusters).
- v. *Public Services* (including capital facility plans and financing that are consistent with growth targets).
- vi. *Transportation* (including transportation networks, planned improvements, capacity for freight movement, employee commuting, and mode split goals).

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<sup>5</sup> Zoned Development Capacity is the amount of development allowed under adopted zoning based on parameters in the zoning regulations such as allowed heights and densities, lot coverages and setbacks, floor area ratios, etc. Zoned Development Capacity is not bound to a specific planning horizon. Jurisdictions must have adequate zoned capacity to accommodate their Growth Target, and this is evaluated under Buildable Lands.