

Regional Growth Centers Criteria Report

Auburn Regional Growth Center



Designation Recommendation

Redesignate Auburn as a regional growth center under the Regional Centers Framework. The center supports VISION 2050's goals to create compact, livable places that accommodate significant regional growth, while promoting sustainability and inclusion.

Background




Downtown Auburn includes the core historic downtown with many older buildings, commercial and residential areas along Auburn Way and Main Street, and adjacent residential areas. Developments in the Center include the Auburn Station, City Hall and Annex, Auburn Regional Medical Center, and mixed-use buildings. The Auburn Regional Growth Center aligns with Downtown Auburn boundaries and is located near both SR-167

and SR-18 and is served by Sound Transit Commuter Rail, King County Metro and Pierce Transit.

Evaluation of Regional Growth Centers Requirements

Status Icons:

 On track
  Needs attention
  Does not meet criteria
  N/A

Criteria		Status
Center Type	—	Urban Growth Center
Existing Density Required: 18 people/acre		The Auburn Regional Growth Center's current density is 22 people per acre, which meets the criteria.
Planned Target Density Required: 45 people/acre		The Auburn Regional Growth Center's planned density is 63 people per acre, which needs improvement. Reaching this density shows whether the center is effectively managing and concentrating growth within its boundaries.
Mix of Uses: 15% of planned residential and employment activity		40% of planned growth is expected to be residential.
Size: 200 to 640 acres (larger if served by high-capacity transit)		The center is currently 234 acres. With the boundary as proposed in the revised subarea plan, the Auburn regional growth center is planned to be 355 acres, which continues to meet regional size requirements.
Transit Access: Existing or planned frequent bus service or high-capacity transit		The center has existing commuter rail and bus service and is planning for bus rapid transit to serve the community.
Market Potential: Demonstrated capacity to support growth targets	—	A market study was not required. Since 2010, the center has increased density by 4 people per acre.
Center Subarea Plan	—	The center subarea plan has not previously been certified. The city is working on an updated plan, with the

Criteria	Status
	intent to adopt by the end of 2025. Please see the draft certification report for planning recommendations.

Jurisdiction Comments / Additional Context

Over the past 20 years Downtown Auburn has seen significant public investments and private development that have transformed several blocks within the downtown core into a strong, pedestrian-oriented center under the “2001 Auburn Downtown Plan.” While the 2001 Downtown Plan has been highly successful due to time, financial commitments, and contributions from the community, Auburn is now ready to plan for the next 20 years.

The City has prepared a new subarea plan, the “2024 Auburn Downtown Subarea Plan.” This new Subarea Plan responds to the changing conditions, community characteristics, and vision, and will replace the “2001 Auburn Downtown Plan” by providing a refreshed perspective of land use, development, and transportation for the downtown area. The new Subarea Plan features increased density, increased building heights, and more housing types, as well as new zoning districts, and forthcoming zoning development standards and architectural and site design standards, all designed to accommodate future growth.

The new Subarea Plan recognizes Auburn’s downtown regional growth center designation through PSRC and the City’s Comprehensive Plan. As such the City adopted a Planned Action Ordinance for the downtown area which will help streamline and expedite the permit review process for future qualified projects within the downtown area, thus furthering future growth.