

# Regional Growth Centers Criteria Report

## Kent Regional Growth Center



### Designation Recommendation

Conditionally redesignate Kent 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.

To meet conditions, the city will:

- Finalize and adopt the subarea plan by June 30, 2026

### Background









The Kent regional growth center encompasses historic downtown Kent and is mostly made up of commercial and retail uses. The center is served by SR 167, multiple rail lines,

the Kent Sounder Station, and the Interurban Trail. A blend of community shopping, housing, educational, recreational, medical and civic functions are located in the center, along with some light industry. Other attractions include extensive public art, parks, the Asian Sister City pavilion, and several churches. The Kent Station shopping center and the adjacent Accesso ShoWare Center bring frequent visitors, and several locally owned businesses and restaurants serve as cultural anchors, drawing people to Downtown Kent from across the region.

## 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 Kent Regional Growth Center's current density is 26 people per acre, which meets the criteria.
Planned Target Density Required: 45 people/acre	 The Kent Regional Growth Center's planned density is 43 people per acre, which is just below but substantially consistent with the regional criteria. 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	 25% of planned growth is expected to be residential.
Size: 200 to 640 acres (larger if served by high-capacity transit)	 The Kent Regional Growth Center is currently 292 acres.
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.

Criteria		Status
Market Potential: Demonstrated capacity to support growth targets	—	A market study was not required.  Since 2010, the center has increased density by 7 people per acre.
Center Subarea Plan	—	The center subarea plan was last certified in 2020.

### Jurisdiction Comments / Additional Context

The City of Kent is currently updating the subarea plan for the Kent regional growth center (RGC). An administrative draft is expected to be available for PSRC review in January 2026 with adoption following later in the spring. The City has extended the timeline for the subarea plan to allow for additional community conversations and internal staff coordination that will lead to a more successful implementation.

Some of the emerging priorities in the plan include:

- Establishment of a strong brand identity for the downtown that extends into the built environment through wayfinding, art, and other design elements
- Promotion of Downtown Kent as a regional destination for experiencing diverse cultures, cuisines, shopping, and events
- Support for local businesses and entrepreneurs, including affordable spaces to test and grow new business concepts
- Tools to promote mixed-use and mixed-income development and create opportunities to generate additional tax revenue downtown
- Strategies to enhance public safety and address vacant and underutilized sites
- Improved streetscapes to create a comfortable pedestrian environment

As part of the subarea plan update, Community Attributes Inc. prepared a market analysis that included existing and planned target densities. Exhibit A shows the 2023 PSRC-published Activity Units (AU) and AU densities for the Kent RGC and the City of Kent. As of 2023, the Kent RGC exceeded PSRC’s AU density requirement of 18 AUs per acre, achieving 24 AUs per acre.

**Exhibit A. Existing Activity Unit Density, 2023**

	Employment	Population	Activity		AU Density	PSRC AU Density Requirement
			Units	Acres		
Kent RGC	4,242	2,710	6,952	292	24	18
City of Kent	72,674	135,015	139,620	21,651	6	

Source: PSRC, 2024; CAI, 2025.

Using PSRC’s LUV-it growth rates, Exhibit B estimates the Kent RGC is projected to reach **68 AUs per acre by 2044** and **81 AU per acre by 2050**, reflecting a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 4% between 2023 and 2050. Both future densities exceed PSRC’s required 45 AUs per acre.

**Exhibit B. Future Activity Unit Density, 2044 & 2050**

Year	Region	Employment	Population	Activity		AU Density	PSRC AU Density Requirement
				Units	Acres		
2044	Kent RGC	11,624	8,369	19,993	292	68	45
	City of Kent	100,468	157,484	257,952	21,651	12	
2050	Kent RGC	13,526	10,155	23,681	292	81	45
	City of Kent	108,453	162,169	270,622	21,651	12	

Source: PSRC, 2024; CAI, 2025.