

Regional Growth Centers Criteria Report

Lakewood Regional Growth Center



Designation Recommendation

Redesignate Lakewood 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.

Additional recommendations:

- The city should review the regional center boundary to ensure the center is a compact and walkable shape.

Background








The city’s vision for Lakewood’s regional growth center is a dense mix of business, commercial, and cultural activity targeted for employment and residential growth, served by high-capacity transit and major public amenities. The center comprises the entire central business district and the majority of the district surrounding Sound Transit’s Lakewood commuter rail station.

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
Density Required: 18 people/acre		The Lakewood Regional Growth Center's current density is 19 people per acre, which meets the criteria.
Planned Target Density Required: 45 people/acre		The Lakewood Regional Growth Center's planned density is 54 people per acre, which meets the 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		37% of planned growth is expected to be residential.
Size: 200 to 640 acres (larger if served by high-capacity transit)		The Lakewood Regional Growth Center is currently 337 acres. However, the city should review the center’s boundaries to meet the shape criteria to support pedestrian connectivity throughout.
Transit Access: Existing or planned frequent bus service or high-capacity transit		The center has existing bus service to serve the community. The city should continue to work with Pierce Transit to support robust transit service to the center.
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.

Criteria	Status
Center Subarea Plan	<div style="text-align: center;">—</div> <p>The center subarea plan was last certified in 2019. Please see the updated certification report for additional planning recommendations.</p>

Jurisdiction Comments / Additional Context

- Lakewood was awarded a 2025 federal RAISE grant to build upon the Downtown Subarea Plan (geography is co-terminus with the regional growth center) by further testing and analyzing the feasibility and desirability of concept designs for multi-modal transportation improvements to improve mobility, provide more activities in Downtown, and support economic development goals. Using all data collected and input received from stakeholders, and the community, the city will develop a list of potential projects and strategies to address the identified safety needs.
- Lakewood updated the boundaries of the Downtown Subarea in 2023 to incorporate 9 additional parcels and would like to have the regional growth center reflect the same changes – please see the map on p. 1 that shows the change on the southern boundary.
- Alliance Residential is currently constructing a new housing project within the center boundaries and within the Lakewood Mall footprint. The project will include over 300 new units and is expected to be completed in 2026. The City anticipates that this project will spur interest to build additional housing development within the regional center by other developers as well as increase economic activity within the center.